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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment

OF

THE ABOLITION

OF

THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE

BY THE

BRITISH PARLIAMENT

BY THOMAS CLARKSON, M. A.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM, LORD GRENVILLE,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES, EARL GREY,

(LATE VISCOUNT HOWICK),

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE FRANCIS, EARL MOIRA,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE GEORGE JOHN, EARL SPENCER,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY RICHARD, LORD HOLLAND,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS, LORD ERSKINE,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDWARD, LORD ELLENBOROUGH,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD HENRY PETTY,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THOMAS GRENVILLE,

NINE OUT OF TWELVE OF HIS MAJESTY'S LATE CABINET MINISTERS,

TO WHOSE WISE AND VIRTUOUS ADMINISTRATION BELONGS

THE UNPARALLELED AND ETERNAL GLORY

OF THE ANNIHILATION

(AS FAR AS THEIR POWER EXTENDED)

OF ONE OF THE GREATEST SOURCES OF CRIMES AND SUFFERINGS,

EVER RECORDED IN THE ANNALS OF MANKIND;

AND TO THE MEMORIES

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT,

AND OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES JAMES FOX,

UNDER WHOSE FOSTERING INFLUENCE

THE GREAT WORK WAS BEGUN AND PROMOTED,

THIS HISTORY OF THE RISE, PROGRESS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

OF THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE-TRADE

IS RESPECTFULLY AND GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.

THE

HISTORY

OF THE

RISE, PROGRESS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENT

OF THE

ABOLITION

OF

THE SLAVE TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

No subject more pleasing than that of the removal of evils—Evils have existed almost from the beginning of the world—but there is a power in our nature to counteract them—this power increased by Christianity—of the evils removed by Christianity one of the greatest is the Slave-trade—The joy we ought to feel on its abolition from a contemplation of the nature of it—and of the extent of it—and of the difficulty of subduing it—Usefulness also of the contemplation of this subject.

I SCARCELY know of any subject, the contemplation of which is more pleasing than that of the correction or of the removal of any of the acknowledged evils of life; for while we rejoice to think that the sufferings

of our fellow-creatures have been thus, in any instance, relieved, we must rejoice equally to think that our own moral condition must have been necessarily improved by the change.

That evils, both physical and moral, have existed long upon earth there can be no doubt. One of the sacred writers, to whom we more immediately appeal for the early history of mankind, informs us that the state of our first parents was a state of innocence and happiness; but that, soon after their creation, sin and misery entered into the world. The Poets in their fables, most of which, however extravagant they may seem, had their origin in truth, speak the same language. Some of these represent the first condition of man by the figure of the golden, and his subsequent degeneracy and subjection to suffering by that of the silver, and afterwards of the iron, age. Others tell us that the first female was made of clay; that she was called Pandora, because every necessary gift, qualification, or endowment, was given to her by the Gods, but that she received from Jupiter at the same time, a box, from which, when opened, a multitude of disorders

disorders sprung, and that these spread themselves immediately afterwards among all of the human race. Thus it appears, whatever authorities we consult, that those which may be termed the evils of life existed in the earliest times. And what does subsequent history, combined with our own experience, tell us, but that these have been continued, or that they have come down, in different degrees, through successive generations of men, in all the known countries of the universe, to the present day?

But though the inequality visible in the different conditions of life, and the passions interwoven into our nature, (both which have been allotted to us for wise purposes, and without which we could not easily afford a proof of the existence of that which is denominated virtue,) have a tendency to produce vice and wretchedness among us, yet we see in this our constitution what may operate partially as preventives and correctives of them. If there be a radical propensity in our nature to do that which is wrong, there is on the other hand a counteracting power within it, or an impulse, by means of the action of the Divine Spirit

upon our minds, which urges us to do that which is right. If the voice of temptation, clothed in musical and seducing accents, charms us one way, the voice of holiness, speaking to us from within in a solemn and powerful manner, commands us another. Does one man obtain a victory over his corrupt affections? an immediate perception of pleasure, like the feeling of a reward divinely conferred upon him, is noticed.—Does another fall prostrate beneath their power? a painful feeling, and such as pronounces to him the sentence of reproof and punishment, is found to follow.—If one, by suffering his heart to become hardened, oppresses a fellow-creature, the tear of sympathy starts up in the eye of another, and the latter instantly feels a desire, involuntarily generated, of flying to his relief. Thus impulses, feelings, and dispositions have been implanted in our nature for the purpose of preventing and rectifying the evils of life. And as these have operated so as to stimulate some men to lessen them by the exercise of an amiable charity, so they have operated to stimulate others, in various other ways, to the same end. Hence the philosopher has

has left moral precepts behind him in favour of benevolence, and the legislator has endeavoured to prevent barbarous practices by the introduction of laws.

In consequence then of these impulses and feelings, by which the pure power in our nature is thus made to act as a check upon the evil part of it, and in consequence of the influence which philosophy and legislative wisdom have had in their respective provinces, there has been always, in all times and countries, a counteracting energy, which has opposed itself more or less to the crimes and miseries of mankind. But it seems to have been reserved for Christianity to encrease this energy, and to give it the widest possible domain. It was reserved for her, under the same Divine Influence, to give the best views of the nature, and of the present and future condition of man; to afford the best moral precepts, to communicate the most benign stimulus to the heart, to produce the most blameless conduct, and thus to cut off many of the causes of wretchedness, and to heal it wherever it was found. At her command, wherever she has been duly acknowledged, many of the evils of life

life have already fled. The prisoner of war is no longer led into the amphitheatre to become a gladiator, and to imbrue his hands in the blood of his fellow-captive for the sport of a thoughtless multitude. The stern priest, cruel through fanaticism and custom, no longer leads his fellow-creature to the altar, to sacrifice him to fictitious Gods. The venerable martyr, courageous through faith and the sanctity of his life, is no longer hurried to the flames. The haggard witch, poring over her incantations by moon-light, no longer scatters her superstitious poison among her miserable neighbours, nor suffers for her crime.

But in whatever way Christianity may have operated towards the increase of this energy, or towards a diminution of human misery, it has operated in none more powerfully than by the new views, and consequent duties, which it introduced on the subject of charity, or practical benevolence

however in a legal point of view the talent of individuals might belong exclusively to themselves, so that no other person had a right to demand the use of it by force, yet in the Christian dispensation they were but the stewards of it for good; that so much was expected from this stewardship, that it was difficult for those who were entrusted with it to enter into his spiritual kingdom; that these had no right to conceal their talent in a napkin; but that they were bound to dispense a portion of it to the relief of their fellow-creatures; and that in proportion to the magnitude of it they were accountable for the extensiveness of its use. He was the first, who pronounced the misapplication of it to be a crime, and to be a crime of no ordinary dimensions. He was the first, who broke down the boundary between Jew and Gentile, and therefore the first, who pointed out to men the inhabitants of other countries for the exercise of their philanthropy and love. Hence a distinction is to be made both in the principle and practice of charity, as existing in ancient or in modern times. Though the old philosophers, historians, and poets, frequently

quently inculcated benevolence, we have no reason to conclude from any facts they have left us, that persons in their days did any thing more than occasionally relieve an unfortunate object, who might present himself before them, or that, however they might deplore the existence of public evils among them, they joined in associations for their suppression, or that they carried their charity, as bodies of men, into other kingdoms. To Christianity alone we are indebted for the new and sublime spectacle of seeing men going beyond the bounds of individual usefulness to each other—of seeing them associate for the extirpation of private and public misery—and of seeing them carry their charity, as a united brotherhood, into distant lands. And in this wider field of benevolence it would be unjust not to confess, that no country has shone with more true lustre than our own, there being scarcely any case of acknowledged affliction, for which some of her Christian children have not united in an attempt to provide relief.

Among the evils, corrected or subdued, either by the general influence of Christianity on

on the minds of men, or by particular associations of Christians, the African * Slave-trade appears to me to have occupied the foremost place. The abolition of it, therefore, of which it has devolved upon me to write the history, should be accounted as one of the greatest blessings, and, as such, should be one of the most copious sources of our joy. Indeed I know of no evil, the removal of which should excite in us a higher degree of pleasure. For in considerations of this kind, are we not usually influenced by circumstances? Are not our feelings usually affected according to the situation, or the magnitude, or the importance of these? Are they not more or less elevated as the evil under our contemplation has been more or less productive of misery, or more or less productive of guilt? Are they not more or less elevated, again, as we have found it more or less considerable in extent? Our sensations will undoubtedly be in proportion to such circumstances, or our

* Slavery had been before annihilated by Christianity, I mean in the West of Europe, at the close of the twelfth century.

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joy to the appretiation or mensuration of the evil which has been removed.

To value the blessing of the abolition as we ought, or to appretiate the joy and gratitude which we ought to feel concerning it, we must enter a little into the circumstances of the trade. Our statement, however, of these needs not be long. A few pages will do all that is necessary! A glance only into such a subject as this will be sufficient to affect the heart—to arouse our indignation and our pity,—and to teach us the importance of the victory obtained.

The first subject for consideration, towards enabling us to make the estimate in question, will be that of the nature of the evil belonging to the Slave-trade. This may be seen by examining it in three points of view:—First, As it has been proved to arise on the continent of Africa in the course of reducing the inhabitants of it to slavery;—Secondly, In the course of conveying them from thence to the lands or colonies of other nations;—And Thirdly, In continuing them there as slaves.

To see it as it has been shown to arise in the

the first case, let us suppose ourselves on the Continent just mentioned. Well then—We are landed—We are already upon our travels—We have just passed through one forest—We are now come to a more open place, which indicates an approach to habitation. And what object is that, which first obtrudes itself upon our sight? Who is that wretched woman, whom we discover under that noble tree, wringing her hands, and beating her breast, as if in the agonies of despair? Three days has she been there at intervals to look and to watch, and this is the fourth morning, and no tidings of her children yet. Beneath its spreading boughs they were accustomed to play—But alas! the savage man-stealer interrupted their playful mirth, and has taken them for ever from her sight.

