



Presented by  
the Worshipful Company  
of Goldsmiths.  
1903.

*Washington MS*

**OPINIONS**

OF

**HENRY BROUGHAM, ESQ.**

ON

**Negro Slavery.**

✓

# OPINIONS

OF

HENRY BROUGHAM, ESQ.

ON

Negro Slavery:

WITH

REMARKS.

---

LONDON :

PRINTED FOR WHITMORE AND FENN,

HOMER'S HEAD, CHARING CROSS,

1826.

OPINIONS  
OF  
HENRY BROUGHAM, ESQ.  
ON  
**Negro Slavery.**

---

*Of the peculiarities of the West Indian Population, and the difficulties of a transition from Slavery to Freedom.*

IT may fairly be assumed, as a general principle, that a multitude collected at random from various savage nations, and habituated to no subordination but that of domestic slavery, are totally unfit for uniting in the regulations of regular government, or being suddenly moulded into one system of artificial society. In fact, the sudden formation of a political body has always been found the most arduous achievement in the art of governing.—*Colonial Policy*, vol. ii. pp. 146, 7.

Our Colonies are at present inhabited by a race of negro slaves; they are not possessed of men fit for the situation of subjects. They have as yet only the bodies of subjects; bodies animated by the minds of slaves in the rudest state of society; and no power under that which called them into existence can *at once* transform them into men capable of supporting the relations re-

quired for the constitution of a free and civilized community. *They are utterly unfit for the relations of voluntary labourers in a regular and civilized state.*—*Col. Pol.* ii. 120, 1.

In fact, there is at least as wide a difference between the habits of a slave and those of a free subject, as between the nature of an African and that of a European. A slave has to learn the difficult lesson of industry; as different from compulsory labour as it is from indolence and sloth. Hitherto he has only obeyed the impulse of another man's will; he has been actuated by no motives but the fear of the lash. The gift of liberty brings with it the burthen of thinking and willing and planning; the task of providing subsistence for himself and his family; the obligation of performing all the social duties. The slave restored to liberty has only had experience of those parts of the functions of a citizen, which in themselves are so disagreeable to his nature, *that nothing but violence could have induced him to perform them.* It is hard to say from which of the two states, of slavery or rebellion, the transition to the rank of a free subject is the greatest and most difficult. But the negroes are not only in a state of slavery, they are in a low state of civilization. The industry of a savage, his habits of voluntary obedience, his capacity for enjoying civil and political rights, and in general his fitness for becoming the subject of a peaceable and regular community, is, if possible, more limited than that of a mere slave. He has all those habits of voluntary exertion to learn, which are wholly unknown to the members of barbarous tribes, and which form the bond of union among the inhabitants of civilized society. The inhabitants of rude nations, indeed, know of no

medium between the extremes of servility and despotic sway. They consist only of two classes of people—tyrants or masters, and slaves. Force is the only inducement to exertion, and indolence the chief reward of wealth or power.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 134.

*Of the fallacy of the Free Negro System, and the necessity of the fear of Punishment to excite Labour.*

The complicated iniquities and the manifold disadvantages of the slave system, have for several years called the attention of European statesmen to the correction of abuses so flagrant, and the remedy of evils so pregnant with danger. Various expedients have been proposed during the wide discussion which those momentous questions have excited. Some *zealots* have contended, with an *inexcusable thoughtlessness*, that the crimes of those whose avarice has transferred the population of Africa to the West Indies, can only be expiated by immediate emancipation of the slaves. The counsels of such *fanatics* have unhappily been adopted and carried into effect by one of the most enlightened nations in the world; *and we have seen the consequences of those insane measures.* Of the plans sketched out, the most important are those which recommend an amelioration in the condition of the negroes, and a gradual change in their hard lot. It has been suggested by many, that settlements not yet cultivated may be peopled by free negroes; and the most sanguine hopes have been entertained of the salutary consequences of such a scheme. Any plan which comprehends the idea of free negroes, or includes the word, is peculiarly adapted to accord with the feelings of those worthy persons who are so keenly alive to the sufferings



of the Africans in a state of bondage. It is natural, therefore, that the schemes to which I allude should be well received, and even eagerly embraced, before a sufficient interval is allowed for sober examination. *These projects are dangerous in the extreme.* I shall prove, from the most simple and obvious considerations, the inefficacy and impossibility of the plans proposed, and then that the dangers of the new order of things intended to be established by such schemes, would be so great as to render their utter impracticability a real blessing.

The desires and wants of man in a rude state are few, and easily gratified. The chief exertion to which necessity impels him is the procuring of food, and his hunger is no sooner satisfied than he sinks into the luxury of repose. When the natural fertility of the soil affords him spontaneously, a regular, though simple perhaps, and scanty supply, the powers of his mind become languid and feeble, his corporeal strength decays, and he regards as the greatest of all evils, any occupation that calls for mental exertion, or is attended with bodily fatigue. The negroes, though in a less degree, are nearly in the same circumstances with the American Indians, to whose bondage and toils they have been doomed to succeed. Born in a less genial climate, and compelled to procure their sustenance by somewhat greater exertions, they are not content with so small a portion of food, and view with less horror the labour of providing it. But beyond this their industry does not extend ; like all savages, they are excited to exertion only by immediate necessity. If you talk to them of conveniences and comforts, and the delights of activity, you speak a language which they have not yet learned to

comprehend; and the idea of a pleasure which must be purchased with a toil, presents to their minds a contradiction in terms. Were they, indeed, allowed to remain in their own country, the influence of those desires which spring from local attachment, the ties of kindred, and the intercourse of more civilized men, *might by slow degrees, awaken those appetites, and excite those artificial wants, which alone can excite regular and effective industry.* But if suddenly removed to a milder climate, and a more plentiful soil, with their original repugnance to exert more labour than necessity prescribes, *it cannot be imagined that any thing except the power of a master can prevent them from sinking into a state of listless inactivity.* Accordingly the negroes who have been transported to America are uniformly found to be totally deficient in active industry. That those who continue in a state of slavery should exhibit the appearance of an indolence, which nothing but the immediate terror of the lash can overcome, is perhaps more the consequence of their degraded condition, than of their uncivilized state. *But the want of activity is not confined to the slaves ;* the free negroes are, with very few exceptions, equally averse to all sorts of labour which do not contribute to the supply of their immediate and most urgent wants. Improvident and careless of the future, they are not actuated by that principle which inclines more civilized men to equalize their exertions at all times, and to work after the necessaries of the day have been procured, in order to make up the possible deficiencies of to-morrow ; nor has their intercourse with the whites taught them to consider any gratification as worth obtaining, which cannot be obtained by a slight exertion of a desultory and capricious industry. The slaves, indeed, who are forced to labour during the whole week for their



masters, shew some symptoms of application in cultivating their own provision-grounds on the holidays allowed them: but the most indolent of men, if pushed into activity for the advantage of others, will naturally continue their exertions, at least for a short time, when they are themselves to reap the fruits of the additional toil; and the voluntary labour for their own profit, during the little interval of liberty, may become tolerable, by forming a contrast to the unrepaid and compulsory fatigues in which by far the greater part of their days are spent. In fact, even under these favourable circumstances, the slaves in our West Indian Islands allot but a very small portion of their free time to the work for which they are with certainty to be recompensed, by *gains that no master ever interferes with*. Out of the six days per month, besides accidental holidays which are allowed them in Jamaica for the cultivation of their grounds, the more industrious do not allow above sixteen hours to this employment. *As to the free negroes, it appears that their industry is still more sparing*: of their invincible repugnance to all sorts of labour, the most ample evidence is produced in the Report of the Committee of Privy Council, in 1788; and the accounts which foreigners have given of the same class of men, in almost all the other Colonies, agree most accurately with the statements collected by the Committee of Privy Council. The Abbé Raynal himself, with all his ridiculous fondness for savages, cannot in the present instance so far twist the facts according to his fancies and feelings, as to give a favourable portrait of this degraded race. Nor does it seem to be of much consequence, in this view of the matter, whether the new stock of negroes is imported at once from Africa, or purchased in a state of slavery

from the old settlements. Those who have been slaves, either in European plantations or the kingdoms of Africa, especially the former, will, from habit, be more prepared for labour, and more skilful in performing work, than free men in a rude state, who have never experienced the hardships of fatigue. The Mydah negroes, in their own country, are, for the most part, in a state of bondage; and their lands are in much better cultivation than those of the other tribes. Accordingly, in the West Indies they are uniformly preferred to all others for docility, quietness, and submission to the master. The Koro-mantees unite to greater strength a more fierce and untameable disposition; but such of them as have been slaves in Africa are observed to apply with greater alacrity and effect to field-labour. *These habits of industry, however, have been formed by the constant dread of punishment: no principle less powerful can maintain them; and they must cease with the master's authority, to which they owed their existence.—Col. Pol. ii. 404, et seq.*

