

from the Author

A CONCISE

STATEMENT

OF

THE QUESTION

REGARDING THE

ABOLITION

OF THE

SLAVE TRADE.

Henry Peter Brougham, baron Brougham and Vaux.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. HATCHARD, AND T. N. LONGMAN

AND O. REES,

BY M. AND S. BROOKE, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

1804.

May 14, 1741.

133805

Kress
Room

THE object of this Tract is to exhibit, as clearly and concisely as the extent of the question will permit, the grounds upon which the friends of the Abolition now urge the adoption of that great measure. This condensed view of the case may be useful to such persons as have not already examined its merits; to such as have not considered the connection between the late changes in St. Domingo, and the continuance of the Slave Trade, finally to such as persist in confounding two things always entirely distinct, and now quite INCOMPATIBLE, the *Abolition* of the Negro Traffic, and the *Emancipation* of the present stock of Slaves.

The argument is arranged in the following manner: First, A general view is taken of the Trade as it relates to the Negroes, in Africa—in the Middle Passage—and in the West Indies.—From hence an inference is drawn, that the burthen of the proof rests upon those who defend this Trade. Their arguments in its favor are then examined at length, as they refer to the interests of the Africans, the interests of those directly engaged in the Slave Trade, and the interests of the West Indian Colonies.—Under this last head are considered the new arguments which the advocates of the Abolition derive from the present state of St. Domingo.

Where no authority is quoted in support of facts stated, the Report of the Committee of Privy Council in 1789, and the Public Accounts laid before Parliament, are understood to be referred to.

K
Foxwell

16684

CONCISE STATEMENT, &c.

ON the 2d of April, 1792, the House of Commons voted by a very great majority*,
“*that the trade carried on by British Subjects for the purpose of obtaining Slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be gradually abolished.*”—Several propositions for abolishing the traffic previous to 1796 were, during the course of the same month, negatived by small majorities; but on the 28th of April, it was resolved, “*that it shall not be lawful to import any African Negroes into any British Colonies or Plantations, in ships owned or navigated by British Subjects at any time after the 1st day of January 1796.*”—And

* 230 to 85.

although this resolution was carried by a narrow majority*, almost all who opposed it concurred in supporting a proposition for putting an end to the trade on the 1st day of January, 1800: we are, therefore, entitled to conclude, that while a majority of the House voted for the Abolition at the earlier period, not above a fourth of the Members entertained any wish to see the trade continued beyond the end of the year, 1799; in other words, a much greater proportion of the Commons, than can in general be found to agree upon any ordinary question of policy solemnly resolved, after the most ample enquiries, and the fullest discussion, which a great question ever received, that the Slave Trade should cease nearly four years and a half ago.

The question is now about to be brought once more before the House of Commons. It is incumbent upon those who have not already examined its merits, to prepare themselves for one of the gravest deliberations in which they can be engaged; to weigh accurately the various interests which the discussion

* 151 to 132.

involves, and appreciate the different motives which may influence their views ; to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the shape and bearings of the question, so that neither the eloquence nor the authority which will be employed on different sides of the debate, may exercise an undue sway over their understandings. Those who were Members of the House upon the former occasions, have only to reflect on the discussions which they then heard, to recollect the clear conviction in which their minds were left, and to enquire whether any of the events which have taken place during the interval, are such as to change the nature of the case.

It is quite unnecessary to remind any one of the vast importance of the vote which he is to give upon this great occasion. The property of a large and most respectable body of our countrymen at home ; the existence of the western wing of the British Empire ; the improvement of a whole quarter of the habitable globe, hinge upon the final decision which this cause is to receive ; and even these high considerations of policy, state necessity and universal philanthropy, are eclipsed by the paramount claims of national justice upon
which

which the cause of the Abolition rests in the first instance for its support.

State of the Question.

The cruelties of the Spaniards having extirpated the native inhabitants of the West Indian Colonies, the proprietors of those settlements had recourse to the labour of Negro Slaves for the cultivation of the ground, the excavation of the mines, and the manufacture of such articles as are not exported in the state of raw produce. The robust constitution of the Africans was found peculiarly well adapted to those kinds of work in a climate too sultry for Europeans. As the cultivation of the colonies increased the demand for Negroes rose in proportion; and their labour soon came to be viewed as an essential part of rural œconomy in the West Indies. The extension of the colonial agriculture became as inseparably connected with the purchase of Slaves, as the improvement of waste land in Europe, is connected with the acquisition of live stock, to supply the blanks occasioned by mismanagement, or accident; the West Indian farmers had recourse to the Slave market, as regularly as the European cultivators

went

went to the cattle market ; and a constant intercourse has thus for several ages been established between the Coast of Africa and the Southern American Colonies, in every respect resembling the connexion which subsists between those parts of a great agricultural territory where animals are used for food or tillage, and those wild or poor districts where they are caught in the woods, or raised by breeding. The comparison which is here followed out, consists merely in a concise statement of the fact, and is by no means suggested with the intention of creating a prejudice against the Negro trade. It is necessary, however, that the fact be fairly expounded, lest the very erroneous idea should gain ground, that there is the slightest resemblance between the kind of cultivation to which the slave commerce is subservient, and the sort of labour in which the European peasantry are employed. The real nature of the work for which the importation of African Slaves has been found necessary, cannot be so well or so shortly defined as by comparing their condition with that of beasts used in tillage, from first to last—from their birth in Africa to the termination of their toils and sufferings

ferings in the West Indies. The wide difference will then be perceived between the condition of the Negro Slave and that of the peasant, in the most oppressed of the feudal countries, or even the domestic Slave in the most dissolute States of Ancient Europe, and Modern Asia. It is of importance then to sketch briefly a summary of the facts respecting the situation of Negro Slaves, which have been brought before the public by writers of all descriptions, and prepossessed with every variety of opinion upon the leading question. These facts, now admitted on all hands, relate chiefly to three points. The methods of procuring Negroes in Africa; the treatment experienced by the Slaves during their passage to America, and the purposes for which they are used after their arrival in the West Indies.

1. *Manner of procuring Negroes in Africa.*

It appears that Slaves may be obtained in two ways—either by certain methods which the laws and customs of the African Tribes authorize as just, or by means of open violence
and

and fraud, contrary even to the rude notions of justice prevalent in those uncivilized states.

The chief legal grounds of selling Negroes are, the sentences of Courts of Criminal Justice, the right of Creditors, the right of Captors in War, and the right which a Master has to sell his home-born Slave in case of extreme poverty.—The crimes for which Negroes are punished, by being sold to Slave Merchants, are principally adultery and witchcraft. But it is proved, by the most undeniable testimonies, that there is no crime for which, by the African laws, this punishment is not awarded. That the accused is frequently sold, with his whole family, and that in many cases the profits of the sale accrue to the judges.—The Slave Merchants avail themselves of the right of Creditors, by trusting the Natives with brandy, rum, fire arms, &c. and then seizing upon themselves and their children in satisfaction of the debt.—The African Princes, in order to supply the Slave Market, go to war, as the natives of woody countries go to the chase, in order to supply the butcher market with game, and the term, by which in their language

“ war ”

“*War*” is expressed, means literally “*great pillage*”—An African who possesses Slaves never wants a pretext for selling them to the Trader; he has only to call himself poor, or to accuse them of witchcraft, and judge of the charge himself. In many parts of the interior the Master has the full right of sale; and a communication is kept up between the inland districts of that vast Continent and the Slave Coast, by means of the Native Slave Merchant, who traverse it in all directions, from Egypt and the Red Sea to Morocco and Guinea, from the Niger to the Mediterranean, and from Angola to the Mozambique Channel. Such are the methods by which it is held justifiable in Africa to make and sell Slaves. Not even there is it deemed just to use those other means by which the constant supply of the Slave Market is secured—fraud, kidnapping, and robbery—partly committed by the Natives among themselves, and partly by the European Traders.

2. *The Treatment of the Slaves on the Passage.*

All writers and travellers concur in representing the Negroes as men of a disposition peculiarly

liarly affectionate ; and nothing, it is agreed, lays stronger hold of their affections than the place endeared to them by the recollection of their nativity and infancy. The author who has given this picture in the liveliest colours is Mr. Park, a gentleman who travelled for some years through the interior of Africa, and is an enemy to the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The effects which a violent separation from their families, and their home, must necessarily produce on the feelings of such men, it is easier to imagine than to describe ; yet the wretchedness which essentially belongs to the cargo of a Slave Ship, is uniformly increased by the unnecessary cruelties that are practised ; the horrid filth of which it is the scene, and the undue number with which it is crowded.

It would be too disgusting a task to repeat any of the dreadful narratives which were brought to light during the enquiries of the Committee in 1788 and 1789. Let it suffice to state, that the average loss of lives on the passage is above *twelve* in the hundred ; that there is a farther loss of nearly *five* before the Negroes are landed ; and a still farther loss of no less than *thirty-three* in seasoning, chiefly
from

from diseases contracted during the voyage. In other words, that yearly one-half of the Negroes exported from Africa die in consequence of the hardships of the voyage, and the change of situation. The friends of the traffic have boasted, that the rewards held out to those vessels which reach the West Indies with only a certain loss of hands, occasion many instances of voyages performed with a very small number of deaths. In plain terms, the Slave Trade is so intimately connected with torture and murder, that a bounty is required to diminish the waste of life, which it necessarily tends to occasion.

The following Extract, from a very inadequate Report of Mr. Wilberforce's memorable Speech upon the first discussion of this question is added, not as evidence of the facts just now alluded to, but as containing a clear and in no degree exaggerated statement of the proof brought forward from various quarters, the Committee, and printed in their report.

“ The description of their conveyance was
 “ impossible : *so much misery condensed in so*
 “ *little room*, so much affliction added to
 “ misery,

“ misery; that it appeared to be an attempt, by
 “ boldly suffering, to deprive them of the feel-
 “ ings of their minds. Six hundred, linked
 “ together, trying to get rid of each other, and
 “ crammed in a close vessel, with every object
 “ that was nauseous and disgusting; with pesti-
 “ lence, disease, and despair, in such a situation
 “ as to render it impossible to add any thing more
 “ to human misery: Yet, shocking as this de-
 “ scription must be felt to be by every man, it
 “ had been described by several witnesses from
 “ Liverpool as a comfortable conveyance. Mr.
 “ Norris had painted the accommodation of a
 “ slave ship in the most flowing terms; he had
 “ represented it in a manner that would have
 “ baffled his attempts at praise of the most lux-
 “ urious scenes: ‘ The Slaves, according to his
 “ account, were fumigated with frankincense and
 “ lime water; instruments of music were em-
 “ ployed to amuse them; the *song* and the *dance*,
 “ he had said, were *promoted*; the women were
 “ employed in weaving fanciful ornaments for
 “ their hair; games of chance were encouraged;
 “ their food was alternately of their own country
 “ and European; and they were indulged in all
 “ their little humours, and kept in the utmost
 “ spirits.

“ spirits.’ Another person had said,—‘ the
 “ sailors were flogged out of the hearing of the
 “ Africans, lest it should depress their spirits.’
 “ He wished not to say that such descriptions were
 “ wilful misrepresentations ; if they were not, it
 “ proved that prejudice was capable of spreading
 “ a film over the eyes thick enough to occasion
 “ total blindness. Other accounts, however, and
 “ from men of the greatest veracity, made it ap-
 “ pear, that instead of apartments for those poor
 “ wretches, instead of those comfortable conve-
 “ niences above described, they were placed in
 “ niches, and along the decks in such a manner
 “ that it is impossible for any one to pass among
 “ them, however careful he might be, without
 “ treading upon them : and Sir George Yonge
 “ had testified, that in a slave ship, on which he
 “ went on board, and which had not completed
 “ her cargo by two hundred and fifty, instead of
 “ the scent of frankincense being perceptible to
 “ the nostrils, the stench was intolerable : the
 “ allowance of water was so deficient, that the
 “ Slaves were frequently found gasping for life,
 “ and almost suffocated ; and the *pulse* which they
 “ were favoured with as a luxury of their own
 “ country, was absolutely *English horse beans*.

“ As

“ As Mr. Norris had said the *song* and *dance*
 “ was *promoted*, he could not suffer it to pass
 “ without acquainting the House with the mean-
 “ ing of the word *promoted*, as there used. The
 “ way the *song* and the *dance* were *promoted*,
 “ was by severe whipping, when the poor wretches
 “ would not take voluntary exercise; their
 “ dances and their songs afforded them so much
 “ merriment, that the moment they were ceased
 “ to be promoted, tears, sighs, and melancholy
 “ succeeded.”