But let us leave the cries of this unfortunate woman, and hasten into another district:—And what do we first see here? Who is he, that just now started across the narrow pathway, as if afraid of a human face? What is that sudden rustling among the leaves? Why are those persons flying from our approach, and hiding themselves in yon darkest

darkest thicket? Behold, as we get into the plain, a deserted village! The rice-field has been just trodden down around it. An aged man, venerable by his silver beard, lies wounded and dying near the threshold of his hut. War, suddenly instigated by avarice, has just visited the dwellings which we see. The old have been butchered, because unfit for slavery, and the young have been carried off, except such as have fallen in the conflict, or have escaped among the woods behind us.

But let us hasten from this cruel scene, which gives rise to so many melancholy reflections. Let us cross yon distant river, and enter into some new domain. But are we relieved even here from afflicting spectacles? Look at that immense crowd, which appears to be gathered in a ring. See the accused innocent in the middle. The ordeal of poisonous water has been administered to him, as a test of his innocence or his guilt. He begins to be sick, and pale. Alas! yon mournful shriek of his relatives confirms that the loss of his freedom is now sealed.

And whither shall we go now? The night is approaching fast. Let us find some friendly

friendly hut, where sleep may make us forget for a while the sorrows of the day. Behold a hospitable native ready to receive us at his door! Let us avail ourselves of his kindness. And now let us give ourselves to repose. But why, when our eyelids are but just closed, do we find ourselves thus suddenly awakened? What is the meaning of the noise around us, of the trampling of people's feet, of the rustling of the bow, the quiver, and the lance? Let us rise up and inquire. Behold! the inhabitants are all alarmed! A wakeful woman has shown them yon distant column of smoke and blaze. The neighbouring village is on fire. The prince, unfaithful to the sacred duty of the protection of his subjects, has surrounded them. He is now burning their habitations, and seizing, as saleable booty, the fugitives from the flames.

Such then are some of the scenes that have been passing in Africa in consequence of the existence of the Slave-trade; or such is the nature of the evil, as it has shown itself in the first of the cases we have noticed. Let us now estimate it as it has been proved to exist in the second; or let us examine the state

state of the unhappy Africans, reduced to slavery in this manner, while on board the vessels, which are to convey them across the ocean to other lands. And here I must observe at once, that, as far as this part of the evil is concerned, I am at a loss to describe it. Where shall I find words to express properly their sorrow, as arising from the reflection of being parted for ever from their friends, their relatives, and their country? Where shall I find language to paint in appropriate colours the horror of mind brought on by thoughts of their future unknown destination, of which they can augur nothing but misery from all that they have yet seen? How shall I make known their situation, while labouring under painful disease, or while struggling in the suffocating holds of their prisons, like animals inclosed in an exhausted receiver? How shall I describe their feelings as exposed to all the personal indignities, which lawless appetite or brutal passion may suggest? How shall I exhibit their sufferings as determining to refuse sustenance and die, or as resolving to break their chains, and, disdaining to live as slaves, to punish their oppressors? How shall I give

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an idea of their agony, when under various punishments and tortures for their reputed crimes? Indeed every part of this subject defies my powers, and I must therefore satisfy myself and the reader with a general representation, or in the words of a celebrated member of Parliament, that " Never was so much human suffering condensed in so small a space."

I come now to the evil, as it has been proved to arise in the third case; or to consider the situation of the unhappy victims of the trade, when their painful voyages are over, or after they have been landed upon their destined shores. And here we are to view them first under the degrading light of cattle. We are to see them examined, handled, selected, separated, and sold. Alas! relatives are separated from relatives, as if, like cattle, they had no rational intellect, no power of feeling the nearness of relationship, nor sense of the duties belonging to the ties of life! We are next to see them labouring, and this for the benefit of those, to whom they are under no obligation, by any law either natural or divine, to obey. We are to see them, if refusing the commands

mands of their purchasers, however weary, or feeble, or indisposed, subject to corporal punishments, and, if forcibly resisting them, to death. We are to see them in a state of general degradation and misery. The knowledge, which their oppressors have of their own crime in having violated the rights of nature, and of the disposition of the injured to seek all opportunities of revenge, produces a fear, which dictates to them the necessity of a system of treatment by which they shall keep up a wide distinction between the two, and by which the noble feelings of the latter shall be kept down, and their spirits broken. We are to see them again subject to individual persecution, as anger, or malice, or any bad passion may suggest. Hence the whip—the chain—the iron-collar. Hence the various modes of private torture, of which so many accounts have been truly given. Nor can such horrible cruelties be discovered so as to be made punishable, while the testimony of any number of the oppressed is invalid against the oppressors, however they may be offences against the laws. And, lastly, we are to see their innocent offspring, against whose personal liberty

berty the shadow of an argument cannot be advanced, inheriting all the miseries of their parents' lot.

The evil then, as far as it has been hitherto viewed, presents to us in its three several departments a measure of human suffering not to be equalled—not to be calculated—not to be described. But would that we could consider this part of the subject as dismissed! Would that in each of the departments now examined there was no counterpart left us to contemplate! But this cannot be. For if there be persons, who suffer unjustly, there must be others, who oppress. And if there be those who oppress, there must be to the suffering, which has been occasioned, a corresponding portion of immorality or guilt.

We are obliged then to view the counterpart of the evil in question, before we can make a proper estimate of the nature of it. And, in examining this part of it, we shall find that we have a no less frightful picture to behold than in the former cases; or that, while the miseries endured by the unfortunate Africans excite our pity on the one

hand, the vices, which are connected with them, provoke our indignation and abhorrence on the other. The Slave-trade, in this point of view, must strike us as an immense mass of evil on account of the criminality attached to it, as displayed in the various branches of it, which have already been examined. For, to take the counterpart of the evil in the first of these, can we say, that no moral turpitude is to be placed to the account of those, who living on the continent of Africa give birth to the enormities which take place in consequence of the prosecution of this trade? Is not that man made morally worse, who is induced to become a tiger to his species, or who, instigated by avarice, lies in wait in the thicket to get possession of his fellow-man? Is no injustice manifest in the land, where the prince, unfaithful to his duty, seizes his innocent subjects, and sells them for slaves? Are no moral evils produced among those communities, which make war upon other communities for the sake of plunder, and without any previous provocation or offence? Does no crime attach to those, who accuse others falsely, or who multiply and divide crimes for

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the sake of the profit of the punishment, and who for the same reason continue the use of barbarous and absurd ordeals as a test of innocence or guilt?

In the second of these branches the counterpart of the evil is to be seen in the conduct of those, who purchase the miserable natives in their own country, and convey them to distant lands. And here questions, similar to the former, may be asked. Do they experience no corruption of their nature, or become chargeable with no violation of right, who, when they go with their ships to this continent, know the enormities which their visits there will occasion, who buy their fellow-creature man, and this, knowing the way in which he comes into their hands, and who chain, and imprison, and scourge him? Do the moral feelings of those persons escape without injury, whose hearts are hardened? And can the hearts of those be otherwise than hardened, who are familiar with the tears and groans of innocent strangers forcibly torn away from every thing that is dear to them in life, who are accustomed to see them on board their vessels in a state of suffocation and in the ago-

nies of despair, and who are themselves in the habits of the cruel use of arbitrary power?

The counterpart of the evil in its third branch is to be seen in the conduct of those, who, when these miserable people have been landed, purchase and carry them to their respective homes. And let us see whether a mass of wickedness is not generated also in the present case. Can those have nothing to answer for, who separate the faithful ties which nature and religion have created? Can their feelings be otherwise than corrupted, who consider their fellow-creatures as brutes, or treat those as cattle, who may become the temples of the Holy Spirit, and in whom the Divinity disdains not himself to dwell? Is there no injustice in forcing men to labour without wages? Is there no breach of duty, when we are commanded to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and visit the sick and in prison, in exposing them to want, in torturing them by cruel punishment, and in grinding them down by hard labour, so as to shorten their days? Is there no crime in adopting a system, which keeps down all the noble faculties of their

their souls, and which positively debases and corrupts their nature? Is there no crime in perpetuating these evils among their innocent offspring? And finally, besides all these crimes, is there not naturally in the familiar sight of the exercise, but more especially in the exercise itself, of uncontrolled power, that which vitiates the internal man? In seeing misery stalk daily over the land, do not all become insensibly hardened? By giving birth to that misery themselves, do they not become abandoned? In what state of society are the corrupt appetites so easily, so quickly, and so frequently indulged, and where else, by means of frequent indulgence, do these experience such a monstrous growth? Where else is the temper subject to such frequent irritation, or passion to such little control? Yes—If the unhappy slave is in an unfortunate situation, so is the tyrant who holds him. Action and reaction are equal to each other, as well in the moral as in the natural world. You cannot exercise an improper dominion over a fellow-creature, but by a wise ordering of Providence you must necessarily injure yourself.

Having now considered the nature of the evil

evil of the Slave-trade in its three separate departments of suffering, and in its corresponding counterparts of guilt, I shall make a few observations on the extent of it.

On this subject it must strike us, that the misery and the crimes included in the evil, as it has been found in Africa, were not like common maladies, which make a short or periodical visit and then are gone, but that they were continued daily. Nor were they like diseases, which from local causes attack a village or a town, and by the skill of the physician, under the blessing of Providence, are removed, but they affected a whole continent. The trade with all its horrors began at the river Senegal, and continued, winding with the coast, through its several geographical divisions to Cape Negro; a distance of more than three thousand miles. In various lines or paths formed at right angles from the shore, and passing into the heart of the country, slaves were procured and brought down. The distance, which many of them travelled, was immense. Those, who have been in Africa, have assured us, that they came as far as from the sources of their largest rivers,

vers, which we know to be many hundred miles in-land, and the natives have told us, in their way of computation, that they came a journey of many moons.

It must strike us again, that the misery and the crimes, included in the evil, as it has been shown in the transportation, had no ordinary bounds. They were not to be seen in the crossing of a river, but of an ocean. They did not begin in the morning and end at night, but were continued for many weeks, and sometimes by casualties for a quarter of the year. They were not limited to the precincts of a solitary ship, but were spread among many vessels; and these were so constantly passing, that the ocean itself never ceased to be a witness of their existence.