The partial and nominal subjection of the negroes, or their submission, as subjects, to the authority of those men whom they formerly obeyed as slaves, will be merely an intermediate and temporary result of the colonial crisis, and cannot be expected long to exist. Various circumstances, both in the situation of the negroes themselves, and in that of the Europeans, concur to render such an arrangement only temporary, and to prevent it from being any thing more than an intermediate state, preparatory to a further and more permanent change. It must be remembered that the peculiar situation of the negroes will have very little tendency to promote their contentment and peaceable demeanour. They will form

the oppressed and labouring part of the community, destitute of property, deprived of the most essential privileges; toiling for a mere subsistence, whilst others are enjoying the fruits of their exertions. The class thus oppressed, too, will be united by common origin, habits, and complexion; indelibly distinguished from the superior order by the same circumstances; united to the rest of the community by no common principles or interest, and held in subjection, though not in slavery, by a handful of strangers. It is easy to see that so unnatural a state of things cannot have a long duration; that a body formed of such jarring principles must contain within itself the seeds of speedy dissolution. A race of men such as the Africans can only be kept in subjection by the whites so long as they are in chains: "the day that makes a man a slave," says Homer, "destroys half his worth; the day that breaks his fetters destroys the whole authority and security of his master." Whilst the slave system exists, the division of the negroes, the watchful eye of the overseer, the constant fear of the driver's lash, may prevent the multitude from uniting and overpowering the least numerous class of the community. The masters, though few in numbers, are civilized and united. Each proprietor of slaves has one constant and simple end in view--the preserving of subordination, and the furtherance of work. The slaves are powerful, indeed, in numbers, but incapable of acting with premeditation or skill, and are prevented from combining, not only by the perpetual attention of the master, but by various circumstances in their own character and habits. *If, however, for the close inspection, the interested care, and the absolute authority of the master, there is substituted the general superintendence, the limited power, and the unconcerned exertions of the government,*

*checked by the acknowledged rights of the negro subjects, it is easy to see how rapidly a still further change will be accomplished, how short will be the duration of European property and power. The circumstances of the negroes, and their relative situation to the whites, will be constantly tending to consummate the colonial revolution, by establishing the complete independence, or, which is the same thing, the supremacy of the most powerful class, and effecting the total extirpation of their former masters.—Col. Pol. ii. 133, et seq.*

*Of the necessity of Absolute Power and of Corporal Punishment.*

*Nothing but the subdivision of the negroes, and their subjection to the power of masters armed with absolute authority, can prevent them from acquiring that ascendancy to which decided superiority in numbers and strength naturally and invariably leads.—Col. Pol. ii. 310.*

It requires very little argument to prove that the quantity of work which may be obtained from a labourer or drudge is liable to be affected as much by the injurious treatment that he receives, as by the idleness in which he may be permitted to indulge. Where this drudge is a slave, no motive but fear can operate upon his diligence and attention. A constant inspection is therefore absolutely necessary; and a perpetual terror of the lash is the only preventive of indolence.—*Ibid.* ii. 451.

*Of admitting Negro Evidence.*

The mere circumstance of slavery is not the only reason for rejecting the testimony of the blacks against



the Europeans in the American Colonies. The distinction of race ; the radical difference of manners and character ; the perpetual opposition of interests as well as prejudices ; the inefficacy of oaths in the mind tempted by passion, uninfluenced by religious impression, and a stranger to the dictates of honour ; *these are the circumstances which render a negro's testimony utterly inadmissible against a white man ;* and they will mark the situation of the vassal as decisively as they now do that of the slave.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 432.

*Of the Time required to alter the Habits of the Negro.*

I must be allowed to suspect that before we people the unsettled Colonies with negroes who will work for hire, we must discover a new race of Africans, industrious in their own country, or invent some method of operating instantaneously upon the tribes already known an enlargement of desires and a change of habits, *which, in the natural progress of human society, is the slow produce of many succeeding ages.*—*Ibid.* ii. 419.

*Of the inefficacy of Laws to modify the conditions of Men in the West Indies.*

It is evident that two orders of men must be formed in the West Indies: the whites, possessed of all the land, entrusted with the whole civil power, clothed with domestic authority ; and the blacks, whose lives are spent in poverty and subjection, toiling for masters whom they consider as a different race of beings, and in whom they recognize the enemies that tore them from their country.

Between these two orders, there can exist no bond of union but that of force: they are the oppressors and the oppressed. Similarity of complexion and situation will constantly excite the one against the other, and *there will be no intermediate class, at least for a series of years, to soften the transition, to hold the balance, or to connect the two classes together.* The white will always view the black as a being of an inferior order, bought with his money, depending on him for support, and born for his use. Nay, should we succeed in finding or creating a new generation of white proprietors, half the work would still remain. The Africans, too, must undergo a radical change; they must be enlightened with the ideas of abstract philanthropy, and inspired with the sense of general expediency and love of order. In such circumstances, it is idle to talk of laws and regulations. Men must be first found ready to obey and to conform; manners and circumstances are independent of any institutions, however positive. It is vain to think of securing the privileges of the negro vassal, so long as the hand of nature has distinguished him from his lord, and the circumstances of his situation have given him the superiority in numbers as well as strength. The modifications of slavery, established by law in favour of the negroes, will, without rendering their situation much more tolerable, give them far greater opportunities to disturb the peace of the Colony. It is easy, then, to see the result of all this. The Planters, knowing that by law their vassals have certain rights, will use their power over them with far less moderation than if they lay wholly at their mercy. The negroes, on their part, finding how nugatory their constitutional privileges become, in the particulars most essential to their happiness, and united by every tie which can induce men



to make common cause, will avail themselves of the few advantages of which their superiors cannot deprive them, *and will at once revenge the injuries of their race.*—*Col. Pol.* ii. 450, *et seq.*

*Of the impolicy of any interference by Parliament in the Slave Codes of the Colonies.*

The details of the slave laws require minute and accurate acquaintance with an infinite variety of particulars, which can only be known to those who reside on the spot. To revise the domestic codes of the Colonies would be a task which no European government could undertake, for want of information, and for want of time. Any parliament, council, or senate, which should begin such a work, would find it necessary to give up legislating for the mother country, in order partly to mar and partly to neglect the legislation of the Colonies. Let this branch of the imperial administration then be left to the care of those *who are themselves the most immediately interested in the good order and government of those distant provinces, and whose knowledge of local circumstances (of those things which cannot be written down in reports, nor told by witnesses) is more full and practical.* The questions of regulation are many and complex; they are stated by a *quomodo*; they lead to the discovery of means, and the comparison of measures proposed. Without pretending to dispute the supremacy of the mother country, we may be allowed to doubt her omniscience; *and the colonial history of modern Europe may well change our doubts into disbelief.* Without standing up for the privileges of the Colonies, we may suggest their more intimate acquaintance with the details of the question, and maintain that the

interest both of the mother country and the Colonies requires a subdivision of the labour of legislation; a delegation of certain duties and inquiries to those who are most nearly connected with the result, and situated within the reach of the materials.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 504.

*Of the Danger arising to the West India Colonies from the Example of, and Communication with, St. Domingo.*

The permanent superiority of the Africans in St. Domingo is an event which is on the eve of being accomplished. It is an event which at all times may be expected, and is, in fact, the natural consequence of that policy, equally incautious and inhuman, by which the Antilles have been peopled by African slaves.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 142.