3. *Situation of Slaves in the West Indies.*

It is by no means intended under this head
 to insist upon the various abuses which are
 admitted, in point of fact, to exist in the Slave
 system, although indeed it might very fairly
 be argued that many of those iniquities are so
 essentially connected with the unlimited power
 of masters, and the radical difference of the
 races, as to furnish a view of certain plain and
 inseparable features of the West Indian society.
 We are only at present to consider those pecu-
 liarities in the circumstances of Negro Slavery
 which must for ever distinguish it from every
 other kind of human servitude, and which bear
 “ directly

directly upon the question of Abolition, by leading us to determine whether the existing plan of cultivation admits of any extension, either in point of policy or of justice. The following picture is drawn by a writer*, who to great natural acuteness and extensive information on general subjects, adds the advantage of a long residence in the Sugar Colonies, and his sketch is adopted as of unquestionable accuracy by the warmest enemies of the Abolition. †

“ That West India Slaves, whether French or English, are the property of their master, and transferable by him, like his inanimate effects ; that in general he is absolute arbiter of the extent and the mode of their labour, and of the quantum of subsistence to be given in return for it ; and that they are disciplined and punished at his discretion, direct privation of life or member excepted ; these are prominent features, and sufficiently known, of this state of Slavery.

“ Nor is the manner in which the labour of Slaves is conducted, a matter of less publicity. Every man who has heard any thing of West India affairs, is acquainted with the term *negro-drivers* ;

* Crisis of the Sugar Colonies, p. 8.

† See Mr. Dallas's interesting and very amusing “ History of the Maroons.”

drivers; and knows, or may know, that the Slaves in their ordinary field labour are *driven* to their work; and during their work, in the strict sense of the term, “driven,” as used in Europe; though this statement no more involves an intimation, that in practice the lash is incessantly, or with any needless frequency, applied to their backs, than the phrase “to drive a team of horses,” imports that the waggoner is continually smacking his whip. I use the comparison merely as descriptive, and not in censure of the West India system; with the accusation, or defence, of which, in a moral view, my argument, let it be observed, has no necessary connection. It is enough for my purpose, that in point of fact, no feature of West India Slavery is better known, or less liable to controversy or doubt, than this established method in which field labour is enforced.

“But a nearer and more particular view of this leading characteristic, may be necessary to those who have never seen a gang of Negroes at their work.

“ When employed in the labour of the field, as, for example, in *holeing a cane piece*, i. e. in turning up the ground with hoes into parallel trenches, for the reception of the cane plants, the slaves, of both sexes, from twenty, perhaps to fourscore in number, are drawn out in a line, like troops on a parade, each with a hoe in his hand, and close to them in the rear is stationed a driver, or several drivers, in number duly proportioned to that of the gang. Each of these drivers, who are always the most active and vigorous Negroes on the estate, has in his hand, or coiled round his neck, from which by extending the handle it can be disengaged in a moment, a long thick and strongly plaited whip, called a *cart whip*, the report of which is as loud, and the lash as severe, as those of the whips in common use with our waggoners, and which he has authority to apply at the instant, when his eye perceives an occasion, without any previous warning. Thus disposed, their work begins, and continues without interruption for a certain number of hours, during which, at the peril of the drivers, an adequate portion of land must be holed.

“ As

“As the trenches,” (continues our author), are generally rectilinear, and the whole line of holers advance together, it is necessary that every hole or section of the trench should be finished in equal time with the rest; and if any one or more Negroes were allowed to throw in the hoe with less rapidity or energy than their companions in other parts of the line, it is obvious that the work of the latter must be suspended; or else, such part of the trench as is passed over by the former, will be more imperfectly formed than the rest. It is, therefore, the business of the drivers, not only to urge forward the whole gang with sufficient speed, but sedulously to watch that all in the line, whether male or female, old or young, strong or feeble, work as nearly as possible in equal time, and with equal effect. The tardy stroke must be quickened, and the languid invigorated, and the whole line made to *dress*, in the military phrase, as it advances. No breathing time, no resting on the hoe, no pause of languor, to be repaid by brisker exertion on return to work, can be allowed to individuals: All must work, or pause together.”

The author afterwards illustrates the same facts by the examples of other sorts of field work, and it is only necessary to add, that the evidence collected by the Committee, as well as the accounts of various writers personally acquainted with the subject, would have justified a much more highly coloured sketch than the one here quoted.

Such being the nature of the Slave Trade, from the purchase, or theft, or plunder of the Negroes in their own country, to their distribution and settlement on the West Indian farms, of which they constitute the live stock, it is obvious that the burden of the argument is necessarily thrown upon those who would defend so inhuman, so unnatural a commerce. We proceed shortly to consider the reasonings which they have advanced, after remarking in general how much they have perplexed one of the shortest and simplest questions that can be stated, by confounding with it topics perfectly extraneous ; as for example, the chimerical and insane projects of emancipation which have been adopted in France, to the destruction of the Europeans, and the lasting misery of the Negroes themselves, and which have, in their consequences

consequences, furnished the friends of the Abolition with some of their most powerful arguments against the continuation of the traffic.

The defence of the Slave Trade is pursued upon two grounds, as it relates either to Africa—or to the interests of the nations engaged in its operations. We shall consider these two branches of the question in their order.

I. Question of the Slave Trade, as it relates to Africa.

1. It has actually been maintained, that the Slave Trade is necessary for the civilization of Africa, and that the nature of the Negroes requires that they should be transplanted to America, and there civilized by main force. Of this extravagance the writings of the French Colonists are full; we find such topics resorted to by an author of no less name than Barré St. Venant, and the general position, that the Negro Slave is happier than the European Peasant, has been maintained by almost every writer, both French and English, who has defended the traffic. It would be wasting time to refute such unaccountable doctrines, we shall
only

only state the argument in the words of its authors, and then give, by way of counterpart, the similar reasoning which has been urged to exculpate the Spaniards from the charge of having treated the native Americans with any sort of cruelty.—The following is M. Barré St. Venant's defence of the Slave Trade.

“ It will hardly be believed that motives of
 “ humanity alone, induced the Spaniards to
 “ procure African Negroes, for the assistance
 “ of the feeble Mexicans in the cultivation of
 “ their colonies.—Perceiving that the con-
 “ quered people were too weak to endure labour
 “ in their native country—then perceiving that
 “ the Negroes, living under a scorching sun,
 “ would find themselves more agreeably cir-
 “ cumstanced in a temperate climate—finally
 “ perceiving, that from time immemorial,
 “ slavery subsisted in Africa, with more horrid
 “ features than in any other country, they
 “ thought it would be rendering them a good
 “ service to take them from thence, and make
 “ labourers of them.”—(Vid. Colonies Mo-
 “ dernes, p. 40.)

The following is Campomanes's vindication of his countrymen, literally translated from the original Spanish.

“ The

“ The author of the ‘ European Settle-
 “ ments,’ has retailed many fables of this kind
 “ against the humanity of the Spaniards,
 “ whereas, if he had taken the trouble of
 “ reading our annals, he would have found
 “ reason to admire, rather than to blame. It
 “ it is fair to draw any inference from the con-
 “ duct of the Spaniards towards their Slaves
 “ to their treatment of the Indians, it would be
 “ easy to demonstrate that they excel all other
 “ nations in humanity, and this is in fact uni-
 “ versally admitted. If any one can be accused
 “ of having acted with severity, it was Am-
 “ brose Alfingar, in Terra Firma, a German, who
 “ came over with a licence from Charles II. and
 “ he is the only person who can be charged with
 “ cruelty.” — *Educação Popular*, II. 172.)

2. The defenders of the Slave Trade in
 this country, have not pleaded their cause
 quite so high : they have, however, supported
 its justice upon abstract principles. They have
 maintained that Slavery has in all ages of the
 world existed, and that no country has ever
 been discovered in which traces of it might
 not be found—as if any degree of antiquity or
 universality could justify an atrocious crime :
 they

they have (may we not say) *impiously* taxed the blessed doctrines of our holy religion, with lending their sanction to the institution—as if any ingenuity could twist the gospel of peace, and charity, and meekness, into a communion with the traffic in human flesh, and the wholesale destruction of innocent life. But these arguments in defence of the trade, may fairly be thrown into the same class with the declamations just now quoted in its praise: they prove a great deal too much, and have therefore been speedily abandoned by the more skilful advocates of the cause.

3. In arguing this branch of the question, great reliance has been placed upon the manner in which Negroes are procured: it has been maintained that the chief sources of the supply are the wars of the native tribes, and the peculiar nature of their criminal jurisprudence. We shall for the present admit, that there are no other means of obtaining slaves; that no man ever sells his home-born Slave, unless in case of famine; that the Slave market on the coast, never holds out temptations sufficiently powerful to encourage kidnapping in those barbarous communities, where
the

the most imperfect form of police subsists; that, in short, no Negroes are ever brought to the traders by the native Merchants, who have not either been taken in war, or condemned in the courts of justice to be sold for their crimes; lastly, we shall admit that there is no impropriety in a civilized nation lending its countenance to the savage practice of condemning to perpetual bondage and exile, prisoners of war, and persons accused of a crime which has no existence. It is evident that the argument for the traffic gains infinitely by all these gratuitous concessions.—Yet let us see in what state they leave it.

“ If (Mr. Brougham observes *) the Slaves captured in war, and the criminals condemned for witchcraft, are sold at a good price, is it not obvious that a premium is held out for the encouragement of wars, and of futile accusations? It is said, that if the Slave market were shut up for ever, the same wars and accusations would continue; with this difference, that captives would be butchered, and criminals put to death.

No doubt, the Abolition of the Slave Trade would neither eradicate war, nor false

* Colonial Policy, vol. II. p. 564.

accusations from the States of Africa. To a certain degree, both of these evils would continue in that barbarous quarter of the globe, because both of them are produced by other causes, as well as by the Slave Trade; by other passions, as well as by avarice. It may, however, fairly be estimated, that more of the wars and false accusations which keep Africa in a state of discord and barbarism, are engendered by the temptations of the Slave Market than by any other cause. Does any one deny, that the common receivers of stolen goods encourage, beyond any other cause, the commission of robberies and thefts? Yet the expulsion of every common receiver from a country (were such a thing possible), would not abolish either of those crimes. But surely nothing could be more absurd, than to dispute the propriety of taking all possible steps for rooting out such pests of society, merely because a complete cure of the evil would not be effected by this remedy.

As to the argument, that massacres and executions would be the consequence of the abolition, we may be sure that, for a few campaigns of African warfare, or a few terms of
the

the African courts, victories and convictions would end in the death of some men, who would otherwise have been sold. This would be exactly the consequence of the previous demand for men occasioned by the trade. It always takes some time before the supply can accomodate itself to the varied demands of any market, whether the variation be that of increase or of diminution.

No measure, surely, could be better calculated to preserve the lives of wild beasts in any well stocked country, than the prohibition of exportation to foreign menageries ; yet, for a few seasons, this law would certainly increase the number of animals devoted to death ; because those whose habits had been formed by the old practice, would continue to hunt, and many would still hunt for amusement, or the gratification of cruel passions : and as the price of wild beasts would fall in the home market, men would grow careless of preserving their lives ; nay, more being for some time caught than the supply of the home menageries required, many must of necessity be killed. But the supply would soon accomodate itself to the lesser demand ; and though some men continued to hunt for
pastime,

pastime, and infinitely smaller number of beasts would be taken and killed than formerly. This case is precisely that of the African Slave Trade.