And it must strike us finally, that the misery and crimes, included in the evil as it has been found in foreign lands, were not confined within the shores of a little island. Most of the islands of a continent, and many of these of considerable population and extent, were filled with them. And the continent itself, to which these geographically belong, was widely polluted by their

domain. Hence, if we were to take the vast extent of space occupied by these crimes and sufferings from the heart of Africa to its shores, and that which they filled on the continent of America and the islands adjacent, and were to join the crimes and sufferings in one to those in the other by the crimes and sufferings which took place in the track of the vessels successively crossing the Atlantic, we should behold a vast belt as it were of physical and moral evil, reaching through land and ocean to the length of nearly half the circle of the globe.

The next view, which I shall take of this evil, will be as it relates to the difficulty of subduing it.

This difficulty may be supposed to have been more than ordinarily great. Many evils of a public nature, which existed in former times, were the offspring of ignorance and superstition, and they were subdued of course by the progress of light and knowledge. But the evil in question began in avarice. It was nursed also by worldly interest. It did not therefore so easily yield to the usual correctives of disorders

orders in the world. We may observe also, that the interest by which it was thus supported, was not that of a few individuals, nor of one body, but of many bodies of men. It was interwoven again into the system of the commerce and of the revenue of nations. Hence the merchant—the planter—the mortgagee—the manufacturer—the politician—the legislator—the cabinet-minister—lifted up their voices against the annihilation of it. For these reasons the Slave-trade may be considered, like the fabulous hydra, to have had a hundred heads, every one of which it was necessary to cut off before it could be subdued. And as none but Hercules was fitted to conquer the one, so nothing less than extraordinary prudence, courage, labour, and patience, could overcome the other. To protection in this manner by his hundred interests it was owing, that the monster stalked in security for so long a time. He stalked too in the open day, committing his mighty depredations. And when good men, whose duty it was to mark him as the object of their destruction, began to assail him, he did not fly, but gnashed

gnashed his teeth at them, growling savagely at the same time, and putting himself into a posture of defiance.

We see then, in whatever light we consider the Slave-trade, whether we examine into the nature of it, or whether we look into the extent of it, or whether we estimate the difficulty of subduing it, we must conclude that no evil more monstrous has ever existed upon earth. But if so, then we have proved the truth of the position, that the abolition of it ought to be accounted by us as one of the greatest blessings, and that it ought to be one of the most copious sources of our joy. Indeed I do not know, how we can sufficiently express what we ought to feel upon this occasion. It becomes us as individuals to rejoice. It becomes us as a nation to rejoice. It becomes us even to perpetuate our joy to our posterity. I do not mean however by anniversaries, which are to be celebrated by the ringing of bells and convivial meetings, but by handing down this great event so impressively to our children, as to raise in them, if not continual, yet frequently renewed thanksgivings,

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to the great Creator of the universe, for the manifestation of this his favour, in having disposed our legislators to take away such a portion of suffering from our fellow-creatures, and such a load of guilt from our native land.

And as the contemplation of the removal of this monstrous evil should excite in us the most pleasing and grateful sensations, so the perusal of the history of it should afford us lessons, which it must be useful to us to know or to be reminded of. For it cannot be otherwise than useful to us to know the means which have been used, and the different persons who have moved, in so great a cause. It cannot be otherwise than useful to us to be impressively reminded of the simple axiom, which the perusal of this history will particularly suggest to us, that "the greatest works must have a beginning;" because the fostering of such an idea in our minds cannot but encourage us to undertake the removal of evils, however vast they may appear in their size, or however difficult to overcome. It cannot again be otherwise than useful to us to be assured

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(and this history will assure us of it) that in any work, which is a work of righteousness, however small the beginning may be, or however small the progress may be that we may make in it, we ought never to despair; for that, whatever checks and discouragements we may meet with, "no virtuous effort is ever ultimately lost." And finally, it cannot be otherwise than useful to us to form the opinion, which the contemplation of this subject must always produce, namely, that many of the evils, which are still left among us, may, by an union of wise and virtuous individuals, be greatly alleviated, if not entirely done away: for if the great evil of the Slave-trade, so deeply entrenched by its hundred interests, has fallen prostrate before the efforts of those who attacked it, what evil of a less magnitude shall not be more easily subdued? O may reflections of this sort always enliven us, always encourage us, always stimulate us to our duty! May we never cease to believe, that many of the miseries of life are still to be remedied, or to rejoice that we may be permitted, if we will only make ourselves

ourselves worthy by our endeavours, to heal them! May we encourage for this purpose every generous sympathy that arises in our hearts, as the offspring of the Divine influence for our good, convinced that we are not born for ourselves alone, and that the Divinity never so fully dwells in us, as when we do his will; and that we never do his will more agreeably, as far as it has been revealed to us, than when we employ our time in works of charity towards the rest of our fellow-creatures!

CHAPTER II.

As it is desirable to know the true sources of events in history, so this will be realized in that of the abolition of the Slave-trade—Inquiry as to those who favoured the cause of the Africans previously to the year 1787—All these to be considered as necessary forerunners in that cause—First forerunners were Cardinal Ximenes—the Emperor Charles the Fifth—Pope Leo the Tenth—Elizabeth queen of England—Louis the Thirteenth of France.

It would be considered by many, who have stood at the mouth of a river, and witnessed its torrent there, to be both an interesting and a pleasing journey to go to the fountain-head, and then to travel on its banks downwards, and to mark the different streams in each side, which should run into it and feed it. So I presume the reader will not be a little interested and entertained in viewing with me the course of the abolition of the Slave-trade, in first finding its source, and then in tracing the different springs which have contributed to its increase. And here I may observe that, in doing this,

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we shall have advantages, which historians have not always had in developing the causes of things. Many have handed down to us events, for the production of which they have given us but their own conjectures. There has been often indeed such a distance between the events themselves and the lives of those who have recorded them, that the different means and motives belonging to them have been lost through time. On the present occasion, however, we shall have the peculiar satisfaction of knowing that we communicate the truth, or that those, which we unfold, are the true causes and means. For the most remote of all the human springs, which can be traced as having any bearing upon the great event in question, will fall within the period of three centuries, and the most powerful of them within the last twenty years. These circumstances indeed have had their share in inducing me to engage in the present history. Had I measured it by the importance of the subject, I had been deterred: but believing that most readers love the truth, and that it ought to be the object of all writers to promote it, and believing

lieving moreover, that I was in possession of more facts on this subject than any other person, I thought I was peculiarly called upon to undertake it.

In tracing the different streams from whence the torrent arose, which has now happily swept away the Slave-trade, I must begin with an inquiry as to those who favoured the cause of the injured Africans from the year 1516 to the year 1787, at which latter period a number of persons associated themselves in England for its abolition. For though they, who belonged to this association, may, in consequence of having pursued a regular system, be called the principal actors, yet it must be acknowledged that their efforts would never have been so effectual, if the minds of men had not been prepared by others, who had moved before them. Great events have never taken place without previously disposing causes. So it is in the case before us. Hence they, who lived even in early times, and favoured this great cause, may be said to have been necessary precursors in it. And here it may be proper to observe, that it is by no means necessary that all these should

should have been themselves actors in the production of this great event. Persons have contributed towards it in different ways:—Some have written expressly on the subject, who have had no opportunity of promoting it by personal exertions. Others have only mentioned it incidentally in their writings. Others, in an elevated rank and station, have cried out publicly concerning it, whose sayings have been recorded. All these, however, may be considered as necessary forerunners in their day. For all of them have brought the subject more or less into notice. They have more or less enlightened the mind upon it. They have more or less impressed it. And therefore each may be said to have had his share in diffusing and keeping up a certain portion of knowledge and feeling concerning it, which has been eminently useful in the promotion of the cause.

It is rather remarkable, that the first forerunners and coadjutors should have been men in power.

So early as in the year 1503 a few slaves had been sent from the Portuguese settle-

ments in Africa into the Spanish colonies in America. In 1511, Ferdinand the Fifth, king of Spain, permitted them to be carried in greater numbers. Ferdinand, however, must have been ignorant in these early times of the piratical manner in which the Portuguese had procured them. He could have known nothing of their treatment when in bondage, nor could he have viewed the few uncertain adventurous transportations of them into his dominions in the western world, in the light of a regular trade. After his death, however, a proposal was made by Bartholomew de las Casas, the bishop of Chiapa, to Cardinal Ximenes, who held the reins of the government of Spain till Charles the Fifth came to the throne, for the establishment of a regular system of commerce in the persons of the native Africans. The object of Bartholomew de las Casas was undoubtedly to save the American Indians, whose cruel treatment and almost extirpation he had witnessed during his residence among them, and in whose behalf he had undertaken a voyage to the court of Spain. It is difficult to reconcile this proposal with the humane

humane and charitable spirit of the bishop of Chiapa. But it is probable he believed that a code of laws would soon be established in favour both of Africans and of the natives in the Spanish settlements, and that he flattered himself that, being about to return and to live in the country of their slavery, he could look to the execution of it. The cardinal, however, with a foresight, a benevolence, and a justice, which will always do honour to his memory, refused the proposal, not only judging it to be unlawful to consign innocent people to slavery at all, but to be very inconsistent to deliver the inhabitants of one country from a state of misery by consigning to it those of another. Ximenes therefore may be considered as one of the first great friends of the Africans after the partial beginning of the trade.

This answer of the cardinal, as it showed his virtue as an individual, so it was peculiarly honourable to him as a public man, and ought to operate as a lesson to other statesmen, how they admit any thing new among political regulations and establishments, which is connected in the smallest degree with injustice. For evil, when once

sanctioned by governments, spreads in a tenfold degree, and may, unless seasonably checked, become so ramified, as to affect the reputation of a country, and to render its own removal scarcely possible without detriment to the political concerns of the state. In no instance has this been verified more than in the case of the Slave-trade. Never was our national character more tarnished, and our prosperity more clouded by guilt. Never was there a monster more difficult to subdue. Even they, who heard as it were the shrieks of oppression, and wished to assist the sufferers, were fearful of joining in their behalf. While they acknowledged the necessity of removing one evil, they were terrified by the prospect of introducing another; and were therefore only able to relieve their feelings, by lamenting in the bitterness of their hearts, that this traffic had ever been begun at all.