The neighbourhood of a negro state will prepare our slaves for ideas of independence; and the first incursions of the enemy must be the signal for revolt.—*Ibid.* ii. 155.

There is, indeed, no direct communication between the people of St. Domingo and the great body of field-negroes in the opposite islands: but these have various opportunities of obtaining information from their brethren who are employed as house-servants, and who thus learn the state of affairs in a quarter that must occupy the conversation of their masters; from the artificers in the towns, whose intercourse with Europeans is more extensive, and who are always better informed; from the free blacks, who as a body, indeed, cannot disturb the peace of our Colonies, but who rank among their numbers many idle and dissolute persons, ready to instruct the slaves in

what is going on ; and, last of all, from the negro servants who return to the West Indies, after having acquired, by their residence in Europe as free men, a large portion of information, and imbibed many of the opinions universally prevalent upon the subject of negro slavery. Without supposing, then, that the African inhabitants of St. Domingo have become infected with that rage of proselytizing which distinguished their former masters, or that any measures have been pursued in the other islands for enlightening and exciting the negroes, it is manifest, from the constitution of the communities of which they form a part, that they will have ample opportunities for information ; and, upon such topics, it is the same act to inform and to interest men placed in their situation. Indeed, when we consider how much of the subordination of the negroes is derived from the habitual conviction of the decided superiority of white men, and their constitutional terror of opposing them, surely nothing can operate more immediately the destruction of those feelings, and of all the force which the negro chains derive from them, than the spectacle constantly presented to their eyes, plain and intelligible even to Africans—of their countrymen in the neighbouring island possessing the territory in full sovereignty, clothed with the spoils and covered with the blood of Europeans.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 154.

The negroes, then, are the enemies most to be dreaded in America by all Europeans ; they are the natural foes of white men, who are distinguished from them by indelible marks in body, *and by marks almost indelible in mind.* The hostility has originated in every species of cruelty and oppression on the part of the most civilized,

but least numerous class; it has been cemented by length and variety of injuries; it has been occasionally inflamed by reciprocal ferocity and barbarous revenge, on the part of the savages; it is rendered perpetual by all those events and habits of animosity, and by those essential marks of natural distinction.

With such a power as the new black republic no European colony can form a league against any other European colony, or any other negro state. The negroes are alike hostile to all who have been masters of Africans, to all who are civilized and white. If any power deserves the name of a natural enemy, it is the negro commonwealth; a state with which no other power can live in amity or form an alliance: a state equally hostile, and radically hostile, to all its neighbours. If any crisis can call for vigorous measures of prevention, it is that which may terminate in the establishment of such a power; a power which, if once suffered to breathe alone and independent, must overwhelm every thing within its grasp. If the European powers value their colonial possessions, it becomes them to unite against this tremendous enemy; to forget all rivalry, and to join in opposing the progress of this inevitable calamity; to interfere, at all events, and abate this unexampled nuisance.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 301.

### *Of the consequences of Negro Revolt to the Colonies.*

It is, indeed, no common fate to which the European settlements in the Charibean Sea will be left. Hordes of blood-thirsty savages, intimately acquainted with every corner of the Planter's house, every retreat into which



his family may be driven, every crevice in the whole country, mad with unnatural rage against all that deviates from the sable hue of their own ferocious brethren; pouring over every spot where European life exists; scattering on all sides, not destruction, for that would be mildness, but every exquisite form of ingenious torment, only stopping in moments of satiety to lay aside the sword for the torch, and in the intervals of mercy alone exchanging torture for murder: marching against the parent with the transfixed body of his butchered infant as a standard; sacrificing the weaker sex to their brutal lust, amidst the expiring bodies of husbands and kinsmen; and enacting other deeds of such complicated horror, that it is not permitted to the pen of a European to describe or to name them. These are a few features of the picture which wretched eye-witnesses have given us of negro warfare.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 308.

*Of the consequences of Revolt to Great Britain.*

It is manifest that all commerce with those rich and fertile settlements will now be at an end. All the capital vested in the West India trade will be instantly thrown out of employment; and that in colonial property will of course be buried for ever. All the cash employed in colonial loans will be either lost or suddenly forced back upon the European market; all the losses of the Planters will be immediately shared by their European creditors and correspondents; all circulation of population and wealth to those parts of the world will at once be terminated; not to mention the less important consideration of private distress; less important only because it is of a less

lasting nature. It is difficult to conceive that the mercantile resources of Great Britain herself could recover.—*Col. Pol.* ii. 303, 4, 5.

*I have thus rapidly attempted to sketch a few features of the picture which the experience of the past holds up for the instruction of those who may be inclined TO SPORT WITH THE QUESTION OF NEGRO EMANCIPATION.—Ibid.* ii. 443.



## REMARKS.

---

SUCH were the opinions of Mr. Brougham, at a time when the subject of Negro Slavery was more likely to be dispassionately handled than it is at present. Should these opinions be deemed erroneous, it is still hoped that it may not have been altogether useless to have brought them again at this moment before the public. The "Inquiry into the Colonial Policy of the European Powers" is obviously a work to which the author had given much labour and thought. If a person of his comprehensive understanding, after coolly and impartially reflecting upon the topics before him, has been wholly wrong, is not the question one in which conflicting opinions should be heard with patience? And can it be safely left to such passionate suggestions as are drawn from the obvious demerits of a state of slavery compared with a state of freedom?

It would be idle to direct any personal argument against Mr. Brougham, because his opinions seem to have undergone a radical change. A little more forbearance towards those who differ from him, a tone of less ferocity towards the victims of his former errors, might, perhaps, be more graceful. But if, upon reconsidering the facts which were before him in 1803, he sees

that his views were fallacious, or if time has brought other facts to assist his judgment, the change of opinion is manly and meritorious. He can hardly hope, however, to influence the judgment of others, unless he favours them with the considerations which have operated his own conversion; and he knows too well how to estimate the weight of an argument, to expect that they who have been convinced by his reasoning in "the Inquiry," should attach much value to his declamations at Freemasons'-Hall.

In the absence of any explanation by Mr. Brougham, as to the particular points in which his former speculations were erroneous, Mr. Stephen has thought it right to step forward as his apologist. In his late "Appeal to the Electors of Great Britain," he has introduced the following passage :

"Can I say this, and not be reminded of Henry Brougham? or can I abstain from hazarding his censure also by a public tribute to his merits? *It is not*, I admit, *untrue* that Mr. Brougham, when a very young man, and as yet known only to the public by the earliest labours of his masterly pen, had imbibed some of those *erroneous views of the colonial system, and the necessity of maintaining it*, which thousands of specious, but self-interested, tongues and pens have long too successfully propagated in the parent state. In his *able and profound* work on Colonial Policy he distinguished too strongly between the slave trade (of which he was ever a most determined enemy) and the slavery that it had established in the Colonies; not, certainly, in the way of justifying the latter, but so as to extenuate its oppressive character, and to prejudice,

in some degree, the efforts of those who attempted its parliamentary correction.\* He had never been in the West Indies, and had then had no communication with those who knew that country; *except, perhaps, with such men as, from regard to their own credit and interests, were sure to mislead and deceive him.* Is it then strange that he, like a part of the most intelligent of European politicians, should have adopted erroneous views of the facts on which he reasoned? While the colonists object to him this short-lived error, let me derive from it an argument that should warn the partial and uninformed against similar delusions. Gross and dangerous, indeed, to ordinary judgments must be those mists of falsehood and imposture which such a luminary could not, even with his rising beams, at once penetrate and disperse. But it was impossible that the pervading mind of Mr. Brougham should not, in the progress of its investigation, discover its own mistakes, and the truths from which it had diverged. Much more likely was it, from ordinary human infirmity, that opinions once given to the public, should not, when changed, be willingly and openly renounced. But here he has added to the fame of his talents far higher than intellectual honour. He has not only combated the false views with which he was once impressed, but it was from his own lips, in the House of Commons, that I first heard the public notice of what OUR ENEMIES, perhaps, had then forgot. He gratuitously alluded, in a speech now several years old, to his early error, and confessed, with manly candour, that the truths he was then