The Abolition of this traffic will diminish the demand for Slaves by seventy or a hundred thousand. The Slave Trade carried on by the East, through Egypt, is extremely trifling. In Cairo, which is the Slave market of Egypt, and the entrepôt of other countries, there are only sold annually from fifteen hundred to two thousand Negroes ; and the price never exceeds one hundred crowns, the average being about ten pounds sterling ; not above one fifth of the price in the West Indies, and not one half of the price on the West Coast—*Sonnini's Voyage in Egypt, chap. XXXVI.—Report of Committee 1789, Part VI.—Edwards' West Indies, B. IV. c. 2.*

Besides, it is universally admitted, that no comparison whatever can be drawn between the eastern and western Slave Traffic. The treatment of the Negroes in those oriental nations which employ them as Slaves, is mild and gentle : they are used entirely for domestic, and even honourable purposes : they soon acquire
their

their freedom with the favour of their masters, and partake as much of the refinement and comforts of society in which they reside, as our menial Negroes do in Europe.—*Sonnini, chap. XXXVI.—Bruce's Travels, vol. I. p. 392.*

It is maintained by some, that the Slave Trade, both in the east and west of Africa, has abolished the use of human flesh, and the practice of human sacrifices.—*Bruce I. 392.* But, besides that, this fact appears extremely repugnant to the character of the Negroes, which the best and latest travellers have given, (*Park's Travels, chap. XX. XXI. XXII.*) admitting all the advantage just now stated to have been gained from the Slave Traffic, do we by the instant Abolition of this Traffic, lose any of the steps already gained in improving Africa? For who can be so foolish as to imagine, that the Africans, in whatever manner they have been civilized, will ever return to their ancient habits of cannibalism and human sacrifices? Let us, then, by abolishing the trade, secure and carry forward those very improvements which the trade may have been the means of beginning.”

* The authorities which Mr. Brougham quotes in this argument, are all strenuous defenders of the Slave Trade.

4. But

4. But it is said, that whatever evils may result from the Slave Trade, the Abolition of the commerce by any one nation would not at all benefit the African Tribes ; that if Britain were to give up all connection with the coast, other states, as France and Holland, would take up the business ; and that the Negroes would then be transported, and enslaved, by the French or Dutch instead of the British.

The answer to this sophism is sufficiently short and obvious. If the Abolition of the Slave Trade means any thing, it is that the importation of Negroes into any British Colony shall thereby be prevented, whether in French, Dutch, or British vessels. The share of the Trade which may fall to France and Holland, upon our giving it up, can only be that part which we formerly carried on for the supply of their colonies. The chief drain of Africa is occasioned by the demands of our own islands, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade is intended to stop up that drain. But further, may not the same argument be used by the other nations engaged in the traffic ? It has in fact been used by them—the French and Dutch Colonists have repeatedly urged the in-utility

utility of their giving up the Slave Trade, on this ground, that it would be immediately engrossed by the British ; so that a trade of iniquity and shame is to be supported to all eternity, because each of the parties engaged in it *may* say, that the others *might* continue it !—The use of the same argument, at the same time, and in the very same terms, by all the parties, is a complete demonstration of its absurdity. There is a language more becoming the public virtue and dignity of this great nation. “ We have been the chief traders, that
 “ is, the ring-leaders in the crime—let us be
 “ the first to repent, and set an example of
 “ amendment.”

Having examined the only arguments that have ever been invented to palliate the enormities of the Slave Trade, as they affect the African nations ; the advocates of the Abolition have undoubtedly made out their case. For, if what is most improperly denominated a trade appears clearly to be a national crime, can any thing be urged in its defence upon grounds of expediency ? Do we vindicate an act of violence ; a cruel, mercenary murder, for example, by proving that it has been profitable ?

If

If the wages of national guilt are a sufficient vindication of it, let us at least not lose the benefits of this 'golden maxim ; let us be consistent with ourselves, and employ our navy in a general system of piracy upon all the lesser powers of Europe—Or if we are afraid of them, let us enrich ourselves at the expence of those insignificant states in Asia, and the north of Africa, who send any vessels to sea. The advantages of such a scheme are infinitely more undeniable than any that have ever been ascribed to the Slave Trade by its warmest advocates : the guilt of the transaction would be less, in the proportion of robbery to torture and murder.

We shall, however, suppose it possible that the argument against the iniquity of the Slave Trade has failed, or that the criminality of any measure is not to be weighed against its expediency, and we shall now try the question upon this ground.—Let us then examine the reasons which have been urged in favour of the traffic from its utility to the states engaged in it. These can only profit by the traffic in two ways ; by the benefits of the carriage of Slaves—and by the opportunity of supplying their colonies with hands.

II. *Question*

II. *Question of the Slave Trade as it relates to the Interests of those directly engaged in it.*

1. It has been maintained that the African Trade opens a wide channel for the beneficial investment of capital, and that the Abolition by suddenly throwing out of employment so great a portion of stock, would give a serious blow to the commercial resources of the country.

In order to answer this, it will be sufficient to shew that the trade does not occupy any considerable part of the national capital—that the profits are of the description least beneficial to the country, and that the same capital, if excluded from this employment, would immediately and easily find a more advantageous vent.

According to the public accounts laid before Parliament from the Custom-house books, it appears that the official value of the exports to Africa during ten years, ending 1800, was £9,301,941, or £930,194 per annum. The average value of the imports from Africa

c

during

during the same period, was £ 83,725, leaving the sum of £ 846,469, for the capital employed in the Slave Trade; and although we should allow that the official value is a third less than the real value of goods, the sum would not amount to more than £ 1,128,625, or not one *thirty-fourth* part of the average capital employed in the exports of the country during the same period of time.—And this is the trade which affords a demand for such a proportion of the National Stock, that its cessation must be attended with the instantaneous ruin of the British Commerce.

The profits of the Negro traffic are universally admitted to be extremely uncertain, and are therefore very high in successful speculations. This must be the case in all gambling trades, the few who succeed reaping the benefits of the numerous failures. But the returns, even in the most advantageous transactions, are more slow than those of the most distant branches of foreign commerce. The Slave Trade, therefore, draws that part of the national capital which it employs, to the occupation of all others most uncertain and productive of most remote benefits. The other branches of
our

our traffic are infinitely more sure, and possess the advantage most of all conducive to the public good, that of much quicker returns.

The commerce which is carried on with Africa for her natural produce, has been uniformly increasing since the beginning of the last century, in spite of all the obstacles which the Slave Trade has constantly opposed to the civilization and culture of that unhappy continent. The African produce is various, and of the descriptions most in request among ourselves, and the nations with whom we trade. Its quantity may be indefinitely augmented in proportion to the demand which our capitalists furnish, and every increase in that quantity must necessarily be attended with an extension of civilization, and a developement of new commercial resources.

But even if no augmentation of the legitimate African Trade were to follow the Abolition of the Negro traffic, the various other branches of our foreign commerce, which are understocked with capital, would afford a ready and profitable employment for the small pitance thrown out of the Slave Trade. Can any one imagine that our powers of extending our

commercial resources, have so exactly reached their utmost point, that we could devise no occupation for *one thirty-fifth* part of the stock now vested in foreign trade?—How then does the capital which every year is rapidly accumulating, find employment in the traffic of the next year? Let the difference between the capitals vested in commerce at any two periods of our history be considered, and then let it be demanded whether the possession of new wealth does not bring along with it the faculty of opening new channels for its employment. The average of the capital employed in the exports of Great Britain during the three years, ending 1800, was above fifty millions. The same average during the three years immediately preceding, was less than thirty-eight millions and a half. How then was employment *suddenly* found for above eleven millions and a half? How could the country sustain the shock of this sum floating in its markets in search of employment, when the shifting of a tenth part of the sum from the Abolition of the Slave Trade, is deemed an experiment too dangerous to be tried? It may truly be asserted that very few changes ever take place in the political arrangements

ments of the state, or in its measures of commercial œconomy, which are not attended with a much greater shifting of capital, than the Abolition of the Slave Trade, however sudden, could have effected in the periods of its greatest prosperity—How much the proportion of that traffic to the whole foreign commerce of the empire has varied at different periods, may be estimated from this consideration, that in the three years, ending 1787, the sum vested in it, amounted to one twenty-sixth part of the exports; whereas in the ten years, ending 1800, the same sum did not amount to a thirty-fourth part.

And here it may be proper to remark the incompatibility of the argument, that foreign nations will take up the Slave Trade, if we leave it, with the argument that the Abolition will throw capital out of employment. From whence are those nations to draw the capital which they may throw into the Negro traffic? Certainly every pound that they vest in this line, must be taken from some other channel in which it was formerly employed, and must leave a blank in that channel. This blank must now be supplied by a British pound, formerly employed

employed in the African Trade. So that the argument about displacing capital, loses force exactly in proportion to the strength of the argument about foreigners benefiting by our Abolition of it.

It is evident, therefore, that the capital vested in the Slave Trade is extremely trifling; that no method of employing it could be devised less beneficial to the country; and that even if it were much more extensive, an easy and profitable opening would be found for it, were the trade instantly abolished.

2. The Advocates of the Slave Trade have insisted, with great earnestness, on the necessity of the Traffic to the support of the British Navy. This argument will be best answered by examining the proportion of the seamen and tonnage employed in the Negro Trade to the whole seamen and tonnage employed in our foreign commerce—the proportion of seamen and tonnage employed by the capital vested in the Slave Trade, to the Seamen and Tonnage employed by an equal capital vested in other branches of traffic—and the proportion of the deaths among seamen engaged in the Slave Trade, to the deaths among seamen engaged in all the other departments of our navigation.

The.

The average number of tons engaged in the African Trade, during ten years, ending 1800, was 30,995, including the trade between Britain and Africa, for goods, being less than the fifty third part of the tonnage employed in the foreign export trade of Great Britain alone, exclusive of the trade of Ireland, and of the whole coasting trade of the United Kingdoms. In 1800 the shipping belonging to the whole of the British Empire was calculated at 1,905,438 tons; of this the tonnage employed in the African trade does not amount to a sixty-third part. The whole seamen belonging to the empire were estimated at 143,661. The number of those employed in the African trade never amounted to a twenty-seventh part of this sum, even including the direct African commerce, and taking the whole calculation upon the grounds of the highest proportion of seamen alledged by the Liverpool merchants. And this is the trade which supports the British Navy—a trade which employs not a sixtieth of our Tonnage—not a twenty-third part of our seamen!

A thousand pounds employed in the African trade requires no more than 30 tons of shipping; according to the average of three years ending 1800. Employed in the other foreign trade of
this

this country, the same sum requires above 50 tons, according to the like average. It is true, that an equal capital, employed in the African trade, requires a greater proportion of seamen than in any other known traffic; but this is easily explained, by attending to the next object of inquiry, the comparative mortality of this and of the other branches of commerce, to those engaged in them.

It is well known, that seamen uniformly shew the greatest alacrity to leave Slave ships for men of war, whilst in every other branch of trade the very reverse takes place; this is a strong presumption, at least, that the traffic is not remarkably healthy. When king's ships find it necessary to take hands from the Negro vessels, they frequently search whole crews without being able to get a man fit for service, those whom they procure are almost always cruel and untractable, and seldom free from infectious diseases. But the muster rolls of Liverpool and Bristol will be deemed unexceptionable evidence on this point. From these it appears, that of 12,263 persons employed in the Slave Trade, 2643 are lost in a year; whereas of the same number employed in the West India trade, not above 325 perish in the
same

same time ; in other words, the Slave Trade is above eight times more fatal to the seamen employed in it than the West India trade, which cannot surely be deemed the most wholesome of all the branches of our foreign commerce *. There is no wonder, then, that the African trade should require a greater proportion of hands than the other kinds of traffic ; but there is some reason for wondering that an employment so eminently fatal to our seamen should have been extolled as the nursery of the British Navy.

Whether, therefore, we compare the shipping and seamen required for the Slave Trade with the whole shipping and seamen of the empire, or attend to the relative proportions of tonnage supported by equal capitals in that and in the other kinds of commerce, or view the comparative loss of sailors incurred by the prosecution of this and of the other branches of foreign navigation, we shall be convinced, by plain undeniable facts, that no persons ever committed a greater abuse of language than those who praise the Slave Trade as beneficial to the naval force of Great Britain.

* The Report of the Committee, 1789, contains a variety of other evidence on this subject. See particularly Mr. Clarkson's Letter in Part II.

It has now been demonstrated, that the arguments in favour of the African Trade, as directly necessary either to the commercial interests or to the maritime power of this country, rest upon no tenable grounds. Let us proceed to examine whether the only remaining defence that has been urged is better founded.

III. *Question of the Slave Trade, as it relates to the interests of the West Indian Colonies.*

I. It is asserted that the labours of West Indian cultivation cannot be borne by Europeans; that the constitutions of the Negroes are admirably adapted to the task and the climate, and that they can only be made to work by the lash, in a state of slavery.