After the death of cardinal Ximenes, the emperor Charles the Fifth, who had come into power, encouraged the Slave-trade. In 1517 he granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand Africans into

into America. But he lived long enough to repent of what he had thus inconsiderately done. For in the year 1542 he made a code of laws for the better protection of the unfortunate Indians in his foreign dominions; and he stopped the progress of African slavery by an order, that all slaves in his American islands should be made free. This order was executed by Pedro de la Gasca. Manumission took place as well in Hispaniola as on the Continent. But on the return of Gasca to Spain, and the retirement of Charles into a monastery, slavery was revived.

It is impossible to pass over this instance of the abolition of slavery by Charles in all his foreign dominions, without some comments. It shows him, first, to have been a friend both to the Indians and the Africans, as a part of the human race. It shows he was ignorant of what he was doing when he gave his sanction to this cruel trade. It shows when legislators give one set of men an undue power over another, how quickly they abuse it,—or he never would have found himself obliged in the short space of twenty-five years to undo that which he had countenanced as a great state-

measure.

measure. And while it confirms the former lesson to statesmen, of watching the beginnings or principles of things in their political movements, it should teach them never to persist in the support of evils, through the false shame of being obliged to confess that they had once given them their sanction, nor to delay the cure of them because, politically speaking, neither this nor that is the proper season; but to do them away instantly, as there can only be one fit or proper time in the eye of religion, namely, on the conviction of their existence.

From the opinions of cardinal Ximenes and of the emperor Charles the Fifth, I hasten to that which was expressed much about the same time, in a public capacity, by pope Leo the Tenth. The Dominicans in Spanish America, witnessing the cruel treatment which the slaves underwent there, considered slavery as utterly repugnant to the principles of the gospel, and recommended the abolition of it. The Franciscans did not favour the former in this their scheme of benevolence; and the consequence was, that a controversy on this subject sprung up between them, which was carried to this

pope

pope for his decision. Leo exerted himself, much to his honour, in behalf of the poor sufferers, and declared "That not only the christian religion, but that Nature herself cried out against a state of slavery." This answer was certainly worthy of one, who was deemed the head of the christian church. It must, however, be confessed that it would have been strange if Leo, in his situation as pontiff, had made a different reply. He could never have denied that God was no respecter of persons. He must have acknowledged that men were bound to love each other as brethren. And, if he admitted the doctrine, that all men were accountable for their actions hereafter, he could never have prevented the deduction, that it was necessary they should be free. Nor could he, as a man of high attainments, living early in the sixteenth century, have been ignorant of what had taken place in the twelfth; or that, by the latter end of this latter century, christianity had obtained the undisputed honour of having extirpated slavery from the western part of the European world.

From Spain and Italy I come to England. The

The first importation of slaves from Africa by our countrymen was in the reign of Elizabeth, in the year 1562. This great princess seems on the very commencement of the trade to have questioned its lawfulness. She seems to have entertained a religious scruple concerning it, and, indeed, to have revolted at the very thought of it. She seems to have been aware of the evils to which its continuance might lead, or that, if it were sanctioned, the most unjustifiable means might be made use of to procure the persons of the natives of Africa. And in what light she would have viewed any acts of this kind, had they taken place, we may conjecture from this fact,—that when captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa and Hispaniola, whither he had carried slaves, she sent for him, and, as we learn from Hill's Naval History, expressed her concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off without their free consent, declaring that "It would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers." Captain Hawkins promised to comply with the injunctions of Elizabeth in this respect.

But

But he did not keep his word; for when he went to Africa again, he seized many of the inhabitants and carried them off as slaves, which occasioned Hill, in the account he gives of his second voyage, to use these remarkable words:—"Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery, an injustice and barbarity, which, so sure as there is vengeance in heaven for the worst of crimes, will sometime be the destruction of all who allow or encourage it." That the trade should have been suffered to continue under such a princess, and after such solemn expressions as those which she has been described to have uttered, can be only attributed to the pains taken by those concerned in it to keep her ignorant of the truth.

From England I now pass over to France. Labat, a Roman missionary, in his account of the isles of America, mentions, that Louis the Thirteenth was very uneasy when he was about to issue the edict, by which all Africans coming into his colonies were to be made slaves, and that this uneasiness continued, till he was assured, that the introduction of them in this capacity into his foreign

foreign dominions was the readiest way of converting them to the principles of the christian religion.

These, then, were the first forerunners in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave-trade. Nor have their services towards it been of small moment. For, in the first place, they have enabled those, who came after them, and who took an active interest in the same cause, to state the great authority of their opinions and of their example. They have enabled them, again, to detail the history connected with these, in consequence of which circumstances have been laid open, which it is of great importance to know. For have they not enabled them to state, that the African Slave-trade never would have been permitted to exist but for the ignorance of those in authority concerning it—That at its commencement there was a revolting of nature against it—a suspicion—a caution—a fear—both as to its unlawfulness and its effects? Have they not enabled them to state, that falsehoods were advanced, and these concealed under the mask of religion, to deceive those who had the power to suppress it? Have they not enabled them

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to state that this trade began in piracy, and that it was continued upon the principles of force? And, finally, have not they, who have been enabled to make these statements; knowing all the circumstances connected with them, found their own zeal increased and their own courage and perseverance strengthened; and have they not, by the communication of them to others, produced many friends and even labourers in the cause?

CHAPTER III.

Forerunners continued to 1787—*divided from this time into four classes*—*First class consists principally of persons in Great Britain of various descriptions* — *Godwyn* — *Baxter* — *Tryon* — *Southern*— *Primatt*—*Montesquieu*—*Hutcheson*—*Sharp*—*Ramsay*—*and a multitude of others, whose names and services follow.*

I HAVE hitherto traced the history of the forerunners in this great cause only up to about the year 1640. If I am to pursue my plan, I am to trace it to the year 1787. But in order to show what I intend in a clearer point of view, I shall divide those who have lived within this period, and who will now consist of persons in a less elevated station, into four classes: and I shall give to each class a distinct consideration by itself.

Several of our old English writers, though they have not mentioned the African Slave-trade, or the slavery consequent upon it, in their respective works, have yet given their testimony

testimony of condemnation against both. Thus our great Milton:—

> "O execrable son, so to aspire
> Above his brethren, to himself assuming
> Authority usurpt, from God not given;
> He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
> Dominion absolute; that right we hold
> By his donation;—but man over men
> He made not lord, such title to himself
> Reserving, human left from human free."

I might mention bishop Saunderson and others, who bore a testimony equally strong against the lawfulness of trading in the persons of men, and of holding them in bondage, but as I mean to confine myself to those, who have favoured the cause of the Africans specifically, I cannot admit their names into any of the classes which have been announced.

Of those who compose the first class, defined as it has now been, I cannot name any individual who took a part in this cause till between the years 1670 and 1680. For in the year 1640, and for a few years afterwards, the nature of the trade and of the slavery was but little known, except to a few individuals, who were concerned in them;

them; and it is obvious that these would neither endanger their own interest nor proclaim their own guilt by exposing it. The first, whom I shall mention, is Morgan Godwyn, a clergyman of the established church. This pious divine wrote a Treatise upon the subject, which he dedicated to the then archbishop of Canterbury. He gave it to the world, at the time mentioned, under the title of "The Negros and Indians Advocate." In this treatise he lays open the situation of these oppressed people, of whose sufferings he had been an eye-witness in the island of Barbadoes. He calls forth the pity of the reader in an affecting manner, and exposes with a nervous eloquence the brutal sentiments and conduct of their oppressors. This seems to have been the first work undertaken in England expressly in favour of the cause.

The next person, whom I shall mention, is Richard Baxter, the celebrated divine among the Nonconformists. In his Christian Directory, published about the same time as the Negros and Indians Advocate, he gives advice to those masters in foreign plantations, who have Negros and other slaves. In this

he

he protests loudly against this trade. He says expressly that they, who go out as pirates, and take away poor Africans, or people of another land, who never forfeited life or liberty, and make them slaves and sell them, are the worst of robbers, and ought to be considered as the common enemies of mankind; and that they, who buy them, and use them as mere beasts for their own convenience, regardless of their spiritual welfare, are fitter to be called demons than christians. He then proposes several queries, which he answers in a clear and forcible manner, showing the great inconsistency of this traffic, and the necessity of treating those then in bondage with tenderness and a due regard to their spiritual concerns.

The Directory of Baxter was succeeded by a publication called "Friendly Advice to the Planters: in three parts." The first of these was, "A brief Treatise of the principal Fruits and Herbs that grow in Barbadoes, Jamaica, and other Plantations in the West Indies." The second was, "The Negros Complaint, or their hard Servitude, and the Cruelties practised upon them by divers of

their Masters professing Christianity." And the third was, "A Dialogue between an Ethiopian and a Christian, his Master, in America." In the last of these, Thomas Tryon, who was the author, inveighs both against the commerce and the slavery of the Africans, and in a striking manner examines each by the touchstone of reason, humanity, justice, and religion.

In the year 1696, Southern brought forward his celebrated tragedy of Oronooko, by means of which many became enlightened upon the subject, and interested in it. For this tragedy was not a representation of fictitious circumstances, but of such as had occurred in the colonies, and as had been communicated in a publication by Mrs. Behn.

The person, who seems to have noticed the subject next was Dr. Primatt. In his "Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy, and on the Sin of Cruelty to Brute-animals," he takes occasion to advert to the subject of the African Slave-trade. "It has pleased God," says he, "to cover some men with white skins and others with black; but as there is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the white

white man, notwithstanding the barbarity of custom and prejudice, can have no right by virtue of his colour to enslave and tyrannize over the black man. For whether a man be white or black, such he is by God's appointment, and, abstractedly considered, is neither a subject for pride, nor an object of contempt."

After Dr. Primatt, we come to baron Montesquieu. "Slavery," says he, "is not good in itself. It is neither useful to the master nor to the slave. Not to the slave, because he can do nothing from virtuous motives. Not to the master, because he contracts among his slaves all sorts of bad habits, and accustoms himself to the neglect of all the moral virtues. He becomes haughty, passionate, obdurate, vindictive, voluptuous, and cruel." And with respect to this particular species of slavery he proceeds to say, "it is impossible to allow the Negros are men, because, if we allow them to be men, it will begin to be believed that we ourselves are not Christians."