\* See at page 34 of these Remarks, abundant evidence that up to the year 1815, both Mr. Stephen and Mr. Wilberforce “distinguished between the slave trade and slavery,” and in terms denied the idea, not merely of “its parliamentary correction,” but of ever abrogating it by express laws.

powerfully maintaining, were contrary, *in some points*, to the opinions he had once entertained. When our opponents again think fit to quote Mr. Brougham's early against his mature opinions, *let them not withhold from him the honour, or from our cause the benefit, of this free and dignified avowal.*"\*

There is something whimsical, to those who recall the events of 1808, in thus finding in Mr. Stephen the tutor and apologist of Mr. Brougham. To some, perhaps, who merely look to the value of the apology, it may seem like paying off old scores, a sort of "war in disguise;" while others will see too much reason to apprehend that Mr. Stephen is in sober earnest, and has forgotten everything relating to the Orders in Council, together with the last act of the tragedy, "that solemn warning" of Mr. Brougham's, "which was to frighten *the rash pro-*

\* The whole of this passage is highly characteristic, not of Mr. Stephen exclusively, but of that party (by courtesy called "Saints,") to which that gentleman belongs. The object of Mr. Brougham's book is to shew the many advantages which result to a nation from possessing colonies, and the futility of the economist system, which he says "is impracticable, consistently with the nature of men, the necessary agents in its execution, and the subjects of its operations." The Negro question is incidentally considered. If Mr. Stephen, in addition to the conviction he must have, that Mr. Brougham was wrong in all that the work contains on the subject of the Negroes, is also of opinion that Mr. Brougham had adopted "*erroneous views on the colonial system, and the necessity of maintaining it.*" that is, that the whole scope and purport of the book was mistaken, what can he mean by describing it as "ABLE and PROFOUND?" But there is something in the constitution of these gentlemen which disables them from pursuing any enterprise in a manly and straight forward way. They are, as Burke has said, "paralytic on one side," and with the best intentions, they do not seem to know how to compass an honest purpose by honest means.



*jector* from ever again presuming to make the edifice of British commerce the subject of his wild experiments.”\*

Now, having first limited the errors of Mr. Brougham upon the subject of the negroes, to “an extenuation of the oppressive character of slavery,” of which, there is not a hint in the whole course of the treatise, Mr. Stephen proceeds to account for this by asserting Mr. Brougham to have written with a leaning to the authority of West Indians, of “such men, as from regard to their own credit and interest, are sure to mislead and deceive.” If Mr. Stephen had never read the work, he could not have blundered upon a more unfortunate apology. Not in the later writings of Mr. Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review*, nor in the pages of the *Christian Observer*; nor even in the works of Mr. Stephen himself, is there to be found such frightful abuse of, and contempt for the West Indians, as abounds throughout the two volumes of the *Colonial Policy*. They are described† as “persons of dissolute morals,” as “recking with lust,” as “wallowing in a glutinous mire of brutal appetites,” as “exhibiting the most disgusting contamination with which a residence in the new world stains the character of the European,” as “detestably indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures,” as “uniting in one character that spirit of gambling which forms the contemptible habits of the horse-jockey, with the odious cruelty which makes the cock-fighter as much an object of detestation as the jockey is of contempt;” nay, as “comprehending among them a greater number of sharpers, than are to be found unfair traders in

\* See Speech of Mr. Brougham before the House of Commons, in support of Petitions against the Orders in Council, 1808.

† *Colonial Policy*, vol. i. p. 70.

any honest calling.”\* But Mr. Brougham has in the very work itself repudiated the apology of Mr. Stephen. In referring to the writings of Mr. Edwards, he excuses himself for not relying upon his testimony, because “ he was inclined to admit facts favourable to his interests as a slave proprietor ;” remarks upon the “ little faith due to the accounts of partizans ;” reprobates the “ thoughtless violence which induces Mr. Edwards to declaim against the civilized friends of the negroes ;” and is so tremblingly alive to the frauds or suppressions which such a situation might prompt, that he blames the African Association “ for trusting the important office of secretary and editor, to persons patrimonially interested in the negro slave trade.”†

It is not then very ingenuous in Mr. Stephen to attribute “ Mr. Brougham’s erroneous views of the facts on which he reasoned,” to his reliance on the authority of West Indians. It has, however, been suggested that he is amply justified in his charge by the present condition of St. Domingo, and by the inertness of the colonial assemblies.

Now true it is, that at the period when the Colonial Policy was written, the author seems to have taken in many respects too gloomy a view of the negro character. But the great and leading truths which he endeavours to establish, are, that the Africans in their early state of civilization, have an invincible repugnance to labour ; that the vassalage of the negro is incompatible with the ascendancy of the European ; that habits of industry, if not resulting from the experience of artificial wants, or a

\* Colonial Policy, vol. i. p. 72, 73.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 557, 567. Mr. Edwards, and Sir W. Young, are the persons alluded to, who were both West India planters.



sense of moral duty, must cease with the authority to which they owed their existence; and that while the admission of the uncivilized slave to the rights of free-men must be inevitably accompanied by the loss of the West Indies, as Colonies to Great Britain, the condition in which such an event would find the negroes, would be equivalent to blotting out those settlements from the list of trading communities. Now, what is there in the past history, or in the actual state of St. Domingo, which should invalidate any part of these conclusions? The Europeans have been expelled; with what circumstances of horror, seems now to be forgotten. The acquiring of property or citizenship in Hayti, by any white man, is forbidden by law;\* and that island, which in 1791 exported, from the French settlements alone,

Clayed Sugar	. . . . .	lbs. 70,227,708
Brown ditto	. . . . .	93,177,512
Coffee	. . . . .	68,151,180
Cotton	. . . . .	6,286,126

exports in 1824, after twenty-one years of independence and negro supremacy, not from the ancient French settlements, but from the whole territorial surface—of sugar, nothing, or at least no quantity thought worthy of being cited in the tables—

Coffee	. . . . .	lbs. 30,000,000
Cotton	. . . . .	3,500,000†

\* Constitution of 1806, tit. i. § 38.

† See the *Histoire Politique et Statistique de l'Isle de Hayti*, par M. Placide Justin, 1826: a work written with a strong bias to magnify the importance of St. Domingo, and to exaggerate the civilization of the

If Mr. Brougham, instead of having written before these results, had written with the perfect knowledge of every thing that has occurred, what other judgment could the facts have extorted?

But the Assemblies have disappointed him; they have not legislated with becoming spirit for the improvement of the condition of the negroes. “*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 WORTHY BUT INTEMPERATE MEN IN ATTACKING THEM, AND THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS SIGNALIZED BY A MAD AND UNPRINCIPLED LOVE OF CHANGE,\* have all conspired to render venerable in the eyes of every West Indian?*”—*Colonial Policy*, vol. ii. p. 497.

negroes: yet is the author compelled to admit that they are distinguished by “une inertie presque incroyable;” that “tout ce peuple vit au jour le jour sans rien compter que le présent,” (p. 536;) and that, with respect to such of the population as had been slaves, “on n’a guère changé de mœurs en changeant de condition, si non que la paresse et l’insouciance dans une existence plus tranquille ont remplacé les penchans tristes et haineux de leur ancienne condition,” (p. 535.) Other accounts estimate the present exports of St. Domingo considerably lower.

\* The following is the sort of language which Mr. Stephen, a judge in equity, has thought it decent to adopt in his last work, the “Appeal to the Electors of Great Britain.”