We shall admit all these propositions, and what does the argument in favour of the *Slave Trade* gain? No one is senseless enough to propose that the Colonies should be cultivated by Europeans, or that the Slaves already settled there, should be emancipated; the question is, whether any more should be imported? And it is surely no answer to this, that the Slaves already in the islands are necessary for their cultivation. The traffic has existed in defiance of every just principle, in violation of every humane

humane

humane feeling; the fruit of our iniquity has been a great and rich empire in America. Let us be satisfied with our gains, and being rich, let us try to become righteous—not indeed by giving up one sugar cane of what we have acquired, but by continuing in our present state of overflowing opulence, and preventing the farther importation of Slaves. It is no innovation to abolish a trade which tends hourly to change our situation—the present condition of the Colonies can only be maintained by prohibiting any sudden and violent increase of the Slave Population. But it is alleged—

2. That the importation of Negroes is necessary for keeping up the stock already on hand; in other words, that our treatment of those men in the West Indies continually diminishes their numbers, and prevents their natural increase. So that it is justifiable to go on kidnapping, or purchasing (it matters not which), in order to procure a sufficient number of men, whom we may murder. We shall not, however, view the question in this light: we shall not at all inquire whether such a ground of defence is tenable; it will be sufficient to prove that there is no necessity whatever for continuing the Slave Trade, in order to supply the

the vacancies occasioned by deaths in the West Indies, but that, on the contrary, the Abolition of the Traffic must necessarily be attended with an immense natural increase of the Negro population already in the Islands.

The two important islands of Jamaica and Barbadoes contain nearly three fourths of the whole Slaves in the British Colonies; let us attend to the history of their population, as contained in documents furnished by the agents and governments of those islands, the persons most hostile to the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The number of the Negroes in Jamaica in 1768, was 167,000; in 1774 it had increased to 193,000; and in 1787, to 256,000. The public returns of importation for the periods between 1768 and 1774, and between 1775 and 1787, when compared with the above statement of the total increase, shew that the average annual excess of deaths above births, during the whole nineteen years, was only seven-eighths per cent.; that the actual excess during the first six of those years was more than one per cent.; during the last thirteen years, only three fifths per cent., that during the years prior to 1768, the excess of deaths was considerably greater

greater than it has been since ; that this excess has been constantly diminishing, even from year to year ; that during the thirteen years ending 1787, hurricanes and want of provisions destroyed above 15,000 Slaves, for which no allowance is made in the above estimate of the excess of deaths ; and that no allowance is made for the deaths among newly imported Negroes, occasioned by diseases contracted on the voyage, as well as by the seasoning. There cannot therefore remain the smallest doubt, that instead of any excess of deaths above births at this time, the natural state of the Slave population in Jamaica is that of an excess of births above deaths, and that were the importation of Negroes immediately to cease, the stock already in the island would not only keep itself up, but gradually increase by breeding, even although the treatment of the Slaves were to continue in all respects the same as it has hitherto been.

From a similar comparison between the progress of the Slave Population and of the importation, in Barbadoes, as stated in the public accounts, after allowing for the hurricanes of 1781, it appears that the excess of deaths above births has been constantly on the decrease ; that in the four years, ending 1786, this excess was

less

less than one third per cent. ; that more than this excess may be accounted for by the exportation of Slaves, which has always taken place from the island, and which is not estimated in the above calculation, and that no allowance is made for the deaths among newly imported Negroes, by the diseases of the voyage and of the seasoning. Hence it follows, that the stock of Slaves in Barbadoes may be kept up, and even increased by breeding, were the Slave Trade instantly abolished. The same general conclusion may be applied to the other islands, as far as we are furnished with returns of their population and importations ; some of them, indeed, are well known to require no supply whatever, and to trust entirely to the natural means of increasing their *stock*.

It is admitted, on all hands, that the disproportion of the sexes in the imported Slaves, is the chief cause of their slow natural increase in our islands. This disproportion must evidently cease at the end of one generation from the period of the Abolition, and the natural increase will, after that, go on with redoubled velocity. The other causes which have been specified as retarding the augmentation of the

Negro

Negro Population, are the infectious diseases imported from Africa by the new Slaves, and the effects arising from scanty food and rigorous treatment; the former circumstance must obviously terminate with the trade; the latter, we shall immediately shew, cannot be expected to continue after the Abolition shall be effected.

It may therefore be stated, as an undeniable truth, drawn from the evidence of public records, and of documents produced by those most hostile to the cause of the Abolition, that if the Slave Trade were instantly abolished, and if no reform whatever were to be effected in the laws, manners, and economy of the West Indies, the stock of Negroes already in the islands would be kept up, and even gradually increased, by breeding.

3. But the friends of the traffic proceed a step farther, and lead us to the real, substantial reason of their defence. The new and understocked plantations, say they, could not be brought into culture, without farther importations of slaves, and none of the plans which have been formed for the extension of West Indian property; by clearing tracks of woody country, could be realized, were the supply of
Negroes

Negroes stopped. It is, indeed, impossible to deny this position. But the reader of the foregoing pages is intreated to consider, whether the advocates of the Abolition lie under any necessity of proving that the traffic is beneficial to no one class of the community, in order to make out their case against its continuance. If they have proved its radical iniquity in the amplest sense of the word—if they have shewn that those actually engaged in it might find various innocent methods of employing their capital, with much more safety to themselves, and far greater benefit to the country—if they have demonstrated that the trade is not in the smallest degree necessary for maintaining the West Indian Colonies in their present state of splendid opulence, and, of consequence, that no injury can result from its Abolition to the wealth already acquired by the planters: is it not a most extravagant demand to require that they should admit the propriety of supporting such a commerce, merely because some men have built upon the hopes of its continuance, their expectations of acquiring or increasing their fortunes?—Surely it is abundantly sufficient to have proved that the termination of
by

by far the most criminal traffic which men ever carried on, will be attended with no injury to interests already in existence, although it should be admitted that the prospects of a few individuals may be disappointed by the change.

But we are told that those persons will be injured who have purchased plantations, with the view of extending their cultivation. They, however (as Mr. Brougham remarks*), “are only subjected to the want of what they might otherwise have gained, or at the utmost to a trifling inconvenience. They still possess an equivalent for their purchase-money. If they are not satisfied with the slow accumulation by means of natural increase, they may sell again, and remove their stock to another channel. They cannot now fulfil their expectations of acquiring a rapid fortune by clearing the land, because the price of negroes will rise, or rather, for some years, there will be no possibility of purchasing slaves. But this is no real or absolute loss which can justify their demands of an equivalent. Suppose that the British Cabinet were disposed to annul the Methuen treaty; would it be necessary first

* Col. Policy, vol. II, page 493.

to consult all those merchants who, on the faith of it, had removed to Portugal, or settled a correspondence with that country, or vested their stock in French wines, or bought woollens to supply the market of Lisbon? Or, suppose that the East Indian monopoly were abolished, would the holders of India stock have a claim for indemnification; or would the capitalists, who had laid out their money in shares of East India vessels, or in loans to captains and traders, have a right to demand compensation? But these cases are much more favourable to such claims than the one which we are considering. Suppose that a number of capitalists have vested their stock in the three *per cents.* at the end of a long war, from the full confidence that the value of the funded property will in a few months rise twenty or thirty *per cent.*; if the national honour is insulted, must all those stockholders be indemnified for their probable disappointment, before a war can be proclaimed? And can any stain be so deep on the honour and the character of the country, as the supporting of a traffic founded in treachery and blood? Can any measure attended with partial loss or disappointment-

appointment, be in its essence more just and necessary than the immediate wiping out of so foul a pollution? Can any policy be more contemptible than that which would refuse its sanction to such a measure, for fear of disappointing those men who had arranged their plans with the hopes of fattening upon the plunder of the public character and virtue?"

The stock which is gradually accumulated in the mother country, always finds new channels of employment, although the population increases much more slowly than the slave population of the colonies will increase, after the new importations are stopped. How then should the augmented wealth of colonial proprietors fail to obtain employment, when the field both of the colonies and the mother country—the colonial commerce, and all the foreign trade of Europe, are open to it?

4. The last hold to which the advocates of the Slave Trade have had recourse, is the right of the colonial legislatures.—Admitting everything which can be urged against the traffic, they observe, the Abolition of it belongs to the colonies themselves, and not to the British

Parliament, in which they are not represented.—This argument will, however, be sufficiently refuted, if we examine the foundation of the claim as a matter of right, and the probable consequence in point of fact, which will result from the admission of it.

The power of legislating for the Colonies has uniformly been exercised by Parliament from their first settlement to the present time; and the object of the laws thus made has frequently extended to matter of mere municipal regulation, as for example, the 5 George II. cap. 7. concerning the recovery of debts. In the American war this right of Parliament was objected to, in so far only as regards taxation, and if we wished to state, in the most ample terms, the general power of the mother country over the colonial commerce, we should have recourse to several of the manifestoes published by the North Americans during the rebellion. The declaratory act, which asserted the parliamentary right of legislation in all cases whatsoever, was only modified by 18 Geo. III. cap. 12, in so far as regarded taxation, and even the right of colonial taxation was expressly reserved,
 “ wherever

“ wherever it might be expedient to exercise it for the regulation of commerce.”

The statute 7 & 8 Will. III. cap. 22. sec. 9, therefore, which declares “ all laws made by the colonies void, if repugnant to English statutes extending to or naming them,” remains to this day in full force. Independent, indeed, of these considerations, we may remark the essential subordination of all colonial establishments, in the discussion of the most important imperial affairs? Does the Slave Trade interest the colonies more than the question of peace and war, which so often recurs? and is any colony ever consulted on such a discussion?

But it is of more importance to observe, that in the nature of things the mother country alone can reasonably be expected to abolish the Slave Trade. No assembly composed of Planters, and sitting in a Slave Colony, will ever, to the end of time, think for one moment of touching the traffic. Can we expect it? Can we blame the persons composing such bodies for their obstinate adherence to that system which ancient habits and prejudices, and the zeal of some intemperate men in attacking them, and the conduct of others, signalized by an insane and unprin-

unprincipled love of change, have conspired to render venerable in the eyes of every West Indian. If every sound reason did not concur to teach us the folly of entertaining such hopes, we might at once be convinced by a single consideration. How many independent legislatures are there in the West Indies? Let it be admitted that a few colonies relinquish the trade; can it be supposed that every other will join them, when the partial abolition in one settlement renders the continuance of it more profitable to the rest? Yet if any one colony refuse to concur, the same doctrines of colonial supremacy must render the forcing of the measure upon that one, as unjustifiable as the universal violation of the colonial rights. In fact, the colonial assemblies and the planters have spoken very plainly upon these matters, and given us a full view of what may be expected from their deliberations on the Abolition. To go no farther back than the year 1799, the petitions of the British West Indian Islands to Parliament contain the most open and explicit avowal of the rooted determination of the Planters and Assemblies to support the Slave Trade for ever,

as

as an integral part of the colonial system. The tenor of these addresses clearly evinces the absurdity of trusting the most trivial branch of the discussion to the colonies; and, that any one should have been found thoughtless enough, after such declarations, to propose leaving the whole matter to the decision of the Planters, would be astonishing, upon any other question than the present.

Whether, therefore, we consider the rights of Parliament, or the probability of the Colonies themselves undertaking the necessary duty, we must equally be convinced, that the former alone can be entrusted with the final discussion of this important question.

5. Having by the foregoing statements exposed the total insufficiency of the arguments which the advocates of the Slave Trade urge in its defence, we are now to consider the direct effects of the traffic upon the wealth, the manners, and the security of the West Indian Colonies.

That the industry of a free man working for himself, or, which is the same thing, for hire, is much more productive than the labour of a
Slave

Slave toiling for a master, is a proposition so easily deduced from every principle of human nature, and so uniformly confirmed by the experience of all countries, as to require no illustration in this place. It may be proper, however, merely to copy the statement of the Assembly of Grenada respecting the comparative efficacy of the industry which a Negro exerts for himself, and of the work which is extorted from him by the lash of the driver.

“ Out of crop time it is the general practice
 “ to allow the Slaves one afternoon in every
 “ week, which, with such hours as they chuse
 “ to work on Sundays, affords them time
 “ amply sufficient for the cultivation of their
 “ own provision grounds ; and it is to be ob-
 “ served, that although the Negroes are al-
 “ lowed the afternoon only of a day in every
 “ week, yet *a Negro will do as much work*
 “ *in that afternoon, when employed for his*
 “ *own benefit, as in a whole day, when em-*
 “ *ployed in his master's service.*”—Report
 of Committee, 1789, Part III. Grenada and St.
 Kitt's Answers to Query 9.

