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of Goldsmiths.  
1903.

LORD BROUGHAM'S

SPEECH

IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS,

ON TUESDAY, THE 20TH OF FEBRUARY, 1838,

FOR THE

IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION

OF THE

NEGRO APPRENTICES.

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LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY AND SONS, PICCADILLY.

1838.

TO  
THE MARQUESS OF SLIGO, K.P.

*ſc. ſc. ſc.*

LATE

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR AND CAPTAIN-GENERAL OF JAMAICA.

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THIS Speech is inscribed with peculiar propriety to the humane and virtuous Viceroy, who himself, a Master of Slaves, gained by his just and beneficent Government, of the greatest Slave Colony in the world, the truly enviable title of the Poor Negro's Friend. The only other publication upon the subject to which I ever affixed my name, was dedicated to an illustrious Statesman, whose life has been devoted to his country's service, and whose noble ambition has always connected itself with the improvement of mankind, by that natural sympathy which unites brilliant genius with public virtue. But the fame with which your Administration has surrounded your character, makes it not unfit to name you even after a Wellesley.

The anxiety expressed from all parts of the country to obtain an authentic report of this speech, and the acceptance with which my countrymen have honoured the humble though zealous efforts of their fellow-labourer in this mighty work,

I regard as by far the highest gratification of a long public life. The present occasion also affords me an opportunity of contradicting the studied misrepresentations of some injudicious supporters of the Government, who have not scrupled to assert that my principal object in proposing the measures of yesterday, was not the abolition of Negro Apprenticeship, but only the regulation of the master's conduct. Nothing can be more wide of the fact than such a statement.

I appeal to your Lordship, and to all who heard me, whether my whole contention was not in behalf of Instant and Complete Emancipation, as the only effectual remedy, and whether I wasted more than a single sentence upon any mere palliatives. To regulate the master's conduct, while the abominable system is suffered to continue, was the purpose of the first five resolutions—but my whole forces, such as they are, were brought to bear upon the only position to take which I was very anxious, and to force an immediate, unconditional surrender of the master's rights—an immediate, unconditional liberation of the slave.

I think I have some right to complain of these misstatements. It was surely enough that I should be resisted by the whole strength of the Government and that in consequence of their resistance my great object of obtaining the Negro's freedom should be defeated, as well as all hopes of effectually destroying the Slave Trade itself, disappointed by

the rejection of my other propositions. There is a refinement of subtle injustice in those men propagating a belief through the country, that the conduct of the Ministry, by which my motion was defeated, and by which I verily think their official existence is endangered, did not altogether thwart the intentions of the parties by whom that motion was brought forward and supported. The reader of this speech will be at no loss to perceive how entirely its object was the Immediate Destruction of Slavery, and how invariably every word of it was inspired by hostility to the existing system, inextinguishable and uncompromising.

BROUGHAM.

*Feb.* 21, 1838.

## SPEECH ON SLAVERY.

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I do not think, my Lords, that ever but once before in the whole course of my public life, I have risen to address either House of Parliament with the anxiety under which I labour at this moment. The occasion to which alone I can liken the present, was, when I stood up in the Commons to expose the treatment of that persecuted Missionary whose case gave birth to the memorable debate upon the condition of our Negro brethren in the Colonies—a debate, happily so fruitful of results to the whole of this great cause. But there is this difference between the two occasions to sustain my spirits now, that whereas at the former period, the horizon was all wrapt in gloom, through which not a ray of light pierced to cheer us, we have now emerged into a comparatively bright atmosphere, and are pursuing our journey full of hope. For this we have mainly to thank that important discussion, and those eminent men who bare in it so conspicuous a part. And



now I feel a further gratification in being the means of enabling your Lordships, by sharing in this great and glorious work, nay, by leading the way towards its final accomplishment, to increase the esteem in which you are held by your fellow-citizens; or if by any differences of opinion on recent measures, you may unhappily have lost any portion of the public favour, I know of no path more short, more sure, or more smooth, by which you may regain it. But I will not rest my right to your co-operation upon any such grounds as these. I claim your help by a higher title. I rely upon the justice of my cause—I rely upon the power of your consciences—I rely upon your duty to God and to man—I rely upon your consistency with yourselves—and appealing to your own measure of 1833, if you be the same men in 1838, I call upon you to finish your own work, and give at length a full effect to the wise and Christian principles which then guided your steps.

I rush at once into the midst of this great argument.—I drag before you once more, but I trust for the last time, the African Slave Trade which I lately denounced here, and have so often elsewhere. On this we are all agreed. Whatever difference of opinion may exist on the question of Slavery, on the Slave traffic there can be none. I am now furnished with a precedent which may serve for an example to guide us. On Slavery we have always held that the Colonial Legislatures could

not be trusted ; that to use Mr. Canning's expression, you must beware of allowing the masters of slaves to make laws upon slavery. But upon the detestable traffic in slaves, I can shew you the proceeding of a Colonial Assembly which we should ourselves do well to adopt after their example. These masters of slaves, not to be trusted on that subject, have acted well and wisely on this. I hold in my hand a document, which I bless heaven that I have lived to see. The legislature of Jamaica, owners of slaves, and representing all other slave owners, feel, that they also represent the poor Negroes themselves : and they approach the throne, expressing themselves thankful—tardily thankful, no doubt—that the traffic has been now for thirty years put down in our own Colonies, and beseeching the Sovereign to consummate the great work by the only effectual means of having it declared piracy by the law of nations, as it is robbery and piracy and murder by the law of God. This address is precisely that which I desire your Lordships now to present to the same gracious Sovereign. After showing how heavily the Foreign Slave Trade presses upon their interests, they take higher ground in this remarkable passage. “ Nor can we forego the higher position, as a question of humanity ; representing all classes of the island, we consider ourselves entitled to offer to your Majesty our respectful remonstrance against the continuance of this con-



“ demned traffic in human beings. As a com-  
 “ munity, composed of the descendants of Africa  
 “ as well as Britain, we are anxious to advance the  
 “ character of the country, and we, therefore,  
 “ entreat your Majesty to exert your interest with  
 “ Foreign Powers to cause this trade at once to be  
 “ declared piracy, as the only effectual means of  
 “ putting it down, and thereby to grace the com-  
 “ mencement of your auspicious reign.” My

Lords, I will not stop to remind the Lawgivers of Jamaica why it is that the Slave traffic is a crime of so black a die. I will not remind them that if slavery were no more, the trade in slaves must cease ; that if the West Indies were like England peopled with free men, and cultivated only by free hands, where no man can hold his fellow-creature in bondage, and the labourer cannot be tormented by his masters; if the cartwhip having happily been destroyed, the doors of the prison-house were also flung open, and chains, and bolts, and collars were unknown, and no toil endured but by the workman’s consent, nor any effort extorted by dread of punishment ; the traffic which we justly call not a trade but a crime, would no longer inflict the miseries with which it now loads its victims, who instead of being conveyed to a place of torture and misery, would be carried into a land of liberty and enjoyment. Nor will I now pause to consider the wishes of some Colonies, in part, I am grieved to say, granted by