Hutcheson, in his System of Moral Philosophy, endeavours to show that he, who detains another by force in slavery, can make

no good title to him, and adds, "Strange that in any nation where a sense of liberty prevails, and where the Christian religion is professed, custom and high prospect of gain can so stupefy the consciences of men and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computations made about the value of their fellow-men and their liberty without abhorrence and indignation!"

Foster, in his Discourses on Natural Religion and Social Virtue, calls the slavery under our consideration "a criminal and outrageous violation of the natural rights of mankind." I am sorry that I have not room to say all that he says on this subject. Perhaps the following beautiful extracts may suffice:

"But notwithstanding this, we ourselves, who profess to be Christians, and boast of the peculiar advantages we enjoy by means of an express revelation of our duty from heaven, are in effect these very untaught and rude heathen countries. With all our superior light we instil into those, whom we call savage and barbarous, the most despicable opinion of human nature. We, to the utmost of our power, weaken and dissolve the

the universal tie, that binds and unites mankind. We practise what we should exclaim against as the utmost excess of cruelty and tyranny, if nations of the world, differing in colour and form of government from ourselves, were so possessed of empire, as to be able to reduce us to a state of unmerited and brutish servitude. Of consequence we sacrifice our reason, our humanity, our christianity, to an unnatural sordid gain. We teach other nations to despise and trample under foot all the obligations of social virtue. We take the most effectual method to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by representing it as a scheme of power and barbarous oppression, and an enemy to the natural privileges and rights of man."

"Perhaps all that I have now offered may be of very little weight to restrain this enormity, this aggravated iniquity. However, I shall still have the satisfaction of having entered my private protest against a practice, which, in my opinion, bids that God, who is the God and Father of the Gentiles unconverted to christianity, most daring and bold defiance, and spurns at all the principles both of natural and revealed religion."

The next author is sir Richard Steele, who, by means of the affecting story of Inkle and Yarico, holds up this trade again to our abhorrence.

In the year 1735, Atkins, who was a surgeon in the navy, published his Voyage to Guinea, Brazil, and the West-Indies, in his Majesty's ships Swallow and Weymouth. In this work he describes openly the manner of making the natives slaves, such as by kidnapping, by unjust accusations and trials, and by other nefarious means. He states also the cruelties practised upon them by the white people, and the iniquitous ways and dealings of the latter, and answers their argument, by which they insinuated that the condition of the Africans was improved by their transportation to other countries.

From this time the trade beginning to be better known, a multitude of persons of various stations and characters sprung up, who by exposing it are to be mentioned among the forerunners and coadjutors in the cause.

Pope, in his Essay on Man, where he endeavours to show that happiness in the present depends, among other things, upon the hope of a future state, takes an opportunity of

of exciting compassion in behalf of the poor African, while he censures the avarice and cruelty of his master:

" Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky-way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n
Behind the cloud-topt hill an humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the watry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold."

Thomson also, in his Seasons, marks this traffic as destructive and cruel, introducing the well-known fact of sharks following the vessels employed in it:

" Increasing still the sorrows of those storms,
His jaws horrific arm'd with three-fold fate,
Here dwells the direful shark. Lur'd by the scent
Of steaming crowds, of rank disease, and death,
Behold! he rushing cuts the briny flood,
Swift as the gale can bear the ship along,
And from the partners of that cruel trade,
Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
Demands his share of prey, demands themselves.
The stormy fates descend: one death involves
Tyrants and slaves; when straight their mangled limbs
Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal."

Neither

Neither was Richard Savage forgetful in his poems of the Injured Africans: he warns their oppressors of a day of retribution for their barbarous conduct. Having personified Public Spirit, he makes her speak on the subject in the following manner:—

"Let by my specious name no tyrants rise,
And cry, while they enslave, they civilize!
Know, Liberty and I are still the same
Congenial—ever mingling flame with flame!
Why must I Afric's sable children see
Vended for slaves, though born by nature free,
The nameless tortures cruel minds invent
Those to subject whom Nature equal meant?
If these you dare (although unjust success
Empow'rs you now unpunish'd to oppress),
Revolving empire you and yours may doom—
(Rome all subdu'd—yet Vandals vanquish'd Rome)
Yes—Empire may revolt—give them the day,
And yoke may yoke, and blood may blood repay."

Wallis, in his System of the Laws of Scotland, maintains, that "neither men nor governments have a right to sell those of their own species. Men and their liberty are neither purchaseable nor saleable." And, after arguing the case, he says, "This is the law of nature, which is obligatory on all men, at all times, and in all places.—Would not

not any of us, who should be snatched by pirates from his native land, think himself cruelly abused, and at all times entitled to be free? Have not these unfortunate Africans, who meet with the same cruel fate, the same right? Are they not men as well as we? And have they not the same sensibility? Let us not therefore defend or support an usage, which is contrary to all the laws of humanity."

In the year 1750 the reverend Griffith Hughes, rector of St. Lucy, in Barbadoes, published his Natural History of that island. He took an opportunity, in the course of it, of laying open to the world the miserable situation of the poor Africans, and the waste of them by hard labour and other cruel means, and he had the generosity to vindicate their capacities from the charge, which they who held them in bondage brought against them, as a justification of their own wickedness in continuing to deprive them of the rights of men.

Edmund Burke, in his account of the European settlements, (for this work is usually attributed to him,) complains "that the Negroes in our colonies endure a slavery

more complete, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time. Proofs of this are not wanting. The prodigious waste, which we experience in this unhappy part of our species, is a full and melancholy evidence of this truth." And he goes on to advise the planters for the sake of their own interest to behave like good men, good masters, and good Christians, and to impose less labour upon their slaves, and to give them recreation on some of the grand festivals, and to instruct them in religion, as certain preventives of their decrease.

An anonymous author of a pamphlet, entitled, An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Colonies of America, seems to have come forward next. Speaking of slavery there, he says, " It is shocking to humanity, violative of every generous sentiment, abhorrent utterly from the Christian religion—There cannot be a more dangerous maxim than that necessity is a plea for injustice, for who shall fix the degree of this necessity? What villain so atrocious, who

who may not urge this excuse, or, as Milton has happily expressed it,

" and with necessity,
The tyrant's plea, excuse his dev'lish deed?"

" That our colonies," he continues, " want people, is a very weak argument for so inhuman a violation of justice—Shall a civilized, a Christian nation encourage slavery, because the barbarous, savage, lawless African hath done it? To what end do we profess a religion whose dictates we so flagrantly violate? Wherefore have we that pattern of goodness and humanity, if we refuse to follow it? How long shall we continue a practice which policy rejects, justice condemns, and piety revolts at?"

The poet Shenstone, who comes next in order, seems to have written an Elegy on purpose to stigmatize this trade. Of this elegy I shall copy only the following parts:

" See the poor native quit the Libyan shores,
Ah! not in love's delightful fetters bound!
No radiant smile his dying peace restores,
No love, nor fame, nor friendship heals his wound.

" Let vacant bards display their boasted woes;
Shall I the mockery of grief display?
No; let the muse his piercing pangs disclose,
Who bleeds and weeps his sum of life away!

" On

"On the wild heath in mournful guise he stood
Ere the shrill boatswain gave the hated sign;
He dropt a tear unseen into the flood,
He stole one secret moment to repine——

"Why am I ravish'd from my native strand?
What savage race protects this impious gain?
Shall foreign plagues infest this teeming land,
And more than sea-born monsters plough the main?

"Here the dire locusts' horrids warms prevail;
Here the blue asps with livid poison swell;
Here the dry dipsa writhes his sinuous mail;
Can we not here secure from envy dwell?

"When the grim lion urg'd his cruel chase,
When the stern panther sought his midnight prey,
What fate reserv'd me for this Christian race?
O race more polish'd, more severe, than they——

"Yet shores there are, bless'd shores for us remain,
And favour'd isles, with golden fruitage crown'd,
Where tufted flow'rets paint the verdant plain,
And ev'ry breeze shall med'cine ev'ry wound."

In the year 1755, Dr. Hayter, bishop of Norwich, preached a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in which he bore his testimony against the continuance of this trade.

Dyer, in his poem called The Fleece, expresses his sorrow on account of this barbarous trade, and looks forward to a day of retributive

retributive justice on account of the introduction of such an evil.

In the year 1760, a pamphlet appeared, entitled, " Two Dialogues on the Man-trade, by John Philmore." This name is supposed to be an assumed one. The author, however, discovers himself to have been both an able and a zealous advocate in favour of the African race.

Malachi Postlethwaite, in his Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce, proposes a number of queries on the subject of the Slave-trade. I have not room to insert them at full length. But I shall give the following as the substance of some of them to the reader: " Whether this commerce be not the cause of incessant wars among the Africans—Whether the Africans, if it were abolished, might not become as ingenious, as humane, as industrious, and as capable of arts, manufactures, and trades, as even the bulk of Europeans—Whether, if it were abolished, a much more profitable trade might not be substituted, and this to the very centre of their extended country, instead of the trifling portion which now subsists upon their coasts—And whether the

the great hindrance to such a new and advantageous commerce has not wholly proceeded from that unjust, inhuman, unchristian-like traffic, called the Slave-trade, which is carried on by the Europeans." The public proposal of these and other queries by a man of so great commercial knowledge as Postlethwaite, and by one who was himself a member of the African Committee, was of great service in exposing the impolicy as well as immorality of the Slave-trade.

In the year 1761, Thomas Jeffery published an account of a part of North America, in which he lays open the miserable state of the slaves in the West Indies, both as to their clothing, their food, their labour, and their punishments. But, without going into particulars, the general account he gives of them is affecting: "It is impossible," he says, "for a human heart to reflect upon the slavery of these dregs of mankind, without in some measure feeling for their misery, which ends but with their lives—Nothing can be more wretched than the condition of this people."

Sterne, in his account of the Negro girl in his Life of Tristram Shandy, took decidedly

dedly the part of the oppressed Africans. The pathetic, witty, and sentimental manner, in which he handled this subject, occasioned many to remember it, and procured a certain portion of feeling in their favour.

Rousseau contributed not a little in his day to the same end.