He says the West Indian merchants and planters are “gamblers and adventurers;” that persons connected with the West Indies, “from regard to their own credit and interest, are sure to mislead and deceive;” he describes the West India Committee, “if not dangerous to the constitution, as at least in a high degree so to the public morals, honour and prosperity of the empire;” he designates the colonists as “contumacious votaries of the cart-whip;” he assimilates their arguments to the “pleas of associated robbers;” he asserts (a charge unrivalled in the history of the most

But is it true that nothing has been done towards ameliorating the condition of the slaves, and towards softening down the distinctions of West Indian society? Take the island of Jamaica alone. By the act of 1809, which was spontaneous on the part of the colonists, and passed before it was thought necessary to goad them to the work of amelioration, one day in every fortnight, besides Sundays, is allowed, except during crop; the negro provision-grounds are to be inspected; and where proper provision-grounds are not provided, 3s. 4d. per week is to be paid by the Planter to each slave. Proper clothing is to be given to the slave once in every year, and accounts of the nature and quality of the clothing served are to be given in to the vestry, under the penalty of £50. Persons turning away slaves on account of sickness or infirmity, and not providing them with proper clothing and wholesome necessaries of life, are subjected to penalties; and the property of the owner is made liable to the expenses of maintaining every slave so neglected or deserted. The work of slaves is limited between the hours of five and seven; that is, to ten hours; out of which half an hour is to be allowed for breakfast, and two hours for dinner. The number of holidays, then usually allowed at Easter, Whitsuntide and Christmas, are secured by law; the practice of putting weights and chains on runaways is abolished; the punish-

savage controversy) that “the exertions made in favour of the slave, have exposed eight hundred thousand hapless fellow creatures (that is the whole slave population) to the MULTIPLIED oppressions of avarice, excited by hatred and REVENGE.” All this Mr. Stephen, a judge in equity, charges, and then “challenges all his opponents to cite a single passage in any of his numerous works on this subject, calculated to give needless pain to any man’s feelings!!”

ment of slaves is limited to ten stripes, unless the overseer be present; and on no occasion, for any one offence, is it to exceed thirty-nine;--the cruel whipping or confining of any slave is subjected to fine and imprisonment. Liberty is given to the slaves of any settlement to assemble together for the purpose of amusement, providing they do not use military instruments, and that they disperse before ten at night. Female slaves, having six living children, are exempted from hard labour, in the field or otherwise, and the owner from taxes on account of them. Slaves are not punishable for violence towards whites, if in the lawful defence of their owner's goods, of which it should not be forgotten that they themselves form a part.

By two acts of 1813, free negroes, and free persons of colour, employed by freemen of their own colour, upon their estates, are held equally, to save deficiencies for their slaves and the slaves of each other, as the employment of white men would have done;\* and all free persons of every colour are enabled to give evidence, provided they have been baptized and initiated in the principles of Christianity, upon producing the certificates of manumission and baptism.

By the act of 1816, the practice which had occasionally obtained, of working the mill during Sundays in crop-

\* Prior to this act, every possessor of slaves was obliged to keep in his employ, upon his estate, a number of white persons serving in the militia, according to the number of his slaves; and, failing the employ of a sufficient number on the estate, to save the deficiency by furnishing the required number of white men to the militia. The act, therefore, is a material step towards identifying the interests of the different colours.



time, is rendered illegal. No mill is to be worked after seven on Saturday night, nor before five on Monday morning. Overseers to be paid 3*l.* for every slave born on the plantation, to be divided between the mother, midwife, and nurse. Proof is required on oath, that the mother of six living children is exempted from all manner of field or other labour, and that she is provided with the means of comfortable maintenance. Magistrates, upon complaint by the slave, that he has been improperly punished, are to inquire summarily into the subject, and if the complaint appear to be true, to proceed against the offender.

By another act of 1816, curates, with a salary of 300*l.*, are appointed to each parish, who, together with the rector, are required to assist in propagating Christianity among the slaves.

By an act of 1821, the practice of executing slaves immediately after sentence of the court, is abolished; and it is enacted, that in all cases, the sentence, the evidence, and the charge, shall be transmitted to the governor, and his sign manual is required, as in the execution of whites.

By an act of 1822, penalties are imposed upon all who shall employ the slaves of another for reward or otherwise, on Sundays.

By an act of 1823, the certificate of freedom and baptism, which a previous act made it indispensable that persons of colour should produce before being admitted to give evidence, is no longer made necessary; but it shall be sufficient to produce any other evidence, if called for, to satisfy the court.

By two acts of 1824, tenants for life are enabled to manumit slaves. The bond which it was heretofore necessary to enter into for the maintenance of the slave before he could be manumitted, is no longer required, providing the slave is produced before the magistrate, or it shall be otherwise shewn that he is not manumised on account of his age or infirmity. Slaves are protected from being levied on, on Saturday as well as Sunday, in order to enable them to go abroad on that day with security.

The last act which has passed, enables slaves to receive and grant discharges for pecuniary bequests and bequests of personal property, which obviously admits their capacity and right to hold personalty.

These provisions are surely worthy of some weight; but even though they were less numerous, or of less value, would it therefore follow that the condition of slavery was not in the course of amelioration?

In a state of society such as that which the abolition of the slave trade found prevailing in the West Indies, with the orders of men separated into castes by the harshest and most stubborn lines of distinction, it argues no very accurate knowledge of human nature to suppose that any real advantage could forthwith be effected by legislation, or to look to the number of laws as the only index to the progress of improvement. "Manners and customs," as Mr. Brougham has observed, "are independent of the most positive institutions." To attempt to do more than to render permanent, by enactments, improvements already established in practice, cannot fail to produce mischief, in a community where those who are to



make the laws are identical with those who are to execute them; and where the inferior order can only derive the benefit of the law, when made, through the medium and agency of the superior. It is better to defer the making of a law, than to enact it with the certainty that it will not be observed. Nothing, doubtless, could be easier than for the Colonial Assemblies to comply with the requisition of the friends of the negroes at home, in respect to admitting slave evidence. It would still rest with the persons who compose those assemblies to believe it or not, at their pleasure. But if they feel that the sanctions under which alone evidence is legally credible have no weight at present in the negro mind, and that the necessary consequence, therefore, of such a law would only be to produce the slave as a witness in order that he might be disregarded, wherein consists their contumacy, or the necessity for the interference of the British Parliament? Must not the habit of disbelief, which a premature admission of negro testimony would inevitably engender, rather cause the slave to retrograde in civilization? and will not its effects be experienced long after he shall have lost the vice by which it was originally justified? If there be backwardness, on the part of the colonists, to commit themselves by legislation; if they do not embody into their codes the suggestions of the mother country; it is but fair, independent of every allowance to be made for the anxious jealousy with which they must view every approach towards interference with their legislative rights, and for the temper of mind excited by the furious zeal with which they have been assailed, to recollect that they, not we, are the parties on whom the most fatal effects of too rapid steps towards the enfranchisement of the negroes must immediately fall. It is but natural that they who

reside in the very heart of the system upon which the experiment is to be tried, whose *existence* depends upon the adoption of wise measures, and “*whose knowledge,*” as Mr. Brougham has expressed himself, “*of those things which cannot be written down in reports, nor told by witnesses, is full and practical,*” should be desirous of first learning the effects of the measures which have been proposed to them, by watching how they work in those smaller communities in which the Order in Council has already introduced them; and that they should be slower in taking steps which it would be impossible to retrace, than we, whose boldness may be aggravated by being out of reach of the danger, and whose confidence may possibly be in proportion to our ignorance.