the Government, that the means should be afforded them of bringing over what they call labourers from other parts of the globe, to share in the sufferings of slavery, hardly mitigated under the name of apprenticeship. That you should ever join your voices with them on this matter, is a thing so out of the question that I will not detain you with one other remark upon it. But so neither have I any occasion to go at present into the subject of the Slave trade altogether, after the statements which I lately made in this place upon the pernicious effects of our Head-money, the frightful extent of the Negro traffic, and the horrible atrocities which mark its course still more awfully now than before. In order to support my call upon your Lordships for the measures which alone can extirpate such enormities, I need but refer you to those statements. Since I presented them here, they have been made public, indeed promulgated all over the kingdom, and they have met with no contradiction, not excited the least complaint in any quarter, except that many have said the case was understated; and that in one place, and only in one, I have been charged with exaggeration. I have read with astonishment, and I repel with scorn, the insinuation, that I had acted the part of an advocate, and that some of my statements were coloured to serve a cause. How dares any man so to accuse me? How dares any one skulking under a fictitious name, to launch his slan-

derous imputations from his covert? I come forward in my own person. I make the charge in the face of day. I drag the criminal to trial. I openly call down justice on his head. I defy his attacks. I defy his defenders. I challenge investigation. How dares any concealed adversary to charge me as an advocate speaking from a brief and misrepresenting the facts to serve a purpose? But the absurdity of this charge even outstrips its malice. I stated that the Negroes were thrown overboard in pairs during a chase to lighten the ship and enable her to escape; thrown overboard in fetters, that they might sink, and not be witnesses against the murderers. The answer is, that this man, if man he be, had been on board slave ships, and never seen such cruelties. I stated that the fetters were not locked, but rivetted in the forge. The answer is, that the writer had been on board of slave vessels, and seen fetters which were locked, and not rivetted. How dares any man deny a statement made upon authority referred to by name, on such a trumpery story as this? As well might he argue that a murder sworn to by 50 or 100 credible witnesses, had never been committed, because some one came forward and said he had not seen it done. Did I not give the particulars? Did I not avouch my authority? Did I not name the gallant officer from whose official report, printed and published, my account was taken? Did I not give the respected name of Commodore Hayes, one of the best esteemed officers in her

Majesty's service? I, indeed, understated the case in many particulars. But, my Lords, if I have not been chargeable with exaggeration—if all who took part in the former debate, whether in or out of office, agreed in acquitting me of that—so neither shall I be charged for the future with understating the atrocities of the case. What I then withheld, I will now tell—and not keeping back my authority now any more than I did before, I appeal to my Noble Friend near me (Lord Sligo) for the truth of the appalling story, himself a planter, and an owner of slaves. I ask him if he did not know a vessel brought in with a cargo of 180 or 200 wretched beings jammed into a space three feet and a half in height.

LORD SLIGO.—Two and a half.

LORD BROUGHAM.—There, my Lords, I am understating again. Into that space of two feet and a half between the decks, that number of miserable creatures were jammed, like inanimate lumber, certainly in a way in which no Christian man would crowd dumb animals. My Noble Friend will say whether or not that vessel, whose slaves had never been released, or even washed, or in any way cleansed, since it left the African coast, presented an intolerable nuisance to all the senses—a nuisance unfit for any description. Nor is this all. I will be chargeable with understatement no more! The ophthalmia had broken out among the poor creatures thus kept in unspeakable torment; and



as often as any one was seized, instead of affording him any medical or other assistance, he was instantly cast overboard, and sunk in his chains, with the view of stopping the infection. I will understate things no more ! I said before that as many as 700 slaves were carried across the sea in one ship ; there I stopped, for to those who know what a slave ship is, this sufficed to harrow up every feeling of the soul. But another vessel brought away, first and last, in one voyage, 980 miserable, unoffending, simple beings, and of this number, without any chase, or accident, or violence, or any acts of wholesale murder, such as those we have been contemplating, six hundred perished in the voyage, through the hardships and sufferings inseparably connected with this execrable traffick. Of 23 or 2400 carried away by four other ships, no less than 1500 perished in like manner, having fallen a sacrifice to the pestilential hold. How this enormous crime of these Foreign nations is to be rooted out I know full well. You must no longer treat it as a mere contraband trade—no longer call murder smuggling, or treat pirates as offenders against the revenue laws. As long as our slave traders were so dealt with they made this calculation—“ If we escape three times in four, our profits are so large that the seizure and confiscation can be well afforded ; nay, even if we are taken as often as we escape, the ships netting 20, 30, even as much as 50 and 60,000 pounds a voyage, we can

well afford to lose 1500 or 2000 pounds when the adventure fails." So they ran the risk, and on a calculation of profit and loss were fully justified. But I had in 1811 the singular happiness of laying the axe to the root of this detestable system. I stopt all those calculations by making the trade felony and punishing it as such ; for well I know that they who would run the risk of capture when all they could suffer by it was a diminution of their profits, would be slow to put their heads in the noose of the halter which their crimes so richly deserved. The measure passed through all its stages in both Houses without one dissenting voice ; and I will venture to assert that ever since, although English capital, I have too much reason to think, finds its way into the Foreign Slave Trade, no Englishman is concerned directly with it in any part of the world. Trust me, the like course must be taken if we would put an end to the same crimes in other countries. Piracy and murder must be called by their right names, and visited with their appropriate penalties. That the Spanish and Portuguese traders now make the same calculations which I have been describing is a certain fact. I will name one—Captain Inza, of the ship Socorro, who on being captured, had the effrontery to boast that he had made fourteen slave voyages, and that this was the first time he had been taken. Well might he resolve to run so slight a risk for such vast gains ; but had the fate of a felon-pirate awaited him, not



all the gains which might tempt his sordid nature would have prevailed upon him to encounter that hazard.

I formerly recounted instances of murder done by wholesale in the course of the chase of our cruisers. I might have told a more piteous tale ; and I will no longer be accused of understating this part of the case either. Two vessels were pursued. One after another negroes were seen to be thrown overboard to the number of a hundred and fifty, of all ages—the elder and stronger ones loaded with their fetters, to prevent them from swimming or floating—the weaker were left unchained to sink or expire ; and this horrible spectacle was presented to the eyes of our cruisers' men—they saw, unable to lend any help, the water covered with those hapless creatures, the men sinking in their chains—the women, and—piteous sight!—the infants and young children struggling out their little strength in the water till they too were swallowed up and disappeared !

I now approach a subject, not, indeed, more full of horrors, or of greater moment, but on which the attention of the people has for some time past been fixed with an almost universal anxiety, and for your decision upon which they are now looking with the most intense interest, let me add, with the liveliest hopes. I need not add that I mean the great question of the condition into which the slaves of our Colonies were transferred as preparatory to their complete li-

beration—a subject upon which your table has been loaded with so many petitions from millions of your fellow-countrymen. It is right that I should first remind your Lordships of the anxious apprehensions which were entertained in 1833, when the Act was passed, because a comparison of those fears with the results of the measure, will form a most important ingredient of the argument which I am about to urge for the immediate liberation of the apprentices. I well remember how uneasy all were in looking forward to the first of August, 1834, when the state of slavery was to cease, and I myself shared in those feelings of alarm when I contemplated the possible event of the vast but yet untried experiment. My fears proceeded first from the character of the masters. I knew the nature of man, fond of power, jealous of any interference with its exercise, uneasy at its being questioned, offended at its being regulated and constrained, averse above all to have it wrested from his hands, especially after it has been long enjoyed, and its possession can hardly be severed from his nature. But I also am aware of another and a worser part of human nature. I know that who so has abused power, clings to it with a yet more convulsive grasp. I dreaded the nature of man, prone to hate whom he has injured—because I knew that law of human weakness which makes the oppressor hate his victim, makes him who has injured never forgive, fills the wrong doer with vengeance against those whose right it is to vindicate those