Bishop Warburton preached a sermon in the year 1766, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in which he took up the cause of the miserable Africans, and in which he severely reprobated their oppressors. The language in this sermon is so striking, that I shall make an extract from it. "From the free savages," says he, "I now come to the savages in bonds. By these I mean the vast multitudes yearly stolen from the opposite continent, and sacrificed by the colonists to their great idol the god of gain. But what then, say these sincere worshippers of mammon? They are our own property which we offer up.—— Gracious God! to talk, as of herds of cattle, of property in rational creatures, creatures endued with all our faculties, possessing all our qualities but that of colour, our brethren both by nature and grace, shocks all the feelings

feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense! But, alas! what is there, in the infinite abuses of society, which does not shock them? Yet nothing is more certain in itself and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free, and grace invites him to assert his freedom."

"In excuse of this violation it hath been pretended, that though indeed these miserable outcasts of humanity be torn from their homes and native country by fraud and violence, yet they thereby become the happier, and their condition the more eligible. But who are you, who pretend to judge of another man's happiness; that state, which each man under the guidance of his Maker forms for himself, and not one man for another? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness is the sole prerogative of him who created us, and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness amidst their native woods and deserts? or rather let me ask, Did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you their lordly masters,

where they see indeed the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefited by them? Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes their own happiness, and then see whether they do not place it in the return to their own country, rather than in the contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part; a return so passionately longed for, that, despairing of happiness here, that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel task-masters, they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of heaven in their future state"—

About this time certain cruel and wicked practices, which must now be mentioned, had arrived at such a height, and had become so frequent in the metropolis, as to produce of themselves other coadjutors to the cause.

Before the year 1700, planters, merchants, and others, resident in the West Indies, but coming to England, were accustomed to bring with them certain slaves to act as servants with them during their stay. The

The latter, seeing the freedom and the happiness of servants in this country, and considering what would be their own hard fate on their return to the islands, frequently absconded. Their masters of course made search after them, and often had them seized and carried away by force. It was, however, thrown out by many on these occasions, that the English laws did not sanction such proceedings, for that all persons who were baptized became free. The consequence of this was, that most of the slaves, who came over with their masters, prevailed upon some pious clergyman to baptize them. They took of course godfathers of such citizens as had the generosity to espouse their cause. When they were seized they usually sent to these, if they had an opportunity, for their protection. And in the result, their godfathers, maintaining that they had been baptized, and that they were free on this account as well as by the general tenour of the laws of England, dared those, who had taken possession of them, to send them out of the kingdom.

The planters, merchants, and others, being thus circumstanced, knew not what to do.

do. They were afraid of taking their slaves away by force, and they were equally afraid of bringing any of the cases before a public court. In this dilemma, in 1729 they applied to York and Talbot, the attorney and solicitor-general for the time being, and obtained the following strange opinion from them:—"We are of opinion, that a slave by coming from the West Indies into Great Britain or Ireland, either with or without his master, does not become free, and that his master's right and property in him is not thereby determined or varied, and that baptism doth not bestow freedom on him, nor make any alteration in his temporal condition in these kingdoms. We are also of opinion, that the master may legally compel him to return again to the plantations."

This cruel and illegal opinion was delivered in the year 1729. The planters, merchants, and others, gave it of course all the publicity in their power. And the consequences were as might easily have been apprehended. In a little time slaves absconding were advertised in the London papers as runaways, and rewards offered for the apprehension of them, in the same brutal

manner as we find them advertised in the land of slavery. They were advertised also, in the same papers, to be sold by auction, sometimes by themselves, and at others with horses, chaises, and harness. They were seized also by their masters, or by persons employed by them, in the very streets, and dragged from thence to the ships; and so unprotected now were these poor slaves, that persons in nowise concerned with them began to institute a trade in their persons, making agreements with captains of ships going to the West Indies to put them on board at a certain price. This last instance shows how far human nature is capable of going, and is an answer to those persons, who have denied that kidnapping in Africa was a source of supplying the Slave-trade. It shows, as all history does from the time of Joseph, that, where there is a market for the persons of human beings, all kinds of enormities will be practised to obtain them.

These circumstances then, as I observed before, did not fail of producing new coadjutors in the cause. And first they produced that able and indefatigable advocate Mr. Granville Sharp. This gentleman is to be distin-

distinguished from those who preceded him by this particular, that, whereas these were only writers, he was both a writer and an actor in the cause. In fact, he was the first labourer in it in England. By the words "actor" and "labourer," I mean that he determined upon a plan of action in behalf of the oppressed Africans, to the accomplishment of which he devoted a considerable portion of his time, talents, and substance. What Mr. Sharp has done to merit the title of coadjutor in this high sense, I shall now explain. The following is a short history of the beginning and of the course of his labours.

In the year 1765, Mr. David Lisle had brought over from Barbadoes Jonathan Strong, an African slave, as his servant. He used the latter in a barbarous manner at his lodgings in Wapping, but particularly by beating him over the head with a pistol, which occasioned his head to swell. When the swelling went down, a disorder fell into his eyes, which threatened the loss of them. To this an ague and fever succeeded, and a lameness in both his legs.

Jonathan Strong, having been brought

into this deplorable situation, and being therefore wholly useless, was left by his master to go whither he pleased. He applied accordingly to Mr. William Sharp the surgeon for his advice, as to one who gave up a portion of his time to the healing of the diseases of the poor. It was here that Mr. Granville Sharp, the brother of the former, saw him. Suffice it to say, that in process of time he was cured. During this time Mr. Granville Sharp, pitying his hard case, supplied him with money, and he afterwards got him a situation in the family of Mr. Brown, an apothecary, to carry out medicines.

In this new situation, when Strong had become healthy and robust in his appearance, his master happened to see him. The latter immediately formed the design of possessing him again. Accordingly, when he had found out his residence, he procured John Ross keeper of the Poultry-compter, and William Miller an officer under the lord-mayor, to kidnap him. This was done by sending for him to a public-house in Fenchurch-street, and then seizing him. By these he was conveyed, without any warrant,

to

to the Poultry-compter, where he was sold by his master, to John Kerr, for thirty pounds.

Strong, in this situation, sent, as was usual, to his godfathers, John London and Stephen Nail, for their protection. They went, but were refused admittance to him. At length he sent for Mr. Granville Sharp. The latter went, but they still refused access to the prisoner. He insisted, however, upon seeing him, and charged the keeper of the prison at his peril to deliver him up till he had been carried before a magistrate.

Mr. Sharp, immediately upon this, waited upon Sir Robert Kite, the then lord-mayor, and entreated him to send for Strong, and to hear his case. A day was accordingly appointed. Mr. Sharp attended, and also William M^cBean, a notary-public, and David Laird, captain of the ship Thames, which was to have conveyed Strong to Jamaica, in behalf of the purchaser, John Kerr. A long conversation ensued, in which the opinion of York and Talbot was quoted. Mr. Sharp made his observations. Certain lawyers, who were present, seemed to be staggered at the case, but inclined rather to recommit

commit the prisoner. The lord-mayor, however, discharged Strong, as he had been taken up without a warrant.

As soon as this determination was made known, the parties began to move off. Captain Laird, however, who kept close to Strong, laid hold of him before he had quitted the room, and said aloud, "Then I now seize him as my slave." Upon this, Mr. Sharp put his hand upon Laird's shoulder, and pronounced these words: "I charge you, in the name of the king, with an assault upon the person of Jonathan Strong, and all these are my witnesses." Laird was greatly intimidated by this charge, made in the presence of the lord-mayor and others, and, fearing a prosecution, let his prisoner go, leaving him to be conveyed away by Mr. Sharp.

Mr. Sharp, having been greatly affected by this case, and foreseeing how much he might be engaged in others of a similar nature, thought it time that the law of the land should be known upon this subject. He applied therefore to Doctor Blackstone, afterwards Judge Blackstone, for his opinion upon it. He was, however, not satisfied with

with it, when he received it; nor could he obtain any satisfactory answer from several other lawyers, to whom he afterwards applied. The truth is, that the opinion of York and Talbot, which had been made public and acted upon by the planters, merchants, and others, was considered of high authority, and scarcely any one dared to question the legality of it. In this situation, Mr. Sharp saw no means of help but in his own industry, and he determined immediately to give up two or three years to the study of the English law, that he might the better advocate the cause of these miserable people. The result of these studies was the publication of a book in the year 1769, which he called "A Representation of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery in England." In this work he refuted, in the clearest manner, the opinion of York and Talbot. He produced against it the opinion of the Lord Chief Justice Holt, who many years before had determined, that every slave coming into England became free. He attacked and refuted it again by a learned and laborious inquiry into all the principles of Villenage.

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He refuted it again, by showing it to be an axiom in the British constitution, "That every man in England was free to sue for and defend his rights, and that force could not be used without a legal process," leaving it to the judges to determine, whether an African was a man. He attacked, also, the opinion of Judge Blackstone, and showed where his error lay. This valuable book, containing these and other kinds of arguments on the subject, he distributed, but particularly among the lawyers, giving them an opportunity of refuting or acknowledging the doctrines it contained.

While Mr. Sharp was engaged in this work, another case offered, in which he took a part. This was in the year 1768. Hylas, an African slave, prosecuted a person of the name of Newton for having kidnapped his wife, and sent her to the West Indies. The result of the trial was, that damages to the amount of a shilling were given, and the defendant was bound to bring back the woman, either by the first ship, or in six months from this decision of the court.