But it is urged that the laws, even such as they are, are nugatory; that they are not executed. If they who advance this, believe that these the spontaneous enactments of the colonists are disregarded, what a farce it must be, according to the conciliatory language of Mr. Brougham, “to wear the spur upon the toe,” and to send them a code prepared in opposition to their prejudices. Whether these provisions are observed or not, what is the actual state of the negro population, what comforts they do enjoy, and of what hardships they may have to complain, it is quite idle to attempt to pronounce amidst the conflicting accounts of those who are believed to be interested in preventing legislation, and of those to whom the baiting of West Indians has now become a pastime.\* The one party

\* The author of “Six Months in the West Indies in 1825,” who is understood to be related to the respected Bishop of Barbadoes, and who, by his strictures upon what he thinks amiss in those settlements, shews that he is no partizan, has the following observations upon the temporal condition of the slaves.

are not more pledged to hold fast every abuse that may exist, than the other are sure to make abuses where they do not succeed in finding them. It is a melancholy truth, that he who at first engages in a philanthropical enterprise from the purest motives, and in the most candid temper, at last acquires that sort of taste for the game, that he seems to gloat upon tales of wickedness, and to think no day mispent but that which has failed to exhibit the crimes and cruelties of his neighbour. Be-

“ From the general and prominent charge of cruelty, active or permissive, towards the slaves, I for one acquit the planters. I have been in twelve of the British colonies, I have gone round and across many of them, and have resided some months in the most populous one for its size in the whole world. I have observed with diligence; I have inquired of all sorts of people—and have mixed constantly with the coloured inhabitants of all hues and of every condition. I am sure I have seen things as they are, and I am not aware of any other bias on my mind, except that which may be caused by a native hatred of injustice, and a contempt and disdain of cant and hypocrisy. The tone of my remarks will probably not gain for me the favour of either party, but it may induce many to listen, whom the profession of a sheer white or black system would certainly alienate.”

\*\*\*\*\* “ I scorn with an English scorn the creole thought, that the West Indian slaves are better off than the poor peasantry of Britain: they are not better off, nothing like it: an English labourer with one shirt, is worth body and soul ten negro slaves, choose them where you will. But it is nevertheless a certain truth, that the slaves in general do labour much less, do eat and drink much more, have much more ready money, dress much more gaily, and are treated with more kindness and attention when sick, than nine-tenths of all the people of Great Britain, under the condition of tradesmen, farmers, and domestic servants. It does not enter into my head to speak of these things as constituting an equivalent, much less a point of superiority to the hardest shape of English freedom: but it seems to me, that where English freedom is not, and cannot be, these things may amount to a very consolatory substitute for it.” P. 310. 313.

Unless the account of Mr. Coleridge be a base falsehood, how shamefully have the colonists been calumniated, and the best feelings of the British public abused!



tween these parties there is but one course that can be taken, or that can satisfy the country : Government have begun at the wrong end : they should first inquire and then resolve : let a commission of impartial men be appointed to ascertain and report upon the actual state of things in the West Indies. The resolution in which Parliament has been involved, will otherwise form a *fulcrum* upon which the anti-colonists may operate what they please. Suppose what is called for to-day were granted ; who shall say what will not be required to-morrow ? or how shall the general principle to which the House of Commons has assented, be limited or restrained ? Unless each successive right ceded to the negro shall be ceded to him after a careful examination of its possible effects upon the state of society in which he will then be placed, and a well-assured confidence that he is in a condition not to abuse it, it is absurd to talk of *gradual* emancipation. If inquiry shall satisfy the country, that the slave suffers what he ought not to suffer, or is deprived of what he ought to enjoy, then will be the time to propose the specific improvement which the case demands. But to lay down the general principle of emancipation, without stint or limit, as to the when or the how, and then to call upon the colonists to enact laws which no inquiry has shewn to be either demanded by present circumstances, or to be compatible with their security ; this is to make them the interested opponents of negro civilization, because it leaves them uncertain whether that emancipation is, according to the old language of Mr. Brougham, to be perfected “ *by the slow progress of succeeding ages,*” and according to the expression of Mr. Stephen in 1815, “ not to be mowed down by the scythe of legislative abolition, but plucked up stalk by stalk, by the progressive hand of pri-



vate and voluntary enfranchisement,\* or whether it is but to attend the coming of the next general election.†

\* Reasons for Establishing a Registry of Slaves, p. 41.

† That the colonists have some reason for distrusting the professions of “the great and good men, who have made this question their own,” that they are not altogether irrational in believing that the demands of to-day afford no test of the possible demands of to-morrow, may perhaps be admitted after perusing the following extracts.

In 1814 Mr. Wilberforce explicitly declared, “that an attempt had been made with considerable success, to confound the abolition of the trade in slaves, with the emancipation of those already in the colonies, although the abolitionists took all opportunities of proclaiming that it was the SLAVE TRADE, and not slavery, against which they were directing their efforts.” *Wilberforce's Letter to Prince Talleyrand*, p. 21.

In 1815, Mr. Stephen, in the Report which he prepared for the African Institution, *does* contemplate the abolition of slavery, but it is “by the same happy means which formerly put an end to it in England, by a benign though *insensible* revolution in *opinions* and *manners*.”

In 1823, Mr. Buxton announces different views. “I hope (he observes) that I shall not be deemed imprudent if *I throw off all disguise*, and state frankly, and without reserve, the object at which *we* aim. The object at which we aim, is the *extinction of slavery, nothing less than the extinction of slavery, in nothing less than the whole of the British dominions*; not however the rapid termination of that state, not the sudden emancipation of the negro, but such preparatory steps, such measures of precaution, as by slow degrees and *in a course of years*, first fitting and qualifying the slave for the enjoyment of freedom, shall gently conduct us to the annihilation of slavery.” *Report of Debate in the House of Commons on 15th May, 1823*.

In 1824, Mr. Sandars, a gentleman of the first consideration in Liverpool, withdraws his support from the Society for the Abolition of Slavery, in that town, because he says, “he knows that their preparatives for early emancipation are of too active a nature to permit him to remain a party to them,” and “that there are those who contemplate bestowing upon the slaves the rights and liberties of freemen at no distant period.”—*Letter addressed to the Liverpool Society for the Abolition of Slavery, by a Member of that Society, 10th January, 1824*.

In 1826, the Report of the Anti-Slavery Society declares it “necessary

Whatever may be thought as to the ultimate ascendancy of European or African in the West Indian Islands, there can be no doubt that it is not less the duty than the interest of Great Britain to endeavour to retard any change to which the natural course of events may seem to lead, until the negroes have attained that progress in civilization which may render the shock less violent. Towards succeeding in this most difficult undertaking, perhaps the most difficult that ever was imposed upon the skill and temper of legislators, the introduction of the lights of Christianity seems to afford the most efficient instrument. That this object is already in progress it is most grateful to observe. Mr. Stephen, to be sure, states that *the slaves are kept in pagan darkness by the compulsion of the planters, and that they are enemies to the propagation of Christianity* :\* but we learn from the Bishop of Barbadoes, “ that so far from returning discouraged by unexpected impediments, he feels that great as are the real difficulties, and distant as must be the full harvest of his labours, the prospect before him is *full of encouragement*: in every class of people he has found that spirit of respect for his person, office, and object—that zeal, liberality, and concession to his desires, which justifies the liveliest, if not impatient hopes—and in no instance has he experienced that kind of prejudice, or that degree of opposition, which should make him despair of ultimate success.” †

The second report of the Incorporated Society for the Religious Instruction and Education of the Negroes,

to destroy the system *root and branch*,” (see *Appendix*, p. 31 ;) and actually breathes a prayer, that Mr. Wilberforce “ may be spared to witness the FINAL consummation of this labour of love and mercy.”

\* Address, &c. p. 89.

† Quarterly Review, No. 64, p. 541.

(commonly called Boyle's Fund,) of which the Bishop of London is the president, states, "that the progress which had been made, confirms the opinion of the governors, that with adequate pecuniary support, they could, under Providence, effect every thing that could be expected from a society of this nature." They give the most encouraging accounts from the different gentlemen engaged in the West India Islands, as to the success of their endeavours; and taking Jamaica as an example, (and it is by no means selected as the most favourable,) they give the statements of three clergymen, their emissaries, as to the progress made by them. The Rev. Thomas Stewart informs them that he addressed a circular to the different Proprietors, or their representatives, upon the subject of the religious interests of the slaves; from some of whom he received the assurance of their anxiety that they should have the benefit of his ministry. He says, the Proprietors appear most desirous of the moral and religious improvement of their slaves, but that unfortunately they are so harassed and distressed by the unhappy acts of rebellion in this part of the country, that they are unable to adopt the measures they may wish, until tranquillity be restored. He asserts, that the Proprietors are not backward in forwarding the great and good cause; and he assures the Society, from his own observation, that there are many in his parish, who not only collect their negroes together on the Sunday mornings, to read to them the Liturgy of the Church, but also prepare and deliver short discourses, explanatory of those prayers. He states, that within the year he had baptized a hundred and thirty adults and sixty-seven infants, that he has in preparation for baptism four hundred and thirty-three, and that his places of worship are attended by two thousand persons.