injuries on his own head. I knew that this abominable law of our evil nature was not confined to different races, contrasted hues, and strange features, but prevailed also between white man and white—for I never yet knew any one hate me, but those whom I had served, and those who had done me some grievous injustice. Why then should I expect other feelings to burn within the planter's bosom, and govern his conduct towards the unhappy beings who had suffered so much and so long at his hands? But on the part of the slaves I was not without some anxiety when I considered the corrupting effects of that degrading system under which they had for ages groaned, and recognised the truth of the saying in the first and the earliest of profane poets, that "the day which makes a man a slave robs him of half his value." I might well think that the West India slave offered no exception to this maxim; that the habit of compulsory labour might have incapacitated him from voluntary exertion; that over much toil might have made all work his aversion; that never having been accustomed to provide for his own wants, while all his supplies were furnished by others, he might prove unwilling or unfit to work for himself, the ordinary inducements to industry never having operated on his mind. In a word, it seemed unlikely that long disuse of freedom, might have rendered him too familiar with his chains to set a right value on liberty; or that, if he panted to be free, the sudden transition from the one state to the other, the instantaneous enjoyment of the

object of his desires, might prove too strong for his uncultured understanding, might upset his principles; and render him dangerous to the public peace. Hence it was that I entertained some apprehensions of the event and yielded reluctantly to the plan proposed of preparing the Negroes for the enjoyment of perfect freedom by passing them through the intermediate state of Indentured Apprenticeship. Let us now see the results of their sudden though partial liberation, and how far those fears have been realised; for upon this must entirely depend the solution of the present question—Whether or not it is safe now to complete the emancipation, which, if it only be safe, we have not the shadow of right any longer to withhold.—Well, then, let us see.

The First of August came, the object of so much anxiety and so many predictions -- that day so joyously expected by the poor slaves, so sorely dreaded by their hard taskmasters; and surely, if ever there was a picture interesting, even fascinating to look upon—if ever there was a passage in a people's history that redounded to their eternal honour—if ever triumphant answer was given to all the scandalous calumnies for ages heaped upon an oppressed race, as if to justify the wrongs done them—that picture, and that passage, and that answer were exhibited in the uniform history of that auspicious day all over the Islands of the Western sea. Instead of the horizon being lit up with the lurid fires of rebellion, kindled by a



sense of natural though lawless revenge, and the just resistance to intolerable oppression—the whole of that wide-spread scene was mildly illuminated with joy, contentment, peace, and goodwill towards men. No civilized nation, no people of the most refined character, could have displayed after gaining a sudden and signal victory, more forbearance, more delicacy, in the enjoyment of their triumph, than these poor untutored slaves did upon the great consummation of all their wishes which they had just attained. Not a gesture or a look was seen to scare the eye—not a sound or a breath from the Negro's lips was heard to grate on the ear of the Planter. All was joy, congratulation and hope. Everywhere were to be seen groupes of these harmless folks assembled to talk over their good fortunes; to communicate their mutual feelings of happiness; to speculate on their future prospects. Finding that they were now free in name, they hoped soon to taste the reality of liberty. Feeling their fetters loosened they looked forward to the day which should see them fall off, and the degrading marks which they left be effaced from their limbs. But all this was accompanied with not a whisper that could give offence to the master by reminding him of the change. This delicate, calm, tranquil joy, was alone to be marked on that day over all the chain of the Antilles.—Amusements there were none to be seen on that day---not even their simple pastimes by which they had been wont to beguile the hard hours of

bondage, and which reminded that innocent people of the happy land of their forefathers, whence they had been torn by the hands of christian and civilized men. The day was kept sacred as the festival of their liberation; for the negroes are an eminently pious race. They enjoy the advantages of much religious instruction and partake in a large measure of spiritual consolation. These blessings they derive not from the ministrations of the Established Church—not that the aid of its priests is withheld from them, but the services of others, of zealous Missionaries, are found more acceptable and more effectual, because they are more suited to the capacity of the people. The meek and humble pastor, although perhaps more deficient in secular accomplishments, is far more abounding in zeal for the work of the vineyard, and being less raised above his flock, is better fitted to guide them in the path of religious duty. Not made too fine for his work by pride of science, nor kept apart by any peculiar refinement of taste, but inspired with a fervent devotion to the interests of his flock, the Missionary pastor lives but for them; their companion on the week-day, as their instructor on the Sabbath; their friend and counsellor in temporal matters, as their guide in spiritual concerns. These are the causes of the influence he enjoys—this the source from whence the good he does them flows. Nor can I pass by this part of the West Indian picture without rendering the tribute of heartfelt admiration which I am



proud to pay, when I contemplate the pious zeal, the indefatigable labours of these holy and disinterested men ; and I know full well that if I make my appeal to my Noble friend (Lord Sligo) he will repeat the testimony he elsewhere bore to the same high merits, when he promulgated his honest opinion that “ for the origin of all religious feeling among the Negroes, it is among the Missionaries and not the Clergy we must look.” Therefore it was that fourteen years ago I felt all the deep anxiety to which I this night began by referring, when it was my lot to drag before the Commons of England the persecutors of one among the most useful, most devoted and most godly, of that inestimable class of men, who for his piety and his self-devotion had been hunted down by wicked men conspiring with unjust judges, and made to die the death for teaching to the poor Negroes the gospel of peace. I am unspeakably proud of the part I then took ; I glory mightily in reflecting that I then struck, aided and comforted by far abler men,\* the first of those blows, of which we are now aiming the last, at the chains that bind the harmless race of our Colonial peasantry. The First of August came—and the day was kept a sacred holiday, as it will ever be kept to the end of time throughout all the West Indies.

\* The great exertions on that memorable occasion of Lord Chief Justice Denman, Dr. Lushington, and others, are well known ; and the report of the interesting debate does them justice. But no one from merely reading it can form an adequate idea of Mr. Justice Williams’s admirable speech, distinguished alike for closeness of argument and for the severity of Attic taste.

Every church was crowded from early dawn, with devout and earnest worshippers. Five or six times in the course of that memorable Friday were all those churches filled and emptied in succession by multitudes who came, not coldly to comply with a formal ceremonial, not to give mouth worship or eye worship, but to render humble and hearty thanks to God for their freedom at length bestowed. In countries where the bounty of nature provokes the passions, where the fuel of intemperance is scattered with a profuse hand, I speak the fact when I tell that not one Negro was seen in a state of intoxication. (*Hear, hear*, from Lord Sligo.) Three hundred and forty thousand slaves in Jamaica were at once set free on that day, and the peaceful festivity of these simple men was disturbed only on a single estate, in one parish, by the irregular conduct of three or four persons, who were immediately kept in order, and tranquillity in one hour restored.