But soon after the work just mentioned was out, and when Mr. Sharp was better prepared,

prepared, a third case occurred. This happened in the year 1770. Robert Stapylton, who lived at Chelsea, in conjunction with John Malony and Edward Armstrong, two watermen, seized the person of Thomas Lewis, an African slave, in a dark night, and dragged him to a boat lying in the Thames; they then gagged him, and tied him with a cord, and rowed him down to a ship, and put him on board to be sold as a slave in Jamaica. This base action took place near the garden of Mrs. Banks, the mother of the present Sir Joseph Banks. Lewis, it appears, on being seized, screamed violently. The servants of Mrs. Banks, who heard his cries, ran to his assistance, but the boat was gone. On informing their mistress of what had happened, she sent for Mr. Sharp, who began now to be known as the friend of the helpless Africans, and professed her willingness to incur the expense of bringing the delinquents to justice. Mr. Sharp, with some difficulty, procured a habeas corpus, in consequence of which Lewis was brought from Gravesend just as the vessel was on the point of sailing. An action was then commenced against Sta-

pylton, who defended himself, on the plea, "That Lewis belonged to him as his slave." In the course of the trial, Mr. Dunning, who was counsel for Lewis, paid Mr. Sharp a handsome compliment, for he held in his hand Mr. Sharp's book on the injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating slavery in England, while he was pleading; and in his address to the jury he spoke and acted thus: "I shall submit to you," says Mr. Dunning, "what my ideas are upon such evidence, reserving to myself an opportunity of discussing it more particularly, and reserving to myself a right to insist upon a position, which I will maintain (and here he held up the book to the notice of those present) in any place and in any court of the kingdom, that our laws admit of no such property*." The result of the trial was, that the jury pronounced the plaintiff not to have been the property of the defendant, several of them crying out "No property, no property."

After this, one or two other trials came

* It is lamentable to think, that the same Mr. Dunning, in a cause of this kind, which came on afterwards, took the opposite side of the question.

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on, in which the oppressor was defeated, and several cases occurred, in which poor slaves were liberated from the holds of vessels, and other places of confinement, by the exertions of Mr. Sharp. One of these cases was singular. The vessel on board which a poor African had been dragged and confined had reached the Downs, and had actually got under weigh for the West Indies. In two or three hours she would have been out of sight; but just at this critical moment the writ of habeas corpus was carried on board. The officer, who served it on the captain, saw the miserable African chained to the mainmast, bathed in tears, and casting a last mournful look on the land of freedom, which was fast receding from his sight. The captain, on receiving the writ, became outrageous; but, knowing the serious consequences of resisting the law of the land, he gave up his prisoner, whom the officer carried safe, but now crying for joy, to the shore.

But though the injured Africans, whose causes had been tried, escaped slavery, and though many, who had been forcibly carried into dungeons, ready to be transported into

into the Colonies, had been delivered out of them, Mr. Sharp was not easy in his mind. Not one of the cases had yet been pleaded on the broad ground, "Whether an African slave coming into England became free?" This great question had been hitherto studiously avoided. It was still, therefore, left in doubt. Mr. Sharp was almost daily acting as if it had been determined, and as if he had been following the known law of the land. He wished therefore that the next cause might be argued upon this principle. Lord Mansfield too, who had been biassed by the opinion of York and Talbot, began to waver in consequence of the different pleadings he had heard on this subject. He saw also no end of trials like these, till the law should be ascertained, and he was anxious for a decision on the same basis as Mr. Sharp. In this situation the following case offered, which was agreed upon for the determination of this important question.

James Somerset, an African slave, had been brought to England by his master, Charles Stewart, in November 1769. Somerset, in process of time, left him. Stewart

art took an opportunity of seizing him, and had him conveyed on board the Ann and Mary, captain Knowles, to be carried out of the kingdom and sold as a slave in Jamaica. The question was—"Whether a slave, by coming into England, became free?"

In order that time might be given for ascertaining the law fully on this head, the case was argued at three different sittings. First, in January, 1772; secondly, in February, 1772; and thirdly, in May, 1772. And that no decision otherwise than what the law warranted might be given, the opinion of the Judges was taken upon the pleadings. The great and glorious result of the trial was, That as soon as ever any slave set his foot upon English territory, he became free.

Thus ended the great case of Somerset, which, having been determined after so deliberate an investigation of the law, can never be reversed while the British Constitution remains. The eloquence displayed in it by those who were engaged on the side of liberty, was perhaps never exceeded on any occasion; and the names of the counsellors Davy, Glynn, Hargrave, Mansfield, and Alleyne,

Alleyne, ought always to be remembered with gratitude by the friends of this great cause. For when we consider in how many crowded courts they pleaded, and the number of individuals in these, whose minds they enlightened, and whose hearts they interested in the subject, they are certainly to be put down as no small instruments in the promotion of it: but chiefly to him, under Divine Providence, are we to give the praise, who became the first great actor in it, who devoted his time, his talents, and his substance to this Christian undertaking, and by whose laborious researches the very pleaders themselves were instructed and benefited. By means of his almost incessant vigilance and attention, and unwearied efforts, the poor African ceased to be hunted in our streets as a beast of prey. Miserable as the roof might be, under which he slept, he slept in security. He walked by the side of the stately ship, and he feared no dungeon in her hold. Nor ought we, as Englishmen, to be less grateful to this distinguished individual than the African ought to be upon this occasion. To him we owe it, that we no longer see our public papers polluted by hateful

hateful advertisements of the sale of the human species, or that we are no longer distressed by the perusal of impious rewards for bringing back the poor and the helpless into slavery, or that we are prohibited the disgusting spectacle of seeing man bought by his fellow-man.—To him, in short, we owe this restoration of the beauty of our constitution—this prevention of the continuance of our national disgrace.

I shall say but little more of Mr. Sharp at present, than that he felt it his duty, immediately after the trial, to write to Lord North, then principal minister of state, warning him, in the most earnest manner, to abolish immediately both the trade and the slavery of the human species in all the British dominions, as utterly irreconcileable with the principles of the British constitution, and the established religion of the land.

Among other coadjutors, whom the cruel and wicked practices which have now been so amply detailed brought forward, was a worthy clergyman, whose name I have not yet been able to learn. He endeavoured to interest the public feeling in behalf of the injured

injured Africans, by writing an epilogue to the Padlock, in which Mungo appeared as a black servant. This epilogue is so appropriate to the case, that I cannot but give it to the reader. Mungo enters, and thus addresses the audience :—

"Thank you, my Massas! have you laugh your fill?
Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill.
E'en from *my* tongue some heart-felt truths may fall,
And outrag'd Nature claims the care of all.
My tale in *any* place would force a tear,
But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here;
For whilst I tread the free-born British land,
Whilst now before me crowded Britons stand,—
Vain, vain that glorious privilege to me,
I am a slave, where all things else are free.

"Yet was I born, as you are, no man's slave,
An heir to all that lib'ral Nature gave;
My mind can reason, and my limbs can move
The same as yours; like yours my heart can love;
Alike my body food and sleep sustain;
And e'en like yours—feels pleasure, want, and pain.
One sun rolls o'er us, common skies surround;
One globe supports us, and one grave must bound.

"Why then am I devoid of all to live
That manly comforts to a man can give?
To live—untaught religion's soothing balm,
Or life's choice arts; to live—unknown the calm
Of soft domestic ease; those sweets of life,
The duteous offspring, and th' endearing wife?

To

To live—to property and rights unknown,
Not e'en the common benefits my own!
No arm to guard me from Oppression's rod,
My will subservient to a tyrant's nod!
No gentle hand, when life is in decay,
To soothe my pains, and charm my cares away;
But helpless left to quit the horrid stage,
Harass'd in youth, and desolate in age!

"But I was born in Afric's tawny strand,
And you in fair Britannia's fairer land.
Comes freedom, then, from colour?—Blush with shame!
And let strong Nature's crimson mark your blame.
I speak to Britons.—Britons, then, behold
A man by Britons *snar'd*, and *seiz'd*, and *sold!*
And yet no British statute damns the deed,
Nor do the more than murd'rous villains bleed.

"O sons of freedom! equalize your laws,
Be all consistent, plead the Negro's cause;
That all the nations in your code may see
The British Negro, like the Briton, free.
But, should he supplicate your laws in vain,
To break, for ever, this disgraceful chain,
At least, let gentle usage so abate
The galling terrors of its passing state,
That he may share kind Heav'n's all social plan;
For, though no Briton, Mungo is—a man."

I may now add, that few theatrical pieces had a greater run than the Padlock; and that this epilogue, which was attached to it soon after it came out, procured a good deal of

feeling for the unfortunate sufferers, whose cause it was intended to serve.

Another coadjutor, to whom these cruel and wicked practices gave birth, was Thomas Day, the celebrated author of Sandford and Merton, and whose virtues were well known among those who had the happiness of his friendship. In the year 1773 he published a poem, which he wrote expressly in behalf of the oppressed Africans. He gave it the name of The Dying Negro. The preface to it was written in an able manner by his friend counsellor Bicknell, who is therefore to be ranked among the coadjutors in this great cause. The poem was founded on a simple fact, which had taken place a year or two before. A poor Negro had been seized in London, and forcibly put on board a ship, where he destroyed himself, rather than return to the land of slavery. To the poem is affixed a frontispiece, in which the Negro is represented. He is made to stand in an attitude of the most earnest address to Heaven, in the course of which, with the fatal dagger in his hand, he breaks forth in the following words:

"To you this unpolluted blood I pour,
To you that spirit, which ye gave, restore."

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This poem, which was the first ever written expressly on the subject, was read extensively; and it added to the sympathy in favour of suffering humanity; which was now beginning to show itself in the kingdom.

About this time the first edition of the Essay on Truth made its appearance in the world. Dr. Beattie took an opportunity, in this work, of vindicating the intellectual powers of the Africans from the aspersions of Hume, and of condemning their slavery as a barbarous piece of policy, and as inconsistent with the free and generous spirit of the British nation.

In the year 1774, John Wesley, the celebrated divine, to whose pious labours the religious world will be long indebted, undertook the cause of the poor Africans. He had been in America, and had seen and pitied their hard condition. The work which he gave to the world in consequence, was entitled Thoughts on Slavery. Mr. Wesley had this great cause much at heart, and frequently recommended it to the support of those who attended his useful ministry.

In the year 1776, the abbé Proyart

brought out, at Paris, his History of Loango, and other kingdoms in Africa, in which he did ample justice to the moral and intellectual character of the natives there.