Another gentleman, the Rev. Hugh Beams, states, that he arrived at Montpelier, in Jamaica, in 1824; that the barrack had been, by the assistance of the neighbouring Proprietors, fitted up as a place of worship; and that a member of the House of Assembly officiated as clerk; that he was attended by two hundred negroes; that he had received every facility and encouragement, and the greatest attention, and that he had reason to believe his exertions would be seconded by all the neighbouring white inhabitants; that within four months of his arrival he had baptized fourteen infants, and had ninety adults in a course of catechetical instruction. He had already engaged with two Proprietors to meet their negroes in the middle of the week.

The Rev. John Stainsby, at Bath, Jamaica, says, that he has hundreds uniting in the worship of God; that he attends five estates, for the purpose of instructing the children on week-days; and that he has eight hundred adults who attend him for the same purpose.

The Report for 1824, of the Society of Wesleyan Methodists, is not less encouraging. They affirm that "the calls of all classes of the population in these islands for religious instruction and assistance, are at this time more pressing than we have ever known. Many prejudices with which our predecessors had to contend, are now giving way, and the way is now more than ever open for the diffusion of the light and influence of evangelical truth in these islands." \*

\* The above statement they adopt from a letter of the missionaries of the Antigua district, comprehending ten of the islands.



The Report proceeds—"The committee may be allowed to state generally, that in almost all the stations the work is in cheering progress and encouraging prosperity ; that fifty missionaries are now employed in these colonies ; that exclusive of the congregations, upwards of twenty-six thousand persons are members of the society ; that in the last four years about four thousand negro marriages have been performed *by the missionaries* ; and that the mission schools for negro children in many of the islands are in a state of increased and most beneficial activity."\*

The Moravians declare that they have long observed with gratitude the general disposition which appears to prevail among the Heathen, in the vicinity of their various settlements, to seek after and receive the Gospel ; that this disposition has been manifested in a remarkable manner among the negro slaves in the West India Islands ; that there appears to be at present some peculiar facilities for cultivating it with success in that quarter ; that notwithstanding the unfavourable feeling which unfortunately prevails in some of the islands, that many of the colonial governments, and of the proprietors of estates, have shewn themselves much disposed to countenance and even to *invite* their exertions ; that they have no less than 28,000 negroes under constant instruction ; and that they are in want of more adequate accommodation for their increasing congregations : and one of their correspondents, the Rev. L. Stobwasser, writes, " When I first came to the island of Antigua, Sunday schools were generally reckoned to be impracticable, though frequent, and *not unfruitful*

\* Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, for the year ending December 31, 1824, 1825, p. 63.

attempts were made, especially by our truly indefatigable brother James Light, (now in Jamaica). By degrees the prejudices of the Planters against permitting the negro children being taught to read, which in the beginning were very perceptible, wore away, and we see on those estates where the children are most generally instructed the beneficial consequences of it. The moral depravities of the negroes are so deeply rooted, that a mere cessation of slavery would not cure them in the least of their laziness, lying, stealing, and lasciviousness.”\*

Admitting, then, that the religious interests of the slaves have been heretofore neglected, do not these reports hold out hopes of a different order of things? and might it not have been expected that they would have called for some notice, at least as “crumbs of comfort,” from those who have, *or who say they have*, the civilization of the negroes so much at heart? Yet were these persons themselves in the pagan darkness in which they assert that the Planters wilfully retain their negroes, and believed that the making a man a Christian did nothing towards raising him in the scale of humanity, towards giving him moral feelings, and, with them, the capacity to enjoy civil rights, they could not have preserved a more unbroken silence upon facts which, if false, should be exposed, and if true, must greet all “*who are doers of the word*” rather than *talkers*, as indicative of a more cheerful prospect. In fact, “*the great and good men who have made this question their own*,” seem apprehensive lest they should lose their occupation. Therefore it is

\* Vid. Proposal for forming a separate fund for the Moravian Missions in the West Indies.

that the world never hears of any thing which should break in upon the uniform tale of "the moral filth of slavery," "the tremendous lash of the cart-whip," "the hundreds of thousands of hapless infants left to learn idolatry from their parents."\* Is it possible to suppose these persons really sincere in their professed objects, when we find them reporting in every year upon the mitigation of slavery, pretending to give to the world an impartial account of the hopes and prospects of the negro, and withholding all allusion to the documents above referred to? Would it not have been more consistent with a Christian spirit, to have acknowledged these cheering and encouraging prospects with gratitude to the Giver of all Good, rather than to have invoked that sacred name for the purpose of recognizing a special interposition, in once more beholding Mr. Wilberforce in the chair?

It is truly appalling to observe with what fidelity the leading members of the Anti-Slavery Society are following the precise steps, using all the arguments and expressions of *les Amis des Noirs*, the fruit of whose exertions humanity has already gathered.

Mr. Stephen addresses the Electors of Great Britain and tells them, that "England is enslaved by her colonies." Just so does Mirabeau his constituents. "Pourquoi donc, esclaves à votre tour des colons blancs, combattez-vous aujourd'hui des opinions qui ont ennobli le commerce?" Mr. Stephen asks, "Where the value of the colonies is to be found, and what is the indemnity for all our sacrifices" for the vast expence of fleets and armies

\* See Mr. Stephen's works, *passim*.

which are furnished by Great Britain? Just so says Mirabeau; "Si on compte ce qu'il en coûte chaque année pour la défense et l'administration des colonies même pendant la paix; si l'on y ajoute l'énormité des dépenses qu'elles ont occasionnée pendant nos guerres; on sera bien tenté de douter s'il n'eût pas été plus avantageux pour nous de les abandonner à leurs propres soins. Sage et heureuse sera la nation, qui la première consentira à ne voir dans ses colonies que des provinces alliées et non plus sujettes de la métropole."

And again, " Dans les colonies, comme par-tout, l'agriculture et le commerce pour devenir florissans n'ont besoin que de la liberté, et cette liberté est le plus sûr moyen de nous attacher à jamais les colonies; dont pourtant la France n'a jamais eu besoin pour prospérer. Si on calculoit ce que les colonies ont coûté de sang et d'argent, on seroit effrayé de savoir qu'elles ont été beaucoup plus à charge que profitables."

The navigation act, says the Edinburgh Review, was an absurd restriction. "*The navy of Great Britain might be infinitely more formidable than it now is, though we had not a single merchant ship; and so intimate a connexion is there between the principles of impartial justice and public wealth, that the equality of rights and privileges, to which every subject of a free country has a just claim, can never be encroached upon without checking the progress of national opulence.*"\* Precisely thus did Petion, Mirabeau, Brissot, Condorcet, and Gregoire, with the rest of the Society of *les Amis des Noirs*, open the course of their

\* Edinburgh Review, No. 84.



designs, and begin by persuading the country to undervalue the subject of their frantic experiments.

L'acte de navigation exclusive ne peut être qu'une occasion de difficultés, de troubles, de mécontentemens, et de fraudes \*\*\*. Peut-on comprendre comment la navigation françoise sera plus coûteuse, moins sure et moins diligente, que celle de quelque nation que ce soit? Ce que nous pensons des avantages de la France, à l'égard de ses productions et de ses consommations, nous le pensons également de la marine marchande. Il est temps de faire cesser le règne des illusions; nous avons besoin d'être éclairés et conduits par les influences de la liberté relativement à nos rapports commerciaux, à ceux que le monde entier offre à une nation populeuse comme la nôtre. Que la Nature seule soit l'arbitre de nos avantages réciproques; c'est à elle à distribuer les privilèges exclusifs, et à les défendre \*\*\*. Nous donnons le défi de prouver que l'abandon de ce funeste monopole peut faire aucun tort à la mère patrie."