But the termination of slavery was to be the end of all labour; no man would work unless compelled—much less would any one work for hire. The cart-whip was to resound no more—and no more could exertion be obtained from the indolent African. I set the fact against these predictions. I never have been in the West Indies; I was one of those whom under the name of reasoners, and theorists, and visionaries, all planters pitied for incurable ignorance of Colonial affairs; one of those who were forbidden to meddle with matters of

which they only could judge who had the practical knowledge of experienced men on the spot obtained. Therefore I now appeal to the fact—and I also appeal to one who has been in the West Indies, is himself a planter, and was an eye-witness of the things upon which I call for his confirmatory testimony. It is to my Noble Friend (Lord Sligo) that I appeal. He knows, for he saw, that ever since slavery ceased, there has been no want of inclination to work in any part of Jamaica, and that labour for hire is now to be had without the least difficulty by all who can afford to pay wages—the apprentices cheerfully working for those who will pay them, during the hours not appropriated to their masters. My Noble Friend made an inquisition as to the state of this important matter in a large part of his government; and I have his authority for stating, that in nine estates out of ten labourers for hire were to be had without the least difficulty. Yet this was the people of whom we were told with a confidence that set all contradiction at defiance, with an insulting pity for the ignorance of us who had no local experience, that without the lash there would be no work done, and that when it ceased to vex him, the African would sink into sleep. The prediction is found to have been ridiculously false; the Negro peasantry is as industrious as our own; and wages furnish more effectual stimulus than the scourge. Oh but, said the men of Colonial experience—the true practical men

—this may do for some kinds of produce. Cotton may be planted—coffee may be picked—indigo may be manufactured—all these kinds of work the Negro may probably be got to do; but at least the cane will cease to grow—the cane-piece can no more be hoed—nor the plant be hewn down—nor the juice boiled—and sugar will utterly cease out of the land. Now let the man of experience stand forward—the practical man, the inhabitant of the Colonies—I require that he now come forth with his prediction, and I meet him with the fact—Let him but appear and I answer for him, we shall hear him prophecy no more. Put to silence by the fact, which even these confident men have not the courage to deny, they will at length abandon this untenable ground. Twice as much sugar by the hour were found on my Noble Friend's inquiry (Lord Sligo) to be made since the apprenticeship as under the slave-system, and of a far better quality; and one planter on a vast scale has said that, with twenty free labourers he could do the work of a hundred slaves. But linger not on the islands where the gift of freedom has been but half bestowed—look to Antigua and Bermuda, where the wisdom and the virtue has been displayed, of at once giving complete emancipation. To Montserrat the same appeal might have been made, but for the folly of the Upper House, which threw out the bill passed in the Assembly by the representatives of the planters. But in Antigua and Bermuda, where for the last three years



and a half there has not even been an apprentice—where all have been at once made as free as the peasantry of this country—the produce has increased, not diminished, and increased notwithstanding the accidents of bad seasons, droughts, and fires.

But then we were told by those whose experience was reckoned worth so much more than our reasoning, that even if by some miracle industry should be found compatible with liberty, of which indeed we in our profound ignorance of human nature, had been wont to regard it as the legitimate offspring; at all events, the existence of order and tranquillity was altogether hopeless. After so long being inured to the abject state of Slavery, its sudden cessation, the instant transition from bondage to freedom, must produce convulsions all over the colonies, and the reign of rebellion and anarchy must begin. Not content with reasoning, the practical men condescended to tax their luxuriant imagination for tropes to dazzle and delude whom their arguments might fail to convince. The child could not walk alone if his leading-strings were cut away—the full-grown tree could not be transplanted—the limbs cramped by the chain could not freely move—the maniac might not safely be freed from the keeper's control—and Mr. Windham used to bring the play of his own lively fancy upon the question, and say that if it was a cruel thing to throw men out of the window, he saw no great kindness in making up for the injury you had done by

throwing them back again into the house. Alas! for all those prophecies—and reasonings—and theories—and figures of speech. The dawn of the First of August chased away the phantoms, and instead of revolt and conspiracy ushered in order and peace. But the fanciful men of experience, the real practical visionaries of the West Indies—though baffled were not defeated. Only wait, they said, till Christmas—all who know the Negro character then dread rebellion—all experience of Negro habits shews that to be the true season of revolt.—We did wait till Christmas—and what happened? I will go to Antigua, because there the emancipation began suddenly without any preparatory state of apprenticeship—with no gradual transition, but the chains knocked off at once, and the slave in an instant set free. Let then the men of practical experience hear the fact. For the first time these thirty years on that day, Christmas 1834, martial law was not proclaimed in Antigua. You call for facts; here is a fact—a fact that speaks volumes. You appeal to experience—here is our experience, your own experience; and now let the man who scoffed at reasoning—who laughed us to scorn as visionaries, deriding our theories as wild fancies, our plans of liberty as frantic schemes which never could be carried into effect, whose only fruit must be wide spreading rebellion, and which must entail the loss of all other colonies—let him come forward now; I dare him to deny one of the statements I



have made. Let those who thought the phrases "Jamaica Planter"—Colonial interest"—"West Indian residence"—flung into the scale of oppression, could make that of mercy and freedom kick the beam—let them now hear the fact and hold their peace; the fact that neither on the first day of emancipation, nor on the Christmas following, the Negro festival, was there any breach of the peace committed over all the West Indian world. Then after these predictions had all failed—these phantasies been all dispelled—the charges against the Negro race been thoroughly disproved—surely we might have looked for a submission to the test of experience itself, from the men of experience, and an acquittal of those so unjustly accused, after the case against them had been so signally defeated. No such thing. The accusers, though a second time discomfited, were not subdued; and there was heard a third appeal to a future day—an appeal which had I not read it in print, and heard of it in speeches, I could not have believed possible. Only wait, said these planters, till the anniversary of the First of August, and then you will witness the effects of your rash counsels! Monstrous effort of incurable prejudice—almost judicial blindness! As if they whom the event of liberation itself could not excite to commit the least disorderly act, would be hurried into rebellion by the return next year of the day on which it had happened; and having withstood all temptation to

irregular conduct in the hour of triumph, would plunge into excess in celebrating its anniversary! I will not insult the understandings of your Lordships by adding that this prediction shared the fate of all the rest. And are we then now to set at nought all the lessons of real and long continued and widely extended experience? Are we never to profit by that of which we are for ever to prate? I ask you not to take advantage of other men's experience, by making its fruits your own—to observe what they have done or have suffered, and wise by the example to follow or to avoid. That indeed is the part of wisdom, and reflecting men pride themselves upon pursuing such a course. But I ask nothing of the kind—my desires are more humble—my demand is more moderate far. I only ask you to be guided by the results of your own experience, to make some gain by that for which you have paid so costly a price. Only do not reject the lesson which is said, in the Book you all revere, to teach even the most foolish of our foolish kind; only shew yourselves as ready to benefit by experience as the fool whom it proverbially is able to teach—and all I desire is gained.