It follows most clearly, from this position, that the nearer a Slave is permitted to approach the condition of a voluntary labourer, in gentleness of treatment, and comfortable accommodation, the more productive will his work become. A state of despair, not of industry, is the never-failing consequence of severe chastisement, and the constant repetition of the torture only serves to blunt the sensibility of the nerves, and disarm the punishment of its terrors. The body is injured, and the mind becomes as little willing, as the limbs are able to exert. Bad food, scanty support of every kind, constant exposure to the extremities of the weather, must weaken the strength and exhaust the constitution even of a Creole Negro. Want of rest, which those men can bear, or appear to bear, with miraculous indifference, must ere long wear them out. Both their bodies and their minds must sooner become incapable of labour than those of voluntary workmen, who have constantly before them the strongest possible motives to activity; and whilst complicated ill usage is rapidly destroying the lives of the sufferers, it must evidently diminish the
productive

productive powers of the exertions which the survivors continue to make.

The facts which have repeatedly been laid before the world, prove to a demonstration the truth of these remarks. It is established beyond all doubt, that the most unprofitable plantations are not always those of which the soil is unfruitful or incommodiously situated, but uniformly those, which are cultivated by Negroes subjected to a cruel and stingy system of management; that the most laborious duty is performed by the best fed and most indulged slaves; that the more nearly the Negro is permitted to approach the condition of freedom in his enjoyments, his privileges, and his habits, the more alacrity does he shew in performing the task assigned to him. Yet, in spite of this uniform experience, so few experiments have been tried of the mild and profitable system of management, that those plantations into which it has been introduced are pointed out as remarkable. The exception to the general rule is not found in that estate, of which the proprietor prefers the commission of cruelty and injustice to the pursuit of his evident advantage, but in that estate, of which the owner or superintendant pursues

shows the easiest and most profitable system of management, notwithstanding its moral rectitude. There appear, then, to be certain bad principles inherent in the human heart, certain blind passions and movements of caprice, which constantly impel men, in certain circumstances, to a line of conduct as obviously inconsistent with their interests as repugnant to their duty.

It is not the intention of these observations to insinuate any thing against the West-Indian Planters, a class of men, whose general respectability is equal to their wealth.—But the details of their estates, and the whole management of their Slaves, are certainly committed to another order of society, extremely different in their character and habits. The overseers of plantations, whose interests are not immediately affected by the state of the concern, are surely not the men most likely to be careful of the Negroes, so long as the blanks occasioned by their bad management can be speedily supplied at the expence of their masters. Some plan is therefore necessary to attract the attention of proprietors, and fix it steadily upon their best interests. Both they and their overseers are most likely to be roused by that measure

measure which prevents the importation of new Slaves.

If this grand reformation is once adopted, there needs no farther interference with the structure of Colonial society, or the concerns of the West Indian proprietors.— Every man may now be left to pursue his own interest in his own way. Few will continue so insane as to maltreat and work out their stock, when they can no longer fill up the blanks occasioned by their cruelty, or their inhuman and short-sighted policy. A great increase of wealth, and a rapid augmentation of the Negro population, will be the consequence of this milder system ; for every proprietor of Slaves will attend to the breeding, as the only method by which his stock can be recruited, or his cultivation extended. The natural fecundity of the Negroes may be gathered, not only from their history in Africa, but still more strikingly from the estimates given in the Report of 1789, by which it appears, that, under all sorts of bad treatment, their numbers were kept up naturally in almost all the islands. The effects of a milder treatment may easily be imagined ; and if facts were necessary to describe those effects, we might refer to the statements

ments of Mr. Jefferson, in his celebrated work on Virginia. The experience of the United States has distinctly proved that the rapid multiplication of the Blacks in a natural way, will inevitably be occasioned by prohibiting their importation.

In a very few years all the Negroes in the West Indies will be Creoles, and all the masters will treat them with kind indulgence, for their own sakes. The enormous expence of new supplies (the greatest of all the burthens at present imposed on the Planter) will be intirely saved; the increase of Negroes by breeding will, on each estate, be in proportion to the accumulation of the proprietor's capital, and will, at the same time, furnish the means of bestowing that capital to most advantage, by clearing new grounds; the labour of the whole Negroes will be much more productive, and will, in some degree, resemble the industry of freemen; the Negro character will be improved; the way will be paved for the introduction of task work, already known in some of the South American Colonies, where the supply of Slaves is very scanty, and their treatment proportionally mild. The manners of the
other

other classes will also be ameliorated ; the non-residence, so much to be lamented at present, and the want of women, so fatal to the Colonial character, will gradually wear out ; the structure of West Indian society will more and more resemble that of the compact, firm, and respectable communities which compose the North American States.

The cruel treatment of the Slaves, is as unfavourable to the security, as to the wealth of the West Indies.

In strict conformity to those general principles which the best writers upon the human character have so successfully explained, and in broad defiance of all the absurd assertions, so confidently made by the apologists of the West Indian policy, it has been proved, by the united testimony of all the authors whose opportunities of information are most extensive, that the proneness of the Negroes to revolt, is in exact proportion to the cruelty and parsimony of their masters. The history of the Dutch colonies, contrasted with that of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, and (we may add) the history of the Spanish and Portuguese settlements, contrasted with that of all

all the others, furnishes abundant proofs of this statement, in itself so extremely probable, that it requires scarcely any support from experience to gain belief. In all rebellions, the plantations where the slaves were treated with most indulgence have suffered the least from the fury of insurrection; and, on the contrary, those estates have generally been the hotbeds of the rebellion, or the first objects of its attack, where the overseer was cruel, and the master avaricious or needy; where, of consequence, the slaves were hard-worked, scantily provided with necessaries, and severely or unjustly punished.

Upon this point let us hear Mr. Malouet, an old Colonial Magistrate, strongly attached to the Slave system. He describes the bad treatment of the Negroes in the Dutch settlements as the main cause of the rebellions so frequent in those parts, and illustrates the position from a variety of facts which came within his personal knowledge. “What a delightful reflexion,” (says he, after expatiating upon the good management of some Surinam planters) “What a delightful reflexion for a feeling and humane master to reap the reward of
“ his

“ his virtuous conduct ! For the Planters of
 “ whom I am speaking have their estates
 “ covered with a numerous population of
 “ Slaves, who are affectionately attached to
 “ their families—who are never known to re-
 “ bel—and exterminate the insurgent Negroes
 “ as often as they approach the Plantations.*”

This fact, it must be remembered, is stated with regard to the Colony, which, of all others, has suffered most constantly from Negro rebellion and desertion, and which has been, more than any other, the scene of domestic cruelty and oppression.

But the dangers arising to the security of the Colonies from the large proportion which the imported Africans bear to the whole Black population, equally deserve our serious attention. It requires no argument to prove that the newly imported Slaves must be infinitely more dangerous to the peace of the community than those who have been born in the islands. Whether the Africans, partly stolen, partly purchased (if there can be such a thing as buying human beings with a price), were originally

* *Mem. sur les Col.* tom v. *passim*, especially p. 152. and tom iii. p. 116.

free or enslaved in their own country, it is manifest that the forcible transportation of those men is a misery not to be described, and their exile an affliction which must embitter the rest of their lives; and surely, the difference of climate, and the exchange of a life of indolence for one of most severe labour, is a sufficient grievance in itself to inspire them with the utmost aversion for their new situation, even if their banishment had been voluntary. Although we should admit every extravagant assertion which has been made with respect to the entire felicity of the Slaves in the West Indies, we must be convinced that this picture of happiness can only apply to the lot of Creoles; for the bliss of a state of Paradise or Elysium forced upon a sentient being against his will, amounts exactly to a contradiction in terms.

Accordingly, what we might expect has uniformly happened; the imported Negroes have been the first to promote rebellion, and at all times the most refractory and discontented Slaves. To keep them in order, as well as to teach them work, all the resources of the cruelty that forms the main spring of the Slave system, have been exhausted. And even this severity of

itself is insufficient ; for it has been found necessary to incorporate the newly arrived Africans with the old stock, by degrees ; never filling a plantation with too great a number of the former, and dispersing them carefully among the latter, for the sake of security and discipline. Notwithstanding all these precautions, the spirit of adventure has always proved sufficiently strong to increase very rapidly the numbers of the new hands. In proportion as the facilities of the African trade have been great, and the capital turned to the Colonial agriculture extensive, the islands have been filled with hordes of native Africans, until, in some cases, the numbers of bad subjects were so much and so quickly augmented, while the necessary proportion of the Creoles was of course decreasing, that extensive and fatal rebellion has been the lamentable consequence. As the large stocks, small profits, and pecuniary incumbrances of the Dutch Planters, have rendered their Slaves remarkable for bad treatment, and continual though partial insurrection or desertion, the unexampled rapidity with which the French Colonies were peopled during the ten years previous to the Revolution, produced, in all the finest parts of those settlements, so fatal

a dif-

a disproportion between the two kinds of Negroes, as has shaken the whole West Indian system from its foundation, and rendered its existence a matter which many enlightened men rather wish for than expect. The history of the French Colonies furnishes as fatal a lesson of the evils arising from the disproportion of Creoles to imported Slaves, as the history of the Dutch Settlements exhibits a picture of the evils arising from the habitual severity and oppression of the masters.

The following statements, extracted from the work formerly quoted *, contain a sufficiently precise demonstration that the two great causes of the Revolution in St. Domingo have been—the rapid importation of Negroes during the previous years, and the extreme ill treatment of the whole stock of Slaves in that ill-fated colony.

“ The authors of the *Encyclopedie Methodique* estimate the Negro population of St. Domingo in 1775 at three hundred thousand, after making allowance for the falsity of the returns, which were only two hundred and forty thousand and ninety-five.—*Econ. Polit. et Diplom. tom. II. p. 140.*

* Brougham's Colonial Policy, vol. ii. p. 532.

The whole of the article of St. Domingo is to be found in *Ricard, Traite du Commerce, tom. III. p. 692*; so that either he is the author mentioned in the *Encyc. Method.* or he has borrowed from that author, or from the *Encyclopedie*.

Jeffreys, in his *West Indian Atlas*, gives the Negro population in 1764 at two hundred and six thousand.

Malouet states the numbers in 1775 at three hundred thousand. *Mem. sur les Colonies, IV. 117*; evidently making allowance for concealments.

Neckar states the number in 1779 at two hundred and forty-nine thousand and ninety-eight. *Finances, tom. III. chap. 13.*

It is fair to conclude, from these authorities, that in 1775 the official returns of Negroes in St. Domingo made the number amount to two hundred and fifty thousand. It was about four or five years after this period that the great importation began, which continued till the Revolution.

According to the official returns, the importation for the year 1787 was thirty thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine; and in 1788
twenty-

twenty-nine thousand five hundred and six.—*Rapport à l'Assemblée Legislative, 1790*; and *Edwards's St. Domingo, Appendix*.

The average export from Africa, in French vessels, about the same time, was reckoned at twenty thousand.—*Edwards's West Indies, Book IV. chap. 2*; *Report of Com. 1789, Part IV*. But the French state, themselves, that of the forty thousand exported from Africa by Britain, only thirteen thousand three hundred are retained in the British West Indies.—*Report of Com. 1789, Part VI*. If this is accurate, the greater part of the remaining twenty-six thousand seven hundred must go to the French Islands.

Malouet states the annual importation of Negroes into St. Domingo, in French vessels, at above eighteen thousand; and the importation by the British traders at twelve hundred and fifty. This statement was written in 1775, and republished in 1802; but no alteration appears to have been made on this passage.—*Mem. sur les Col. IV. 150*. The average export of France from Africa, is given at thirty thousand for 1786, 1787, and 1788, by Arnould.—*Balance de Commerce, Part II. Sect. III*. And Barré St. Venant gives
the

the importation between 1788 and 1791, (that is, in two years,) at sixty thousand.—*Colonies Modernes*, p. 81.