"Am I not a man and a brother?" yet am I treated as a chattel, yet is my testimony rejected, say the Anti-Slavery Society?\*" "Où est l'impie qui oseroit dire qu'un

\* Mr. Macaulay has just published his Third Report of the Proceedings of this Society with Notes and an Appendix. Let the admirers of this gentleman take the following extract as a specimen of his candour. Mr. Macaulay is professing to comment upon the alleged incorrectness of the statements of Mr. Dwarris, who, jointly with another person, had been appointed by Government to inquire into the state of civil and criminal justice in the West Indies, and whose Report being in many respects opposed to the views and statements of THE SOCIETY, is of course to be hunted down. In page 30 of the Appendix, Mr. Macaulay proceeds thus:

"In some of the Islands," says Mr. Dwarris, "it was felt desirable to

noir et un blanc ne sont pas égaux devant Dieu, puisqu'il leur a donné les mêmes organes?" exclam les Amis des Noirs. And again, " Peut-on tolérer cette loi qui rejette

restrain *the delegated power* of the manager or overseer. Accordingly an act was passed (*in some of the islands!* Could not Mr. Dwarris have named them, and specified the acts,) restricting the number of blows such person should have the power of inflicting to ten lashes. The manager, accordingly, always stopped at the prescribed number of ten: but instances of abuse soon occurred, in which, after a short respite, the punishment was repeated. A new act was framed, providing, that a manager should only give ten stripes, and no more, for any one and the same offence. It was easy, however, to allege a new offence, and punish as original the second constructive delinquency. It was then enacted that only one punishment of a limited number of blows should be inflicted on one and the same day, as well as for one and the same offence. It was presently discovered that the severity of the punishment depended much less on the quantum of the blows than the degree of force with which they were administered. The last, and perhaps the best of these ineffectual provisions, directed, that no punishment should be inflicted on any slave, whatever his demerits, until he had recovered from the effects of his former punishment." "What doctrine on the subject of Negro Slavery Mr. Dwarris wished to establish by this statement *we* know not, except it be the incurable viciousness of the system, and *the necessity of destroying it root and branch.* We suspect, however, that its real object was to shew the anxiety of the legislatures, in some of the islands, to protect the negro from ill treatment, and certainly it would be calculated in some measure to do this if it was a correct statement. But the fact is, and *we* challenge Mr. Dwarris to shew the contrary, that *in no island is there any law restraining the MANAGER* of an estate to TEN lashes. The whole of this beautiful fabric of legislative care and solicitude for the protection of the Negro has, *therefore*, no foundation whatever.'

After reading this, who would not believe Mr. Dwarris to be unworthy of the slightest credit? Who would not conceive that the whole of the story which he has incorporated in his Report was utterly false? Now, what is the fact? Why, that Mr. Dwarris should have written *driver* instead of *Manager*. The Manager is, as we have seen in Jamaica, among other islands, restrained to thirty-nine lashes; it is the driver who is restrained to ten: and it is of him and his authority that Mr. Dwarris is

le témoignage des esclaves, ou cette autre quand elle les déclare des meubles, c'est-à-dire des objets inanimés?"

"Leave legislation to the assemblies!" says Mr. Stephen, "to the authors of every wrong to be redressed, of every oppression to be mitigated, to slave masters, to whom slavery yields a sordid subsistence, and the degradation of the blacks is privilege; as well recommend toleration to Spanish Inquisitors." In terms as courteous said Petion: "Laissez aux colons le soin d'être justes et humains, lorsqu'ils ne croiront pas nuisible à la prospérité de leur pays; c'est-à-dire, laissez aux colons le soin d'être injustes et inhumains, lorsqu'ils le croiront nécessaire à la prospérité de leur pays!"

speaking. Mr. Macaulay could not be ignorant of the meaning of Mr. Dwarris, because that gentleman speaks of delegated power, and Mr. Macaulay, from personal experience, well knows that the Manager is the person who delegates; the driver, the person to whom power is delegated. But Mr. Macaulay speculated upon the ignorance of others, and having challenged Mr. Dwarris to prove that THE MANAGER is restrained, fearlessly asserts, that "THE WHOLE of this beautiful fabric of legislative care and solicitude has THEREFORE no foundation whatever." Let it not be forgotten that this is the same gentleman who has just been blaming "the *artful* statements of partizans," and talking about "the light of the Gospel," "the labour of love," and "the favour of Heaven." Recollecting as Mr. Macaulay must, the exhibition in the Court of King's Bench, and the exposure of that malicious tale of falsehood which the Society, of which he was then and is still the most active member, published in their Tenth Report,\* he should hesitate before he tells a gentleman of the acknowledged respectability of Mr. Dwarris, that what he professes to have seen and observed, "is so far from being generally true, that it is notoriously the reverse." (p. 13.) Is it then only from the reports of convicted libellers that "the facts" can be verified?

\* Vid. The King v. Hatchard, for a Libel on the Aides-du-Camp of Sir J. Litch, 1817, published by Whitmore and Fenn.

“Talk of resistance,” says Mr. Macaulay in the *Christian Observer*, “strange indeed is the effrontery of such a declaration. Shall the puny multitudes of Jamaica intimidate this great nation from the pursuit of a laudable design? Is it from Jamaica, whose slave masters, but for our daily protection, would have the knife at their throats to-morrow, that we are seriously to dread resistance; or if they had the ludicrous daring to make the attempt, would their bondsmen lose so fair an occasion of breaking their galling chains?” So say Petion and his society: “Ils armeront, nous dit-on, leurs esclaves. Et comment les désarmeront-ils? \*\*\* Pour qui les auteurs de ces menaces prennent-ils donc nos législateurs, s'ils pensent les effrayer avec de pareils fantômes? \*\*\* Oublie-t-on la puissance nationale? Oublie-t-on qu'un empire tel que la France ne peut être long-temps insulté sans en tirer vengeance?”

In the professions of *les Amis des Noirs* as to the extent and object of their reformation, there is also the same instructive similarity which is to be found in the pamphlets, addresses, and resolutions of the friends of the Negroes here.

“ Dans tous les pamphlets, dans tous les libelles, qui ont été publiés contre nous, on nous a accusés de demander l'affranchissement subit des esclaves. Nous le répétons, c'est un odieux mensonge. Nous croyons bien que malgré les loix l'esclave reste libre, parce qu'on ne peut prescrire contre la nature; qu'en conséquence la restitution de la liberté n'est pas un bienfait, mais un devoir rigoureux. Mais nous croyons aussi que cet acte de justice exige de grands ménagemens. Nous croyons qu'affranchir subite-



ment les esclaves seroit une opération non-seulement fatale pour les colonies, mais que dans l'état d'abjection et de nullité où la cupidité a réduit les noirs, ce seroit leur faire un présent funeste.”\*

Within six months of the period from which this address was written, St. Domingo was revolutionized. Without supposing that we are on the eve of any such scenes of desolation, will it not be wise to read and profit by the lesson which the past holds out for the government of the future?

The French made that question which of all others is one of temper and discretion, a question of passion and a popular cry. They have experienced the results, let us profit by their example.

If any man be inclined to “*sport with the question of Negro Emancipation*,” let him first give attentive consideration to the opinions of the Author of the “*Inquiry into the Colonial Policy*,” which, though Mr. Brougham may now repudiate, he cannot alter their truth, or make them less applicable to the circumstances in which Great Britain is placed.

“ But it seems to be the lot of nations to derive instruction from experience rather than example ; and however acutely they may discern the consequences of folly

\* See *Lettres de Mirabeau à ses Commettans*, p. 1. 32, and the different addresses of the Society of les Amis des Noirs, given in the *Courier de Provence*, vol. ix. p. 338, and vol. xiii. p. 350, et seq. The address from which this last passage is taken, is dated April, 1791.

in the conduct of their neighbours, no sooner has the case become their own, than a senseless confidence in their own good fortune blinds them to the most obvious application of the lessons before their eyes, and gives birth to the same strange delusions so often fatal to individuals, that the circumstances and the conduct which have ruined others, may prove harmless or beneficial to themselves.”—*Colonial Policy*, vol. ii. p. 520.

FINIS.