But now, my Lords, my task is accomplished, my work is done. I have proved my case, and may now call for judgment. I have demonstrated every part of the proposition which alone it is necessary that I should maintain, to prove the title of the apprentice to instant freedom from his task-

masters, because I have demonstrated that the liberation of the slave has been absolutely, universally safe—attended with not even inconvenience—nay, productive of ample benefits to his master. I have shewn that the apprentice works without compulsion, and that the reward of wages are a better incentive than the punishment of the lash. I have proved that labour for hire may anywhere be obtained as it is wanted and can be purchased—all the apprentices working extra hours for hire, and all the free Negroes, wherever their emancipation has been complete, working harder by much for the masters who have wherewithal to pay them, than the slave can toil for his owner or the apprentice for his master. Whether we look to the noble minded Colonies which have at once freed their slaves, or to those who still retain them in a middle and half-free condition, I have shewn that the industry of the Negro is undeniable, and that it is constant and productive in proportion as he is the director of its application and the master of its recompense. But I have gone a great deal further—I have demonstrated by a reference to the same experience—the same unquestioned facts—that a more quiet, peaceful, inoffensive, innocent race, is not to be found on the face of this earth than the Africans—not while dwelling in their own happy country, and enjoying freedom in a natural state, under their own palm trees, and by their native streams—but after they have been torn away

from it, enslaved, and their nature perverted in your Christian land, barbarized by the policy of civilized states—their whole character disfigured, if it were possible to disfigure it—all their feelings corrupted if you could have corrupted them. Every effort has been made to spoil the poor African—every resource of wicked ingenuity exhausted to deprave his nature—all the incentives to misconduct placed around him by the fiend-like artifice of Christian, civilized men—and his excellent nature has triumphed over all your arts—your unnatural culture has failed to make it bear the poisonous fruit that might well have been expected from such abominable husbandry—though enslaved and tormented, degraded and debased, as far as human industry could effect its purpose of making him blood-thirsty and savage, his gentle spirit has prevailed, and preserved, in spite of all your prophecies, aye, and of all your efforts, unbroken tranquillity over the whole Charaibbean chain ! Have I not then proved my case ? I shew you that the whole grounds of the arrangement of 1833, the very pretext for withholding complete emancipation, alleged incapacity for labour, and risk of insurrection, utterly fail. I rely on your own records ; I refer to that record which cannot be averred against ; I plead the record of your own statute. On what ground does its preamble rest the necessity of the intermediate or apprentice state—--all admitting that nothing but necessity could justify it ? “ Where-



as it is expedient that provision should be made for promoting the industry, and securing the good conduct of the manumitted Slaves.” These are the avowed reasons for the measure---these its only defence. All men confessed that were it not for the apprehension of liberated slaves not working voluntarily, and not behaving peaceably---of slavery being found to have unfitted them for industry, and of a sudden transition to complete freedom being fraught with danger to the peace of society—you had no right to make them indented apprentices, and must at once set them wholly free. But the fear prevailed, which, by the event, I have now a right to call a delusion; and the apprenticeship was reluctantly agreed to. The delusion went further. The planter succeeded in persuading us that he would be a vast loser by the change, and we gave him twenty millions sterling money to indemnify him for the supposed loss. The fear is found to be utterly baseless---the loss is a phantom of the brain—a shape conjured up by the interested parties to frighten our weak minds---and the only reality in this mockery is the payment of that enormous sum to the crafty and fortunate magician for his incantations. The spell is dissolved---the charm is over---the unsubstantial fabric of calculating alarm, reared by the Colonial body with our help, has been crushed to atoms, and its fragments scattered to the wind. And now, I ask, suppose it had been ascertained in 1833, when you made the Appren-

ticeship Law, that these alarms were absolutely groundless---the mere phantom of a sick brain, or contrivance of a sordid ingenuity---would a single voice have been raised in favour of the intermediate state? Would the words Indentured Apprenticeship ever have been pronounced? Would the man have been found endued with the courage to call for keeping the Negro in chains one hour after he had been acknowledged entitled to his freedom?

I freely admit that formerly, and before the event, when the measure was passed, the proof was upon us, who maintained that the experiment of emancipation was safe. We did not pretend to deny all risk; we allowed the possibility of a loss being sustained by the planters; nay, we did more; we took for granted there would be a loss, and a loss to the amount of twenty millions, and that vast sum we cheerfully paid to indemnify them. Then we had not the facts with us; all experience was said to be the other way; and because we could only offer argument against the opinions of practical men of local knowledge, we were fain to let them take every thing their own way, and receive our money by way of securing them against the possibility of damage. But now the case is reversed; the facts are all with us; experience has pronounced in our favour, and the burthen of the proof is thrown on the planter, or whoever would maintain, contrary to the result of the trial already made, that there is any risk whatever in absolute



emancipation. The case lies in a narrow compass ; the sudden transition from absolute slavery to apprenticeship—from the condition of chattels to that of men—has been made without the least danger whatever, though made without the least preparation. It is for those who, in spite of this undoubted fact, maintain that the lesser step of substituting freedom for apprenticeship will be dangerous, though made after a preparation of three years, to prove their position. Therefore I am not bound to maintain the opposite proposition, by any one argument or by a single fact. Nevertheless, I do prove the negative, against those upon whom it lies to prove the affirmative ; I gratuitously demonstrate, both by argument and by fact, that the transition to freedom from apprenticeship may be safely made. I appeal to the history of Antigua and Bermuda, where the whole process took place at once---where both steps were taken in one—and where, notwithstanding, there was more tranquillity than had ever before been enjoyed under the death-like silence of slavery. Nay, I prove even more than the safety of the step in question ; for in those Colonies the transition being so made at once, it follows, *a fortiori*, that the making the half transition, which alone remains to be made in the rest, is doubly free from all possible risk of any kind, either as to voluntary labour or orderly demeanour.

But this is not all---let us look at the subject

from another point. The twenty millions have been paid in advance, on the supposition of a loss being incurred. No loss, but a great gain has accrued to the planter. Then he has received our money for nothing; it is money paid under a mistake in fact, to propagate which he himself contributed. If such a transaction had happened between private parties, I know not that the payer of the money might not have claimed it back as paid under mistake; or if deception had been practised, that he was not equitably entitled to recover it. But without going so far, of this I am certain, that all men of honourable minds would in such circumstances have felt it hard to keep the party to his bargain. Again, view the matter from a different point, for I am desirous to have it narrowly examined on all sides. Suppose it is still maintained that the second step we require to be taken will be attended with risk—how much is the loss likely to be? Six years apprenticeship and the emancipation were reckoned at twenty millions. No loss has as yet accrued, and four years have elapsed. Then what right have you to estimate the loss of the two years that remain at more than the whole sum? But unless it exceeds that sum, the planter, by giving up these two years, manifestly loses nothing at all; for he has his compensation, even supposing the total loss to happen in two years, for which the money was given, on the supposition of a six years diminished income. But suppose

I make a present of this concession likewise, and admit that there may be a loss in the next two years as there has been a gain in the former four—have not I a right to set off that gain against any loss, and then unless twice as much shall be lost yearly in future as has been gained in past years, the planter is on the whole a gainer, even without taking the twenty millions into the account, and although there should be that double rate of loss, contrary to all probability: even without these twenty millions, he will on the whole have lost nothing. But I will not consent to leave that vast sum out of the account. It shall go in diminution of the loss, if any has been suffered. It shall be reckoned as received by the planters, and unless they lose, during the next two years, more than twenty millions over and above the gains they have made during the last four, I insist upon it that they be deemed to have suffered no loss at all, even if, contrary to all experience and all reason they lose by the change. What is the consequence of all this? That at the very least we have a right to make the planters bring their twenty millions to account, and give us credit for that sum—so that until their losses exceed it, they shall have no right whatever to complain. Take, now, a new view of the subject, in order that we may have left no stone unturned, no part of the whole subject unexplored—have we not at the very least a title to call upon the planters to consign the

money into a third party's hands, to pay it, as it were, into Court, until it shall be ascertained whether they sustain any loss at all, and, if any, to what amount? I defy all the quibblers in the world to shew what right the planters can have, if they insist upon retaining our money, now given for nothing, to keep the Negroes out of their liberty, that money having been paid to compensate a supposed loss, and experience having demonstrated that instead of loss, the present change has already been to them a gain. My proposal is this, and if the planters be of good faith it must at once settle the question, at least it must bring their sincerity to the test. They say they are afraid of a loss by the apprenticeship ceasing—then let them either pay the money into Court, or keep an account of their losses, and if they, at the end of the two years, after emancipating the apprentices, shall be found to have incurred any loss, let them be repaid out of the money. I agree that they should be further compensated should their losses exceed the twenty millions, provided they will consent to repay all the money that exceeds the losses actually sustained. This is my proposal—and I am as certain of its being fair as I am convinced it will be rejected with universal horror by the planters.