If, then, we consider the period from 1775 to 1790 as divided into two periods, one ending 1780, and the other ending 1790, we may reckon the average importation of the first period at fifteen thousand, on the lowest computation, and the average importation of the second period at about twenty-six thousand. The numbers in 1784 had only increased to two hundred and ninety-seven thousand and seventy-nine, according to the official returns.—*Laborie, Coffee-planter, Appendix, Art. IV.* The returns for 1789 give this number at four hundred and thirty-four thousand four hundred and twenty-nine. But this is fairly ascribed by Laborie to the alterations in the mode of obtaining these. It is utterly impossible to conceive that there could have been in five years an increase of a hundred and forty thousand. Yet some have rashly asserted, that the numbers of the St. Domingo Negroes were increased by a hundred and fifty thousand during the five years ending 1790, evidently comparing the loose returns of 1784 and 1785—with the
more

more accurate enumerations of 1789 and 1790.
—*Wimpffin, Let. XXVII.*

Let us, however, in the first place, admit his inspection of the returns to be always an equally fair criterion. The returns for 1790 give four hundred and fifty-five thousand as the total number of the Slaves.—*Laborie, Appen.; Wimpffen, Let. XXVIII.; Edwards's St. Domingo, Appen. and Cdap. I.; Barré St Venant, Col. Mod. p. 102.; Malouet, &c. &c.* Morse has indeed (*American Geography*) stated this number at six hundred thousand, and Laborie at five hundred thousand; but these statements proceed upon rough calculation of the numbers probably omitted even in the most accurate returns; and that of Morse is in all probability much exaggerated. We are therefore to confine ourselves entirely to the official number of four hundred and fifty-five thousand, and to compare this with the official number, two hundred and fifty thousand, of the year 1775.

We have here, then, a total increase of two hundred and five thousand Negroes in sixteen years. But according to the progress of the importation, and the natural progress of the population, the natural and forced increase

com-

combined ought to have been much greater. Suppose that, by the natural mode, no increase ought to have taken place, and that the propagation only balanced the mortality, both in the original stock of 1775, and in every subsequent increase by importation, the total increase of the first six years, admitting that there were two males to every female imported, and that no account of the odd males is to be kept, should have been sixty thousand; and of the second period, (ten years) on the same suppositions, about a hundred and seventy-four thousand; and the whole increase should have been about two hundred and thirty-four thousand, or above twenty-nine thousand more than the actual increase.

But this difference is evidently much less than the truth; for no account has been taken of five thousand male Negroes annually imported during the first six years, and eight thousand six hundred and sixty-four during the last ten. In order to correct the calculation, we shall suppose that one death in twenty of the population is a fair estimate for the West Indian climate, being much more than in the worst climates of Europe. It may easily be computed, that at the end of the sixteen years, there would
remain

remain, of the odd males imported during that period, above eighty thousand.

Besides, no account has been taken of the superior accuracy with which the returns were made at the end of the period under consideration. This circumstance must evidently increase the difference still farther. For we find, that during nine years ending 1784, the total numbers had only increased from two hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred and ninety-seven thousand; whereas, supposing the propagation only to have kept up the stock, the importation during that period should have produced an augmentation of a hundred and twelve thousand at least. Instead, therefore, of a difference of a hundred and nine thousand, in the whole period of sixteen years, we may safely conclude, that there was a difference of nearly a hundred and forty, or that the common good treatment experienced by the lower orders of the most unhealthy countries in the world, would have produced on the population of St. Domingo an increase greater, in the proportion of seven to four, than the increase which actually took place during the sixteen years of great importation.

The

The nature of the treatment experienced by the Negroes in that island, may from this statement easily be estimated. But several calculations have been presented to us, directly confirming the same position, and demonstrating, that the cruelty or hard usage of the French Colonists was extreme. The general statements of the report of 1789, upon the treatment experienced by the Slaves in all the French islands, is decisive of this point. We may add the particular testimony of two able men, who drew their observations from personal knowledge. Baron Wimpffen (*Lettres; No. XXV.*) states, that of the Negroes imported into St. Domingo, twenty per cent. die during the first year, while only five per cent. are born; and of these five, one infant dies of the tetanus in the first fortnight. M. Malouet says that it requires from four to five thousand births, besides the annual importation of eighteen thousand Slaves, to keep up the stock; and that the only total addition is the contraband with the English Islands.—*Essai sur St. Domingue, p. 148, & seqq.*—Thus, according to Wimpffen, the deaths among the imported Negroes are about five times more numerous than among the people

people of any other country, and the births five times less numerous ; and according to Malouet, the mortality of the whole stock is between two and three times greater than that of the natives of any other country on earth—a sufficient commentary upon the boasted humanity of the Planters in the French Islands, and a useful lesson upon the profits of the Slave System.”

Such has been the history of the Negro population in St. Domingo, and such the steps by which the Slave Trade prepared the society in that unhappy island for all the miseries of a servile war. If nothing but a transient rebellion had been the consequence of that unnatural state of things which the rapid importation and cruel treatment of the Negroes brought about—if the French had been successful in their attempts to restore the dominion of civilized men in the revolted settlement—still the ineffable horrors of the fourteen years during which the contest raged, would have justified us in viewing with increased antipathy the African Slave Trade, the cause of so many wide spread calamities.—The predictions of those who foretold that insurrection was the natural consequence of the Negro importation, would have been abundantly verified; they

they would have had full reason for reminding us how accurately they had foretold even the manner in which that cause of rebellion must operate, and for once more raising their voice against a system which during the very discussion of its merits, was giving such tremendous proofs of its destructive power. But, unhappily, the events of the Negro War have led to a revolution, complete, and in all appearance permanent; connected with the Slave Trade more nearly than as a warning example; and calculated to prescribe, with more than the force of a mere argument, the necessity of instantly abolishing that destructive commerce.

In the middle of the Slave Colonies, almost within the visible horizon of our largest island, a commonwealth of savage Africans is at this moment established, inspired with irreconcilable enmity to all that bears the name of Negro Bondage, and a rooted horror of that subordinate state which their efforts have enabled them to shake off. Does any one imagine that the Slaves of Jamaica are ignorant of the proud superiority of their free brethren on the opposite shore? Is it probable that they now kiss with more devotion than ever, the chains which their fellow Slaves in the

next

next settlement have triumphantly broken? Admitting that our Colonies are safe from the risk of being attacked by the new Negro Power,—an attack which in all probability would be joined by every discontented, and every newly imported Slave—is not the constant example of the neighbouring island a sufficient reason for deprecating, beyond every thing, the mal-treatment of Slaves, the disproportion of whites, the increase of unseasoned Negroes, which are the necessary consequences of continuing the African Trade? When the enemy's forces are besieging you, is it prudent to excite mutiny in your garrison, and to admit into the heart of your fortrefs the best allies that your enemy has?—When the fire is raging to windward, is it the proper time for stirring up every thing that is combustible in your warehouses, and throwing into them new loads of materials still more prone to explosion? Surely, surely, these most obvious considerations, need but be hinted at, to demonstrate, that independent of every other argument against the Negro traffic, the present state of the French West Indies renders the idea of continuing its existence for another hour worse than insanity. Were there not another objection

objection to the commerce, the revolution of St. Domingo is enough, both as a sad monument of its fatal tendency, and as an event which has unfortunately changed the very nature of the case ; aggravating, a thousand fold, every danger wherewith the system was originally pregnant. The planters have now to chuse between the surrender of the Slave Trade, and the sacrifice of their possessions—between the civilization of Africa, and the lasting barbarism of the West Indies—between the peaceful improvement of the Negroes in their own country, and the masterful domination of savage men in the American islands—between the immediate, total Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the Abolition of that Slavery, which alone can preserve the existence of white men in the Charaibean sea. That there is no other alternative, the late history of the West Indies proves in every page.

By the unspeakably mournful events of that story—by the nameless horrors of Negro warfare—by the lives of all their kindred in the New World—by the wealth and grandeur of England, for which they have so often and so generously bled—by the existence of the European

European name in those fair regions where it has shone for ages with such brilliant lustre—the planters are now solemnly implored to prevent a catastrophe dreadful beyond the language of man to paint. *Hitherto* the cause of the Africans has appeared, in their eyes, to be at variance with the cause of their countrymen; otherwise it would surely, even on its own merits, have been pleaded with success.—*Now*, the very same suit is plainly urged for both—May it not be preferred in vain!

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

*Statement of the comparative Merits of
the Plans of GRADUAL and IMMEDIATE
Abolition.*

SINCE the two first Editions of this Tract were published, the general question has been decided in the House of Commons by a very great majority. It is now, therefore, once more resolved, but under circumstances of more marked and unanimous reprobation, that the Slave Trade, being inconsistent with justice and with policy, ought to be abandoned by this virtuous and enlightened nation. The only farther enquiry that suggests itself, relates to the time and manner of effecting this great object ; and whoever shall take the trouble of reflecting on the nature of the arguments before urged upon the general question, will clearly perceive that they necessarily involve also

a satisfactory adjustment of these important details. A very few observations will serve to place this position in a light sufficiently strong.

1. If the Slave Trade is radically iniquitous—if instead of a commerce, it is in fact a series of enormous crimes; to think of any but the most sudden methods of destroying it, would be in the highest degree absurd. There can be no compromise—no temporizing with a traffic like this: nor is it possible to conceive an inconsistency greater than their's, who after admitting the iniquity of the practice, are afraid of putting an end to it at once. To every argument for delay this one answer is sufficient—that if you condemn the Slave Trade (as the House of Commons has done) and then give it a respite—you admit that your crimes are too profitable to be abandoned.

2. But sudden innovations, we are told, should always be avoided as dangerous. Let us examine a little more nearly a position that seems to have swayed many able and worthy minds upon this question.

A gradual abolition can only mean one of two things—either a decree that the traffic shall
cease

cease after a certain time, or an arrangement for its partial abolition to take place immediately.— If a delay of the measure is pressed, it is evident, that, carry it into effect when you will, you make a sudden innovation, and expose the Colonies, or the Mother Country, to all the pretended dangers of the change. Besides, what is the necessary consequence of such a delay? The interval will be employed by the African Traders in drawing millions from the other branches of commerce to pour them into the Negro Traffic, and in manning every vessel that can keep the sea, with sailors, swept from the wholesome lines of navigation, and hurried into the most pestilential of all employments. The demand for slaves suddenly increased, can only be answered by a frightful aggravation of all the miseries to which Africa has been doomed by her communication with Europe. The eagerness of our traders to profit by the interval, will urge them to commit new breaches of the Slave carrying Act, and to augment incalculably the deplorable cruelties of the middle passage. But what will be the consequence of this sudden accumulation of new Slaves in the West Indies? What to this was the paltry

increase of new hands previous to 1789, which brought about the dreadful revolution of St. Domingo? How well is it for those who shudder at the prospect of the immediate Abolition, because it is a sudden innovation, to embrace a project the most full of change—the most pregnant with violent alteration—the most certainly prolific in wide spreading revolution of any that the imagination can paint? Yes indeed, sudden innovation is to be dreaded at all times, and in every state, but in no æra, and in no region so much as in the first year of the independence of Hayti—in the Slave colonies which almost touch the shores of Guadaloupe and St. Domingo. That measure is surely no innovation, however suddenly it may be executed, which only stops the increase of combustible matter in a house already hot with the fire that rages in the next.

If, on the other hand, by gradual Abolition is meant the immediate and progressive diminution of the trade, so that there shall only be allowed an importation of ten thousand Negroes this year, seven the next, and four the year after, it is evident that such a scheme is impracticable. Nothing can be easier than to pre-

prevent a single Slave from being purchased by the British trader, or by the West India planter. But nothing can be more difficult than to draw the line, and stop at a certain number. Besides who are to have the preference in this limited traffic, and who are to be preferred in this limited supply? Such a plan is obviously unattainable. If, again, it is proposed to begin by allowing only certain colonies, for example the new settlements, to import Slaves, a similar objection occurs from the difficulty of drawing the line so as to prevent contraband: besides the obvious injustice of allowing certain islands only to benefit by the supply, and the still more glaring absurdity of affecting to fix a certain point of gainfulness at which the permission of a great national crime is to be deemed expedient. In every point of view, therefore, the gradual Abolition is fraught with innumerable difficulties, and liable to objections from various quarters, which there is no possibility of surmounting.