Once more I call upon your Lordships to look at Antigua and Bermuda. There is no getting over that—no answering it—no repelling the force with which our reason is assailed by the example of thirty



thousand negroes liberated in one night—liberated without a single instance of disturbance ensuing, and with the immediate substitution of voluntary work for hire in the stead of compulsory labour under the whip. There is no getting over that—no answering it—no repelling the force with which it assails the ordinary reason of ordinary men. But it is said that those Islands differ from Jamaica and Barbadoes, because they contain no tracts of waste or woody ground to which negroes may flee away from their masters, conceal themselves, and subsist in a Maroon state. I meet the objection as one in front, and I pledge myself to annihilate it in one minute by the clock. Why should free negroes run away and seek refuge in the woods, if slaves, or half slaves like apprentices, never think of escaping? That the slave should run away—that the apprentice should fly—is intelligible—but if they don't, why should a bettering of their condition increase their inclination to fly? They who do not flee from bondage and the lash, why should they from freedom, wages, independence, and comfort? But this is not all. If you dread their escape and marooning now, what the better will you be in 1840? Why are they to be less disposed then than now to fly from you? Is there any thing in the training of the present system to make two years more of it disarm all dislike of white severity, all inclination for the life of the Maroon? The minute is not yet out, and I think

I have disposed of the objection.—Surely, surely, we are here upon ground often trodden before by the advocates of human improvement, the friends of extended rights. This is the kind of topic we have so often been fated to meet on other questions of deep and exciting interest. The argument is like that against the repeal of the Penal Laws respecting Catholics—if it proves any thing, it proves far too much—if there be any substance in it, the conclusion is that we have gone too far already, and must retrace our steps—either complete the emancipation of the Catholics, or re-enact the Penal code. The enemies of freedom, be it civil or religious—be it political or personal—are all of the same sect, and deal in the same kind of logic. If this argument drawn from the danger of Negroes eloping in 1838, should we emancipate the apprentices, is worth any thing at all, it is a reason for not emancipating them in 1840, and consequently for repealing altogether the law of 1833. But I shall not live to hear any one man in any one circle of any one part of the globe, either in the Eastern hemisphere or in the Western, venture to breathe one whisper in favour of so monstrous a course. But I will not stop here. Lives there, my Lords, a man so ignorant of West Indian society, so blind to all that is passing in those regions, as to suppose that the continuance of the apprenticeship can either better the Negro's condition, or win him

over to more love for his master? I am prepared to grapple with this part also of the argument. I undertake to demonstrate that the state of the Negro is in but a very few instances better, and in many beyond all comparison worse, than ever it was in the time of slavery itself.

I begin by freely admitting that an immense benefit has been conferred by the cart-whip being utterly abolished. Even if the lash were ever so harshly or unsparingly or indiscriminately applied in execution of sentences pronounced by the Magistrate, still the difference between using it in obedience to judicial command, and using it as the stimulus to labour, is very great. The Negro is no longer treated as a brute, because the motive to his exertions is no longer placed without himself and in the driver's hand. This is, I admit, a very considerable change for the better in his condition, and it is the only one upon which he has to congratulate himself since the Act of Emancipation was passed. In no one other respect whatever is his condition improved—in many it is very much worse. I shall run over a few of these particulars, because the view of them bears most materially upon this whole question, and I cannot better prove the absolute necessity of putting an immediate end to the state of apprenticeship than by showing what the victims of it are daily fated to endure.

First of all as to the important article of food, to secure a supply of which in sufficient abun-

dance, the slave-regulating acts of all the islands have always been so anxiously directed—I will compare the prison allowance of Jamaica, with the apprentice allowance in Barbadoes, and other Colonies from which we have the returns, there being none in this particular from Jamaica itself. The allowance to prisoners is 14 pints weekly of Indian corn, and different quantities of other grain, but comparing one will be sufficient for our purpose. In Barbadoes the allowance to apprentices is only 10 pints, while in the leeward islands and Dominica it is no more than 8 pints ; for the Crown Colonies the slave allowance before 1834 was 21 pints ; in the same Colonies the apprentice receives but 10 ; so that in the material article of food there is the very reverse of an improvement effected upon the Negro's condition. Next as to time—it is certain that he should have half a day in the week, the Friday, to work his own provision-ground, beside Saturday to attend the market, and the Sabbath for rest and religious instruction. The Emancipation Act specifies 45 hours as the number which he shall work weekly for his master. But these are now so distributed as to occupy the whole of Friday ; and even in some cases to trench upon Saturday too. The planter also counts those hours invariably from the time when the Negro having arrived at the place of work, begins his labour. But as it constantly happens that some at least of the Negroes on an estate have several miles



to walk from their cottages, all the time thus consumed in going and returning is wholly lost to the Negro. Nay, it is lost to the master as well as the apprentice, and so long as he is not compelled to reckon it in the statutory allowance, it will continue a loss to both parties. For as no reason whatever can be assigned why the Negro huts should be on the frontier of the plantation, only make the time, frequently as much at present as three or four hours a day, consumed in going and returning, count for part of the 45 hours a week, and I'll answer for it all the Negroes will be provided with cottages, near the place of their toil.

I come now to the great point of the Justice administered to the people of colour. And here let me remind your Lordships how little that deserves the name of justice, which is administered wholly by one class, and that the dominant class, in a society composed of two races wholly distinct in origin and descent, whom the recollection of wrongs and sufferings have kept still more widely apart, and taught scarcely to regard each other as brethren of the same species. All judicial offices are filled by those whose feelings, passions, and interests are constantly giving them a bias towards one, and from the other, of the parties directly appearing before the judgment-seat. If to a great extent this is an unavoidable evil, surely you are bound, by every means possible, to prevent its receiving any unnecessary aggravation. Yet we do

aggravate it by appointing to the place of puisne judge natives of the colonies, and proprietors of estates. From the same privileged class are taken all who compose the juries, both in criminal and in civil cases, to assess damages for injuries done by whites to blacks—to find bills of indictment for crimes committed upon the latter class—to try those whom the Grand Jury presents—to try Negroes charged with offences by their masters. Nay, all magistrates, goalers, turnkeys—all concerned in working every part of the apparatus of jurisprudence, executive as well as administrative, are of one tribe alone. What is the consequence? It is proverbial that no bills are found for maltreatment, how gross soever, of the Negroes. Six were preferred by a humane individual at one assize, and all flung out. Some were for manslaughter, others for murder. Assize after assize presents the same result. A wager was on one occasion offered, that not a single bill would be found that assize, and nobody was found to take it; prudent was the refusal proved by the result: for all the bills were ignored, without any exception. Now, your Lordships will observe, that in no one case could any evidence have been examined by those Grand Juries, except against the prisoner. In cases of murder sworn to, as plainly as the shining of the sun at noon-day tide, by witness after witness—still they said, “No Bill.” Nay, they sometimes said so when only part of the witnesses for the prosecution

had been heard, and refused to examine the others that were tendered.

The punishments inflicted are of monstrous severity. The law is wickedly harsh ; its execution is committed to hands that exasperate that cruelty. For the vague, undefined, undefinable offence of insolence, thirty-nine lashes ; the same number for carrying a knife in the pocket ; for cutting the shoot of a cane-plant, fifty lashes, or three months imprisonment in that most loathsome of all dungeons a West Indian gaol. There seems to have prevailed at all times among the lawgivers of the Slave Colonies a feeling, of which—I grieve to say, those of the mother country have partaken ; that there is something in the nature of a slave—something in the disposition of the African race—something in the habits of those hapless victims of our crimes, our cruelties and frauds—which requires a peculiar harshness of treatment from their rulers, and makes what in other men's cases we call justice and mercy, cruelty to society and injustice to the law in theirs—inducing us to visit with the extremity of rigour in the African what if done by our own tribes would be slightly visited or not at all, as though there were in the Negro nature something so obdurate that no punishment with which they can be punished would be too severe. Prodigious, portentous injustice ! As if we had a right to blame any but ourselves for whatever there may be of harsh or cunning in our

slaves—as if we were entitled to visit upon him that disposition were it obdurate, those habits were they insubordinate, those propensities were they dishonest, (all of which I deny them to be, and every day's experience justifies my denial), but were these charges as true as they are foully slanderous and absolutely false—is it for us to treat our victims harshly for failings or for faults with which our treatment of him has corrupted and perverted his nature, instead of taking to ourselves the blame—punishing ourselves at least with self-abasement and atoning with deepest shame for having implanted vice in a pure soil? If some capricious despot were in the career of ordinary tyranny to tax his pampered fancy to produce something more monstrous, more unnatural than himself; were he to graft the thorn upon the vine, or place the dove among vultures to be reared—much as we might marvel at this freak of a perverted appetite, we should marvel still more if we saw tyranny exceed even its own measure of proverbial unreasonableness, and complain because the grape was not gathered from the thorn, or because the dove so trained had a thirst for blood. Yet this is the unnatural caprice—this the injustice—the gross, the foul, the outrageous, the monstrous the incredible injustice of which we are daily and hourly guilty towards the whole of the ill-fated African race! My Lords, we fill up the measure of this injustice by executing laws wickedly con-



ceived, in a yet more atrocious spirit of cruelty. Our whole punishments smell of blood. Let the treadmill stop, from the weary limbs and exhausted frame of the sufferers no longer having the power to press it down the requisite number of turns in a minute—the lash instantly resounds through the mansion of woe! Let the stone spread out to be broken, not crumble fast enough beneath the arms already scarred, flayed, and wealed by the whip—again the scourge tears afresh the half-healed flesh! Within the last hour before I entered this house, I heard from an eye-witness of the fact as disgusting as it was appalling, that a leper among the prisoners was cut to pieces by stripes with the rest. And in passing let me here note the universal but cruel practice of placing the patients stricken with infectious diseases in hospitals, and in prisons among others, upon almost all private estates; and the no less unjust and exclusively West Indian practice of cruelly and stingily compelling the prisoners to go out daily and find their own food instead of the master supplying them in the gaol—a refinement of harshness and meanness not, I venture to assert, ever reached by the tyrant-master of the Siberian mines. But I was speaking of the public prison, and there as the leper had been scourged, so when a miserable wretch whose legs were one mass of ulcerated flesh from former inflictions, gave some offence to his taskmasters, he was on those limbs mangled anew

by the merciless application of the lash. I have told you how the bills for murdering negroes were systematically thrown out by the Grand Juries. But you are not to imagine that bills are never found by those just men, even bills against whites. A person of this cast had, unable to bridle his indignation, roused by the hideous spectacle I have described (so disgusting, but that all other feelings are lost in pity for the victim and rage against his oppressor), repaired to the Governor and informed him of what he had witnessed. Immediately the Grand Jury, instead of acknowledging his humane and, in a slave Colony, his gallant conduct, found a bill against him, and presented him as a nuisance !

My Lords, I have had my attention directed within the last two hours to the new mass of papers laid on our table from the West Indies. The bulk I am averse to break ; but a sample I have culled of its hateful contents. Eleven females were punished by severe flogging—and then put on the treadmill, where they were compelled to ply until exhausted nature could endure no more. When faint, and about to fall off, they were suspended by the arms in a manner that has been described to me by a most respectable eye-witness of similar scenes, but not so suspended as that the mechanism could revolve clear of their persons ; for the wheel at each turn bruised and galled their legs, till their sufferings had reached the pitch when life can no longer even glimmer in the

socket of the weary frame. In the course of a few days these wretched beings languished, to use the language of our law—that law which is thus so constantly and systematically violated—and “languishing, died.” Ask you if crimes like these, murderous in their legal nature as well as frightful in their aspect, passed unnoticed—if inquiry was neglected to be made respecting these deaths in a prison? No such thing! The forms of justice were on this head peremptory, even in the West Indies---and those forms, the handmaids of Justice, were present, though their sacred Mistress was far away. The coroner duly attended—his jury were regularly impannelled—eleven inquisitions were made in order—and eleven verdicts returned. Murder! manslaughter! misdemeanour! misconduct! No—but “Died by the visitation of God!”—Died by the visitation of God! A lie!—a perjury!—a blasphemy! The visitation of God! Yes, for it is among the most awful of those visitations by which the inscrutable purposes of his will are mysteriously accomplished, that he sometimes arms the wicked with power to oppress the guiltless; and if there be any visitation more dreadful than another—any which more tries the faith and vexes the reason of erring mortals, it is when Heaven showers down upon the earth the plague—not of scorpions, or pestilence, or famine, or war—but of Unjust Judges and perjured Jurors—wretches who pervert the law to wreak their personal vengeance or compass

their sordid ends, and forswear themselves on the Gospels of God, to the end that injustice may prevail, and the innocent be destroyed !

*Sed non immensum Spatiis confecimus æquor  
Et jam tempus equis formantia soluere colla.*

I hasten to a close. There remains little to add. It, is, my Lords, with a view to prevent such enormities as I have feebly pictured before you, to correct the administration of justice, to secure the comforts of the Negroes, to restrain the cruelty of the tormentors, to amend the discipline of the prisons, to arm the Governors with local authority over the police ; it is with these views that I have formed the first five of the resolutions now upon your table, intending they should take effect during the very short interval of a few months which must elapse before the sixth shall give complete liberty to the slave. I entirely concur in the observation of Mr. Burke, repeated and more happily expressed by Mr. Canning, that the masters of slaves are not to be trusted with making laws upon Slavery ; that nothing they do is ever found effectual ; and that if by some miracle they ever chance to enact a wholesome regulation, it is always found to want what Mr. Burke calls “ the executory principle ;” it fails to execute itself. But experience has shewn that when the lawgivers of the Colonies find you are firmly determined to do your duty, they anticipate you by doing theirs. Thus, when you announced the bill for amending



the Emancipation Act, they outstript you in Jamaica, and passed theirs before yours could reach them. Let then your resolutions only shew you to be in good earnest now, and I have no doubt a corresponding disposition will be evinced on the other side of the Atlantic. These improvements are, however, only to be regarded as temporary expedients—as mere palliatives of an enormous mischief, for which the only effectual remedy is that Complete Emancipation which I have demonstrated by the unerring and incontrovertible evidence of facts, as well as the clearest deductions of reason, to be safe and practicable, and therefore proved to be our imperative duty at once to proclaim.