It was formerly a part of this gradual plan to prepare the Colonies for the breeding system, by giving a bounty on the importation of the young in preference to the aged Africans, and
of

of the females in preference to the Males.— The persons who made this proposition were not, it is to be hoped, fully aware of its nature and tendency : for surely the Slave Trade in its former state was a sufficient cruelty to the unhappy continent which has so long been its victim, without such an exasperation. This new invention, this refinement of torture, was scarcely required to fill the cup of its miseries. If such was to be the beginning of our kindness to those unhappy tribes, well might they implore us to resume our natural train of ferocity, and to spare them a continuance of our tender mercies.

It is most fervently to be hoped, that the Legislature and the enlightened Members of the West Indian body, may perceive the utter inefficacy of their late decision, unless it shall be followed up by the measure of immediate Abolition—that measure which can alone satisfy the loud claims of justice, or save the British West Indies from the deplorable fate of St. Domingo.

3. It is maintained by authority, whose respectability no man will deny, that the immediate Abolition, however devoutly to be wished for,

for, is impracticable; and that, therefore, making compromise between what is desirable and what is possible, we must rest contented with gradual measures. It has already been proved, that the progressive diminution of the traffic is in the strictest sense of the word impracticable; and how the sudden Abolition, if delayed a certain number years, would become at all easier than it now is, does not really appear very plain. Let us, however, consider what is the meaning of this argument of impracticability, which, with many, seemed to operate so powerfully.

The impracticability of abolishing the trade can only arise from two circumstances—the ease of smuggling, and the prospect of other nations taking it up if we leave it. It does not seem probable that the cruizers of this country, trained to activity and expertness as they have long been by all the variety of our navigation and revenue laws, should in this new line of their duty be altogether unfit for the service required. A century and a half has now elapsed since the regulation of our navigation act subjected to a most rigorous restraint the trade of half the empire. It is not apprehended that this law has been more evaded than any other

other of the same class. The Slave Carrying Act, which cut as directly as possible at the interests of the trade, and opened a much wider door to evasion, from the great difficulty of detection, has, it may be hoped, been tolerably well carried into effect. It is evident that no contraband article is so easily detected as a cargo of men, differing from their crew in every obvious particular, and imprisoned in all parts of the vessel against their will; nor can any commodity be so difficult to smuggle into a country as new Slaves, kept in subjection by main force.

But, it is said, if we were to succeed in effecting the Abolition, other nations would carry on the trade. Now it is clear, that though this were true it proves nothing; for surely if the trade is criminal, our business is to wash our hands of it instantly, although our example should not be followed, and although Africa should gain nothing by the measure. But it is equally evident that such a statement is radically false; for by giving up our share in the trade, we at least destroy a large proportion of the evil; we diminish the whole number of Slaves taken from Africa, by the numbers yearly required for the supply
of

of our Colonies, and at this particular crisis we prevent the enormous increase of that number, which our new settlements must immediately occasion. Besides, let us consider what chance there is of our Abolition being attended with a diminution of that number also, which we at present furnish to foreign colonies. Before the measure can be carried into effect, it is highly probable we shall be in possession of all the Dutch Colonies, and of all the French Islands; during the continuance of the war then, no Slaves will be imported by either France or Holland, except, perhaps, into the trifling settlement of Cayenne, if we should not think it worth taking. Denmark has long since shewn her willingness to abandon the Trade, by decreeing that it should cease with the year 1800: Can there be a doubt that she will now carry into full effect a resolution, only opposed by the various difficulties which our practice and example have thrown in the way? Sweden has so very trifling an interest in the West Indies, that it signifies little whether she takes into her own hands the trifling supply of Negroes hitherto furnished by England and France; nothing can, however, be more unlikely, than that she should

should now enter into that commerce in which she has never yet engaged. One of the first acts of American independence was the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and the United States soon began to reap the benefit of this sound policy in the rapid increase of their Negroes, by breeding, and their uniformly quiet and obedient conduct during the whole of the St. Domingo revolution. Lately, indeed, a law was passed in South Carolina, admitting the importation of Slaves; but so abhorrent was this measure to the spirit of the other States, that several of them proceeded to emancipate their Negroes, in testimony of their disapprobation; and Congress, in order to check the evil, imposed the highest duty which the constitution allows upon the importation of Negroes into South Carolina itself. The importation of Slaves into Louisiana has been also entirely and strictly prohibited. The Spanish and Portuguese Colonies receive a very trifling supply of Slaves, in comparison of the other settlements; their Negroes are infinitely better treated, and the breeding system much more encouraged than in any other European Colonies. The spirit of commercial speculation, too, is far less ardent, both in the traders and the planters

ters of those nations: so that there is little doubt of their being disposed to abandon a traffick which England, Denmark, and America shall have given up.

When we view, therefore, the peculiar circumstances of the present crisis—when we consider the large proportion of the Slave Trade that is at present absolutely under the power of Great Britain, the disposition shewn by other states to concur in the Abolition, and the palpable examples held out to all colonial governments, by the late events in St. Domingo, it is not drawing too sanguine an inference to predict that our example is more likely to be followed now than at any future period. The lapse of a few years will unquestionably diminish this fair probability; the Dutch Colonies and the French Islands will then most likely be restored; the commerce of France and Holland will be in a situation much more favourable to the speculations of the Slave Traffic during peace, than in the present state of hostilities; the northern powers, and Spain and Portugal, will have profited sufficiently by a most gainful neutrality, to enter upon the Negro Trade when we abandon it. But above all let it be considered, that the proposed delay necessarily

farily involves the very period of our greatest danger from the Slave system ; that this moment is truly a colonial crisis, and that if we put off doing what every call of duty, and every view of interest so imperiously enjoin, under pretence of being enabled hereafter to do it more effectually, in all human probability that consummation will have taken place which has already been partially accomplished, and the Abolition of the Slave Trade will have been effected by the utter destruction of the Colonial System. *

* The fear of alarming the Negroes in our Islands by stirring the question at the present moment, is a topic which no one can think of urging, who knows how ready the Government of Jamaica have been at all times to publish in their official Gazettes every document relating to the events of the Negro war in St. Domingo, as well as to the discussion of the Abolition in Great Britain.

A P P E N D I X.

No. II.

EXTRACTS from various Authors; (not Advocates for the Abolition of the Slave Trade) designed to illustrate some Parts of the Argument urged in the CONCISE STATEMENT.

THE following passages are quoted from authorities the most unexceptionable that can be imagined in this discussion; viz. from writers who either lived before the commencement of the traffic, or shew themselves decidedly hostile to the Abolition. The number of these extracts might be indefinitely multiplied; but as they are given rather to illustrate, than to prove the parts of the case to which they refer, it is not necessary to insert all that may be found.

Leo

Leo Africanus, who lived long before the discovery of America, says,

All these fifteen kingdoms of Negroes (enumerating them) which are known to us, extend along the Niger; and all the lands of Negroes are situated between two vast deserts; for on the one side is the main desert between Numidia and it, which is extended unto this very country; and to the south side of it is another desert, which reacheth to the main ocean on the west; beyond which desert, many nations inhabit, with whom we are not acquainted, for none of our people have travelled thither, by reason of the length of the journey, and the vast distance, and also diversity of language and religion. They have no dealings with us.—Book vii.

Mr. Smith, who was in the employment of the Royal African Company, says,

That the discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness, that they were ever visited by the Europeans. They say, that we Christians introduced the traffick of slaves, and that before our coming, they lived in peace; but, say they, it is observable, that wherever Christianity comes, there come with it a sword, a gun, powder and ball.—Voyage, p. 266.

Monf. Brue, who was Director General of the French Senegal Company, and resided eleven years in Africa, in giving a full description of the trade, with the most friendly opinion of it, says,

The Europeans are far from desiring to act as peacemakers amongst them. It would be too contrary to their interests;

interests ; for the only object of their wars is, to carry off Slaves, and as these make the principal part of their traffic, they would be apprehensive of drying up the source of it, were they to encourage these people to live well together.

According to the wars which these people have with each other, and their success, the Slave Trade here is better or worse. Again—The neighbourhood of the Damel and Tin keep them perpetually at war, the benefit of which accrues to the Company, who buy all the prisoners made on either side, and the more there are to sell, the greater is their profit ; for the only end of their armaments is to make captives, to sell them to the white traders.

Their campaigns are usually incursions to plunder and pillage, and they have every thing they wish to aim at from their wars, when they are able to make captives from one another, because that it is the best merchandize they have to trade with the Europeans. Avarice, and the desire of making Slaves, in order to have wherewith to buy European commodities, are often the veritable motives for going to war.

This Prince and the other Negro Kings have not always Slaves to treat with ; but they have always a sure and ready way of supplying the deficiency, that is, by making inroads upon their own subjects, carrying them off, and selling them, for which they never want pretensions, in order to justify their pillage and rapine, when those they have seized, have relations in a situation to resent the injury.—Vol. iv. p. 147, 217, and v. p. 115, 133.

The evidence of Dr. Sparman, Mr. Poplet, and Sir G. Yonge, in the Report of the Privy Council, 1789, deserves to be consulted.—See pages 17, 18, 19, and 24 of the Report.

Mr.

Mr. Moore, who was factor to the Royal African Company for seven years, says,

Whenever the King of Barially wants goods, or brandy, he sends a messenger to our Governor at James Fort, to desire he would send a sloop there with a cargo; this news being not at all unwelcome, the Governor sends accordingly. Against the arrival of the said sloop, the King goes and ransacks some of his enemies towns, seizing the people, and selling them for such commodities as he is in want of, which commonly are brandy or rum. gunpowder, balls, guns, pistols, and cutlasses for his attendants and soldiers, and coral and silver for his wives and concubines. In case he is not at war with any neighbouring King, he then falls upon one of his own towns, which are numerous, and uses them in the very same manner. It is owing to the King's insatiable thirst after brandy, that his subjects freedom and families are in so precarious a situation, for he very often goes with some of his troops by a town in the day time, and returns in the night, and sets fire to three parts of it, and sets guards to the fourth, to seize the people as they run out from the fire. He ties their arms behind them, and marches them to the place where he sells them, which is either Joar or Cabone. "Yesterday 20th March, 1732," says Moore, "the King fell upon one of his own towns, and having taken a good many prisoners, brought them along with him, with intent to sell them to Captain Clarke, a separate trader, now at anchor at Rambo's Port."—P. 1730.

"When the native Princes put a stop to trade, it is true," says Mr. Brue, "that the French have been forced sometimes to make use of violent means themselves; and not being able to get the Princes to discharge the loans they had borrowed from the Company, they have pillaged some village, seized the inhabitants, and carried them off
for

for Slaves; after which, they have balanced accounts with the King, and if they had seized more Slaves than they ought, in balance of the account, they have paid him the difference."

"But these expedients," he adds, "are not always successful, and though one was even sure of being paid by these sorts of executions; *il faut en user sobrement*," says he, "one should not have recourse to them too frequently, lest it should draw the ill-will of the country upon us, and sooner or later we should be made to repent of going thus violently to work."—P. 198.

Artus, Barbot, Bosman, Loyer, Nyendael, &c. inform us, that in their time all crimes were punished by mulcts and fines; but since the introduction of the Slave Trade, Slavery has become the universal punishment.

Mr. Moore, above quoted, says

Since this Trade has been used, all punishments are changed into Slavery; there being an advantage in such condemnation, they strain for crimes very hard, in order to get the benefit of selling the criminal. Not only murder, theft, and adultery, are punished by selling the criminal for a Slave, but every trifling crime is punished in the same manner.—P. 42.

This is abundantly confirmed in the Report of 1789, page 15, 17, and 43.

The difference between a domestic Slave in Africa and a Negro transported to the West Indies, may also be learnt from Mr. Moore.

“ Some people,” says he, “ have a good many house Slaves, which is their greatest glory, and they live so well and easy, that it is sometimes a very hard matter to know the Slaves from their masters or mistresses ; they very often being better clothed, especially the females, who have sometimes coral, amber, and silver, about their hands and wrists, to the value of twenty or thirty pounds sterling. Many of the Slaves are born in their families. There is a whole village near Boncoe, of two hundred people, who are all the wives, slaves, or children of one man. I never heard of but one that ever sold a family Slave, except for such crimes, as would have made them to be sold, had they been free. If there are many family Slaves, and one of them commits a crime, the master cannot sell him without the joint consent of the rest ; for, if he does, they will all run away, and be protected by the next kingdom to which they fly.”—P. 110.