From the instant that glad sound is wafted across the ocean, what a blessed change begins; what an enchanting prospect unfolds itself! The African, placed on the same footing with other men, becomes in reality our fellow-citizen—to our feelings, as well as in his own nature our equal, our brother. No difference of origin or of colour can now prevail to keep the two castes apart. The Negro, master of his own labour, only induced to lend his assistance if you make it his interest to help you, yet that aid being absolutely necessary to preserve your existence, becomes an essential portion of the community, nay, the very portion upon which the whole must lean for support. This ensures him all his rights; this makes it not only no longer possible to keep him in thralldom, but places him in a complete and intimate union with the whole mass of Colonial society.

Where the driver and the gaoler once bore sway, the lash resounds no more ; nor does the clank of the chain any more fall upon the troubled ear ; the fetter has ceased to gall the vexed limb, and the very mark disappears which for a while it had left. All races and colours run together the same, glorious race of improvement. Peace unbroken, harmony uninterrupted, calm unruffled, reigns in mansion and in field—in the busy street, and the fertile valley, where nature, with the lavish hand she extends under the tropical sun, pours forth all her bounty profusely, because received in the lap of cheerful industry, not extorted by hands cramped with bonds. Delightful picture of general prosperity and social progress in all the arts of civility and refinement ! But another form is near !—and I may not shut my eyes to that less auspicious vision ! I do not deny that danger exists—I admit it not to be far distant from our path. I descry it, but not in the quarter to which West Indian eyes for ever turn. The planter, as usual, looks in the wrong direction. Averting his eyes from the real risk, he is ready to pay the price of his blindness, and rush upon his ruin. His interest tells him he is in jeopardy, but it is a false interest, and misleads him as to the nature of the risk he runs. They, who always dreaded Emancipation—who were alarmed at the prospect of Negro indolence—who stood aghast at the vision of Negro rebellion should the chains cease to

rattle, or the lash to resound through the air—gathering no wisdom from the past, still persist in affrighting themselves and scaring you, with imaginary apprehensions from the transition to entire freedom out of the present intermediate state. But that intermediate state is the very source of all their real danger ; and I disguise not its magnitude from myself. You have gone too far if you stop here and go no further ; you are in imminent hazard if having loosened the fetters you do not strike them off—if leaving them ineffectual to restrain, you let them remain to gall, and to irritate, and to goad. Beware of that state, yet more unnatural than slavery itself—liberty bestowed by halves—the power of resistance given—the inducement to submission withheld—you have let the slave taste of the cup of freedom ; while intoxicated with the draught beware how you dash the cup away from his lips. You have produced the progeny of liberty—see the prodigious hazard of swathing the limbs of the gigantic infant—you know not the might that may animate it. Have a care, I beseech you have a care, how you rouse the strength that slumbers in the sable peasant's arm ! The children of Africa under the tropical sun of the West, with the prospect of a free Negro Republic in sight, will not suffer themselves to be tormented when they no longer can be controlled. The fire in St. Domingo is raging to windward,

its sparks are borne on the breeze, and all the Charaibbean sea is studded with the materials of explosion. Every tribe, every shade of the Negro race will combine from the fiery Koromantin to the peaceful Eboe, and the ghastly shape of Colonial destruction meets the astonished eye—

“ If shape it may be called that shape has none  
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;  
Or substance may be called that shadow seems  
For each seems either ; black it stood as night,  
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell !”

I turn away from the horrid vision that my eye may rest once more on the prospect of enduring empire, and peace founded upon freedom. I regard the freedom of the Negro as accomplished and sure. Why ? Because it is his right—because he has shown himself fit for it—because a pretext or a shadow of a pretext can no longer be devised for withholding that right from its possessor. I know that all men at this day take a part in the question, and they will no longer bear to be imposed upon now they are well informed. My reliance is firm and unflinching upon the great change which I have witnessed—the education of the people unfettered by party or by sect—witnessed from the beginning of its progress, I may say from the hour of its birth. Yes ! It was not for a humble man like me to assist at Royal births with the illustrious Prince who condescended to grace the pageant of this opening



session, or the Great Captain and Statesman in whose presence I am now proud to speak. But with that illustrious Prince, and with the father of the Queen, I assisted at that other birth, more conspicuous still. With them, and with the Head of the house of Russell, incomparably more illustrious in my eyes, I watched over its cradle—I marked its growth—I rejoiced in its strength—I witnessed its maturity—I have been spared to see it ascend the very height of supreme power; directing the councils of State; accelerating every great improvement; uniting itself with every good work; propping all useful institutions; extirpating abuses in all our institutions; passing the bounds of our European dominion, and in the New world, as in the Old, proclaiming that freedom is the birth-right of man—that distinction of colour gives no title to oppression—that the chains now loosened must be struck off, and even the marks they have left effaced—proclaiming this by the same eternal law of our nature which makes nations the masters of their own destiny, and which in Europe has caused every tyrant's throne to quake! But they need feel no alarm at the progress of light who defend a limited monarchy and support popular institutions --- who place their chiefest pride not in ruling over slaves, be they white or be they black, not in protecting the oppressor, but in wearing a constitutional crown, in holding the sword of justice with the hand of mercy, in being the first citizen of a coun-

try whose air is too pure for slavery to breathe, and on whose shores, if the captive's foot but touch, his fetters of themselves fall off. To the resistless progress of this great principle I look with a confidence which nothing can shake; it makes all improvement certain; it makes all change safe which it produces; for none can be brought about, unless all has been prepared in a cautious and salutary spirit. So now the fulness of time is come for at length discharging our duty to the African captive. I have demonstrated to you that every thing is ordered---every previous step taken---all safe, by experience shewn to be safe, for the long-desired consummation. The time has come, the trial has been made, the hour is striking: you have no longer a pretext for hesitation, or faltering, or delay. The Slave has shown, by four years' blameless behaviour, and devotion to the pursuits of peaceful industry, that he is as fit for his freedom as any English peasant, aye or any Lord whom I now address. I demand his rights: I demand his liberty without stint. In the name of justice and of law---in the name of reason---in the name of God, who has given you no right to work injustice---I demand that your brother be no longer trampled upon as your slave! I make my appeal to the Commons, who represent the free people of England; and I require at their hands the performance of that condition for which they paid so enormous a price---that condition which all their

constituents are in breathless anxiety to see fulfilled! I appeal to this House. Hereditary judges of the first tribunal in the world—to you I appeal for justice! Patrons of all the arts that humanize mankind—under your protection I place humanity herself! To the merciful Sovereign of a free people I call aloud for mercy to the hundreds of thousands for whom half a million of her Christian sisters have cried aloud—I ask that their cry may not have risen in vain. But first I turn my eye to the throne of all justice, and devoutly humbling myself before Him who is of purer eyes than to behold such vast iniquities, I implore that the curse hovering over the head of the unjust and the oppressor be averted from us—that your hearts may be turned to mercy---and that over all the earth His will may at length be done!

THE END.