Bosman informs us,

That the inhabitants of Coto, upon the Slave Coast, depend upon the Slave Trade ; for their most advantageous trade is taking a journey inland, and stealing men : it is the best part of their subsistence.—P. 308.

A little farther, he says,

The inhabitants of Popo, as well as those of Coto, depend on plunder and the Slave Trade, in both of which they very much exceed the latter ; for being endowed with a much larger share of courage, they rob more successfully, and consequently by that means increase their Trade ; notwithstanding all which, to freight a ship with Slaves, requires some months attendance.—P. 310.

Mr. Bryan Edwards, the most zealous defender of the Trade, in his speech to the Assembly

sembly of Jamaica, bears ample testimony to the same facts. His words are,

“He is persuaded that Mr. Wilberforce has been very rightly informed as to the manner in which Slaves are generally procured. His (Mr. E.’s) information arises from his own Negroes, who abundantly confirm, he assures us, Mr. W.’s account. They have not left, he tells us, the shadow of a doubt upon his own mind, that the effects of this trade are precisely such as Mr. W. represents them to be—a general scene of oppression, fraud, treachery, and blood—all upheld by the Slave Trade—That the whole of that immense continent is a field of warfare and desolation—a wilderness in which the inhabitants are wolves to each other. He dare not dispute it. And Mr. E. further asserts, that every man may be convinced that it is so, who will inquire of any African Negroes, on their first arrival, concerning the circumstances of their captivity; and he declares, that the assertion “that a great many of these are criminals and convicts,”—is mockery and insult.

The Travels of Mr. Park, a decided advocate of the Slave Trade, published under the immediate inspection of Mr. Bryan Edwards, afford various confirmations of the facts above stated. “War,” he observes, “is certainly “the most general and most productive source “of slavery*.” He says there are two kinds of warfare, one similar to that which prevails among all nations, the other peculiar to Africa; it is called *tegria*, or plunder, and is thus described:

G 2

Wars

* P. 292.

Wars of this description are generally conducted with great secrecy. A few resolute individuals, headed by some person of enterprise and courage, march quietly through the woods, surprize in the night some unprotected village, and carry inhabitants and their effects, before their neighbours can come to their assistance. One morning, during my stay at Kamalia, we were all much alarmed by a party of this kind. The king of Fooladoo's son, with five hundred horsemen, passed secretly through the woods, a little to the southward of Kamalia, on the morning following, plundered three towns belonging to Madigai, a powerful chief in Jallonkadoo.

The success of this expedition encouraged the governor of Bangassi, a town in Fooladoo, to make a second inroad upon another part of the same country. Having assembled about two hundred of his people, he passed over the river Kokoro in the night, and carried off a great number of prisoners. Several of the inhabitants who had escaped these attacks, were afterwards seized by the Mandingoes, as they wandered about in the woods, or concealed themselves in the glens and strong places of the mountains.

These plundering excursions, always produce speedy retaliation; and when large parties cannot be collected for the purpose, a few friends will combine together, and advance into the enemy's country, with a view to plunder, to carry off the inhabitants. A single individual has been known to take his bow and quiver, and proceed in like manner; conceal himself among the bushes, until some young or unarmed person passes by. He then, tyger-like, springs upon his prey; drags his victim into the thicket, and in the night carries him off as a slave.—P 293.

Early in the morning, the remainder of the Moors departed from the town. They had, during their stay, committed many acts of robbery; and this morning, with the most unparalleled audacity, they seized upon three girls, who

who were bringing water from the wells, and carried them into slavery.—P. 166.

See also p. 336.

When a Negro takes up goods on credit from any of the Europeans on the coast, and does not make payment at the time appointed the European is authorized, by the laws of the country, to seize upon the debtor himself, if he can find him; or if he cannot be found, on any person of his family; or, in the last resort, on any native of the same kingdom.—P. 296.

That a great part of the African population is in a state of domestic slavery cannot be doubted. But it does not follow from thence that the natives breed Slaves for sale, or that the enormities of the Slave Trade fall in the smallest degree lighter upon this class of the community than upon the free men. Mr. Park agrees with all other writers on the state of Africa, in describing the circumstances of the domestic Slaves as easy and comfortable, and in admitting that they can only be sold to foreigners, in cases which authorize the sale of free men, such as capture in war, condemnation for certain crimes. &c.

In all the laborious occupations above described, the master and his Slaves work together, without any distinction of superiority.—P. 286.

The domestic Slaves, or such as are born in a man's own house, are treated with more lenity than those which are purchased

purchased with money. The authority of the master over the domestic Slaves, as I have elsewhere observed, extends only to reasonable correction ; for the master cannot sell his domestic, without having first brought him to public trial, before the chief men of the place.—P. 287.

The wars and kidnappings of the interior fall as heavily upon the Slaves as upon their masters ; they all end in their being sold to Europeans on the coast. The progress of a caravan of Slaves for exportation, is described minutely by Mr. Park, with circumstances too shocking to quote.—See pages 4, 318, 320, 325, 346, 349, 353.

That the barbarism, depopulation, and barrenness of Africa increase as we approach the mouths of the rivers and the bays on the western coast, is a general fact, amply testified by Mr. Park, and is so repugnant to the history of mankind in every other region, that it furnishes the strongest support to the statements of those who attribute the incivilization of this continent to the Slave Trade. As he proceeds eastward he says,

The towns were now more numerous, and the land that is not employed in cultivation affords excellent pasturage for large herds of cattle ; but, owing to the great concourse of people daily going to and returning from Sego, the inhabitants are less hospitable to strangers.—P. 191.

See

See in particular the description of Sego.

The view of this extensive city ; the numerous canoes upon the river ; the crowded population, and the cultivated state of the surrounding country, formed altogether a prospect of civilization and magnificence, which I little expected to find in the bosom of Africa.—P. 196.

See also pages 226 and 261, and for proofs of the fertility of the soil in various produce, see pages 4, 5, 10, 58, 203, and 311.

The progress which the Africans are capable of making in the arts appears clearly from the account which Mr. Park gives of their different manufactures—as *salt*, pages 4 and 203 ; *cotton-cloth*, p. 17 and 281 ; *gunpowder*, 116 ; *rich dyes*, 281 ; *weaving and sewing*, 282 ; *tanned and dyed leather*, *iron smelting and manufacture*, 283, 285, 341, 348, and 349 ; *gold smelting*, and the *manufacture of beautiful gold trinkets and ornaments*, 285 ; *soap*, 341.

Their commercial habits appear to be equally confirmed, and their journies, for the purposes of trade, are long and constant.—See p. 4, 58, 203, 256, and 341.

But nothing in Mr. Park's work is more deserving of our attention than his description of the negro character and dispositions, in all those places where the Slave Trade has left them

them in their natural state.—See the anecdote in p. 69. See also the return of the blacksmith to his home :

When we arrived at the blacksmith's place of residence; we dismounted and fired our muskets. The meeting between him and his relations was very tender ; for these rude children of nature, free from restraint, display their emotions in the strongest and most impressive manner. Amidst these transports, the blacksmith's aged mother was led forth, leaning upon a staff. Every one made way for her ; and she stretched out her hand to bid her son welcome. Being totally blind, she stroked his hands, arms, and face, with great care, and seemed highly delighted that her latter days were blessed by his return, and that her ears once more heard the music of his voice. From this interview I was fully convinced, that whatever difference there is between the Negro and the European in the conformation of the nose and the colour of the skin, there is none in the genuine sympathies and characteristic feelings of our common nature.—P. 82.

The following incident is still more striking :

About sunset, however, as I was preparing to pass the night in this manner, and had turned my horse loose, that he might graze at liberty, a woman, returning from the labours of the field, stopped to observe me, and perceiving that I was weary and dejected, inquired into my situation, which I briefly explained to her ; whereupon, with looks of great compassion, she took up my saddle and bridle, and told me to follow her. Having conducted me into her hut, she lighted up a lamp, spread a mat on the floor, and told me I might remain there for the night. Finding that I was very hungry, she said she would procure me something to eat. She accordingly went out, and returned in a short time with a very fine fish : which, having caused to be half broiled upon some embers, she gave me for supper. The
rites

rites of hospitality being thus performed towards a stranger in distress; my worthy benefactress (pointing to the mat, and telling me I might sleep there without apprehension) called to the female part of her family, who had stood gazing on me all the while with astonishment, to resume their task of spinning cotton; in which they continued to employ themselves great part of the night. They lightened their labour by songs, one of which was composed extempore; for I was myself the subject of it. It was sung by one of the young women, the rest joining in a sort of chorus. The air was sweet and plaintive, and the words, literally translated, were these.—“The winds roared, and
 “the rains fell.—The poor white man, faint and weary,
 “came and sat under our tree.—He has no mother to
 “bring him milk; no wife to grind his corn. *Chorus.*
 “Let us pity the white man; no mother has he, &c. &c.” Trifling as this recital may appear to the reader, to a person in my situation, the circumstance was affecting in the highest degree. I was oppressed by such unexpected kindness; and sleep fled from my eyes. In the morning I presented my compassionate landlady with two of the four brass buttons which remained on my waistcoat; the only recompense I could make her.—P. 197.

The picture which he gives of the ardent affection of the Negroes for their native country, is in the highest degree beautiful and touching; it proves most clearly how severe upon such men must be their compulsory exile from their home.

When their country has been desolated, and their ruined towns and villages deserted by the enemy, such of the inhabitants as have escaped the sword, and the chain, generally return, though with cautious steps, to the place of their nativity; for it seems to be the universal wish of
 mankind

mankind, to spend the evening of their days where they passed their infancy. The poor Negro feels this desire in its full force. To him, no water is sweet but what is drawn from his own well; and no tree has so cool and pleasant a shade as the *tabba* tree of his native village. When war compels him to abandon the delightful spot in which he first drew his breath, and seek for safety in some other kingdom, his time is spent in talking about the country of his ancestors; and no sooner is peace restored than he turns his back upon the land of strangers, rebuilds with haste his fallen walls, and exults to see the smoke ascend from his native village.

In reference to the force with which the present state of St. Domingo bears upon the question of Abolition, it may be proper to quote the words of Mr. Bryan Edwards, addressed to the West India Planters.

“To the resident Planters I address myself with still greater solicitude; and, if it were in my power, would exhort them, “with more than mortal voice,” to rise above the foggy atmosphere of local prejudices. “I call on them, with the sincerity and affection of a brother, of themselves to restrain, limit, and finally abolish the further introduction of enslaved men from Africa.” “The example of St. Domingo, and the dictates of self-preservation, like the hand-writing against the wall, warn them no longer to delay it!” “Thus will the Planters prepare a shield of fence against their enemies, and secure to themselves that serenity and elevation of mind, which arise from an approving conscience; producing assurance in hope, and consolation in adversity. Their persecutors and slanderers in the mean time will be disregarded or forgotten; for calumny, though a great evil, is a temporary evil, but truth and justice will prove triumphant and eternal.”—History of St. Domingo, p. 193, 194.

Before concluding these statements, it may be proper to take notice of a view of the subject which has suggested itself to some persons, chiefly to the foreign advocates of the Slave Trade, who belong to the school of French metaphysics.—“The increasing demand for sugar, say they, which the European market furnishes, must always find a supply in some colony or other, and this supply can only be secured by new importations of Slaves. The same number will therefore always be imported, whether Britain abolishes the trade or not, until that demand is supplied, and then the traffic will of itself cease, when it becomes no longer necessary.”—Various refutations of this strange argument must have been perused already by the reader of the foregoing pages: it is only necessary here to add, that such a doctrine proceeds upon a fundamental mistake of the positions maintained by the advocates of the Abolition; inasmuch, as it supposes an importation of new Negroes necessary to keep up the stock. Besides, it is well known that any deficiency in the West Indian supply can be easily remedied by permitting the importation of the sugar made in Asia by free men at so cheap a rate.

rate. If it is argued that the demand increases quicker than the supply procured by the natural increase of the negroes, it remains to shew how the consumers of sugar should multiply faster in Europe, where the population doubles only once in 525 years, than the manufacturers of the article increase in America, where the Blacks (as may be seen by the Census of the United States) can with proper care be made double their numbers in the natural way once every 26 years. It remains also to explain how the power of purchasing sugars should increase more rapidly in Europe, under all the disadvantages of low profits, than the capital of the producers augments by the high gains of the new world.

FINIS.

Brooke, Printer, Paternoster-Row.