The same year produced two new friends in England, in the same cause, but in a line in which no one had yet moved. David Hartley, then a member of parliament for Hull, and the son of Dr. Hartley who wrote the Essay on Man, found it impossible any longer to pass over without notice the case of the oppressed Africans. He had long felt for their wretched condition, and, availing himself of his legislative situation, he made a motion in the house of commons, "That the Slave-trade was contrary to the laws of God, and the rights of men." In order that he might interest the members as much as possible in his motion, he had previously obtained some of the chains in use in this cruel traffic, and had laid them upon the table of the house of commons. His motion was seconded by that great patriot and philanthropist, sir George Saville. But though I am now to state that it failed, I cannot but consider it as a matter of pleasing reflection, that this great subject

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was first introduced into parliament by those who were worthy of it; by those who had clean hands and irreproachable characters, and to whom no motive of party or faction could be imputed, but only such as must have arisen from a love of justice, a true feeling of humanity, and a proper sense of religion.

About this time two others, men of great talents and learning, promoted the cause of the injured Africans, by the manner in which they introduced them to notice in their respective works.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiments, had, so early as the year 1759, held them up in an honourable, and their tyrants in a degrading light. "There is not a Negro from the coast of Africa, who does not, in this respect, possess a degree of magnanimity, which the soul of his sordid master is too often scarce capable of conceiving. Fortune never exerted more cruelly her empire over mankind, than when she subjected those nations of heroes to the refuse of the gaols of Europe, to wretches who possess the virtue neither of the countries they came from, nor of those they go to,

to, and whose levity, brutality, and baseness so justly expose them to the contempt of the vanquished." And now, in 1776, in his Wealth of Nations, he showed in a forcible manner (for he appealed to the interest of those concerned) the dearness of African labour, or the impolicy of employing slaves.

Professor Millar, in his Origin of Ranks, followed Dr. Smith on the same ground. He explained the impolicy of slavery in general, by its bad effects upon industry, population, and morals. These effects he attached to the system of agriculture as followed in our islands. He showed, besides, how little pains were taken, or how few contrivances were thought of, to ease the labourers there. He contended, that the Africans ought to be better treated, and to be raised to a better condition; and he ridiculed the inconsistency of those who held them in bondage. "It affords," says he, "a curious spectacle to observe that the same people, who talk in a high strain of political liberty, and who consider the privilege of imposing their own taxes as one of the unalienable rights of mankind, should make

no

no scruple of reducing a great proportion of their fellow-creatures into circumstances, by which they are not only deprived of property, but almost of every species of right. Fortune perhaps never produced a situation more calculated to ridicule a liberal hypothesis, or to show how little the conduct of men is at the bottom directed by any philosophical principles." It is a great honour to the university of Glasgow, that it should have produced, before any public agitation of this question, three professors *, all of whom bore their public testimony against the continuance of the cruel trade.

From this time, or from about the year 1776, to about the year 1782, I am to put down three other coadjutors, whose labours seem to have come in a right season for the promotion of the cause.

The first of these was Dr. Robertson. In his History of America, he laid open many facts relative to this subject. He showed himself a warm friend both of the Indians and Africans. He lost no opportunity of

* The other was professor Hutcheson, before mentioned in p. 49.

condemning

condemning that trade which brought the latter into bondage: "a trade," says he, "which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity than to the principles of religion." And in his Charles the Fifth, he showed in a manner that was clear, and never to be controverted, that Christianity was the great cause in the twelfth century of extirpating slavery from the West of Europe. By the establishment of this fact, he rendered important services to the oppressed Africans. For if Christianity, when it began to be felt in the heart, dictated the abolition of slavery, it certainly became those who lived in a Christian country, and who professed the Christian religion, to put an end to this cruel trade.

The second was the abbé Raynal. This author gave an account of the laws, government, and religion of Africa, of the produce of it, of the manners of its inhabitants, of the trade in slaves, of the manner of procuring these, with several other particulars relating to the subject. And at the end of his account, fearing lest the good advice he had given for making the condition of the slaves more comfortable should be construed into

into an approbation of such a traffic, he employed several pages in showing its utter inconsistency with sound policy, justice, reason, humanity, and religion.

"I will not here," says he, "so far debase myself as to enlarge the ignominious list of those writers, who devote their abilities to justify by policy what morality condemns. In an age where so many errors are boldly laid open, it would be unpardonable to conceal any truth that is interesting to humanity. If whatever I have hitherto advanced hath seemingly tended only to alleviate the burthen of slavery, the reason is, that it was first necessary to give some comfort to those unhappy beings, whom we cannot set free, and convince their oppressors, that they were cruel, to the prejudice of their real interests. But, in the mean time, till some considerable revolution shall make the evidence of this great truth felt, it may not be improper to pursue this subject further. I shall then first prove that there is no reason of state, which can authorize slavery. I shall not be afraid to cite to the tribunal of reason and justice those governments, which tolerate this cruelty, or which

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even are not ashamed to make it the basis of their power."

And a little further on he observes—"Will it be said that he, who wants to make me a slave, does me no injury, but that he only makes use of his rights? Where are those rights? Who hath stamped upon them so sacred a character as to silence mine?"—

In the beginning of the next paragraph he speaks thus: "He, who supports the system of slavery, is the enemy of the whole human race. He divides it into two societies of legal assassins; the oppressors, and the oppressed. It is the same thing as proclaiming to the world, If you would preserve your life, instantly take away mine, for I want to have yours."

Going on two pages further, we find these words: "But the Negros, they say, are a race born for slavery; their dispositions are narrow, treacherous, and wicked; they themselves allow the superiority of our understandings, and almost acknowledge the justice of our authority.—Yes—The minds of the Negros are contracted, because slavery destroys all the springs of the soul. They

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are wicked, but not equally so with you. They are treacherous, because they are under no obligation to speak truth to their tyrants. They acknowledge the superiorityof our understanding, because we have abused their ignorance. They allow the justice of our authority, because we have abused their weakness."

"But these Negros, it is further urged, were born slaves. Barbarians! will you persuade me, that a man can be the property of a sovereign, a son the property of a father, a wife the property of a husband, a domestic the property of a master, a Negro the property of a planter?"

But I have no time to follow this animated author, even by short extracts, through the varied strains of eloquence which he displays upon this occasion. I can only say, that his labours entitle him to a high station among the benefactors to the African race.

The third was Dr. Paley, whose genius, talents, and learning have been so eminently displayed in his writings in the cause of natural and revealed religion. Dr. Paley did not write any essay expressly in favour of the Africans. But in his Moral Philosophy, where

where he treated on slavery, he took an opportunity of condemning, in very severe terms, the continuance of it. In this work he defined what slavery was, and how it might arise consistently with the law of nature; but he made an exception against that which arose from the African trade.

"The Slave-trade," says he, "upon the coast of Africa, is not excused by these principles. When slaves in that country are brought to market, no questions, I believe, are asked about the origin or justice of the vendor's title. It may be presumed, therefore, that this title is not always, if it be ever, founded in any of the causes above assigned."

"But defect of right in the first purchase is the least crime with which this traffic is chargeable. The natives are excited to war and mutual depredation, for the sake of supplying their contracts, or furnishing the markets with slaves. With this the wickedness begins. The slaves, torn away from their parents, wives and children, from their friends and companions, from their fields and flocks, from their home and country, are transported to the European settlements

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in America, with no other accommodation on ship-board than what is provided for brutes. This is the second stage of the cruelty, from which the miserable exiles are delivered, only to be placed, and that for life, in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth: and from all that can be learned by the accounts of people upon the spot, the inordinate authority, which the Plantation-laws confer upon the slave-holder, is exercised by the English slave-holder, especially, with rigour and brutality."

"But necessity is pretended, the name under which every enormity is attempted to be justified; and after all, What is the necessity? It has never been proved that the land could not be cultivated there, as it is here, by hired servants. It is said that it could not be cultivated with quite the same conveniency and cheapness, as by the labour of slaves; by which means, a pound of sugar, which the planter now sells for sixpence, could not be afforded under sixpence-halfpenny—and this is the necessity!"

"The great revolution, which has taken place

place in the western world, may probably conduce (and who knows but that it was designed) to accelerate the fall of this abominable tyranny: and now that this contest and the passions which attend it are no more, there may succeed perhaps a season for reflecting, whether a legislature, which had so long lent its assistance to the support of an institution replete with human misery, was fit to be trusted with an empire, the most extensive that ever obtained in any age or quarter of the world."

The publication of these sentiments may be supposed to have produced an extensive effect. For the Moral Philosophy was adopted early by some of the colleges in our universities into the system of their education. It soon found its way also into most of the private libraries of the kingdom; and it was, besides, generally read and approved. Dr. Paley, therefore, must be considered as having been a considerable coadjutor in interesting the mind of the public in favour of the oppressed Africans.

In the year 1783, we find Mr. Sharp coming again into notice. We find him at this time taking a part in a cause, the know-

ledge

ledge of which, in proportion as it was disseminated, produced an earnest desire among all disinterested persons for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

In this year, certain underwriters desired to be heard against Gregson and others of Liverpool, in the case of the ship Zong, captain Collingwood, alleging that the captain and officers of the said vessel threw overboard one hundred and thirty-two slaves alive into the sea, in order to defraud them, by claiming the value of the said slaves, as if they had been lost in a natural way. In the course of the trial, which afterwards came on, it appeared, that the slaves on board the Zong were very sickly; that sixty of them had already died; and several were ill and likely to die, when the captain proposed to James Kelsall, the mate, and others, to throw several of them overboard, stating "that if they died a natural death, the loss would fall upon the owners of the ship, but that, if they were thrown into the sea, it would fall upon the underwriters." He selected accordingly one hundred and thirty-two of the most sickly of the slaves. Fifty-four of these were immediately

diately thrown overboard, and forty-two were made to be partakers of their fate on the succeeding day. In the course of three days afterwards the remaining twenty-six were brought upon deck to complete the number of victims. The first sixteen submitted to be thrown into the sea; but the rest with a noble resolution would not suffer the officers to touch them, but leaped after their companions and shared their fate.

The plea, which was set up in behalf of this atrocious and unparalleled act of wickedness, was, that the captain discovered, when he made the proposal, that he had only two hundred gallons of water on board, and that he had missed his port. It was proved, however, in answer to this, that no one had been put upon short allowance; and that, as if Providence had determined to afford an unequivocal proof of the guilt, a shower of rain fell and continued for three days immediately after the second lot of slaves had been destroyed, by means of which they might have filled many of their vessels *

* It appeared that they filled six.

with

with water, and thus have prevented all necessity for the destruction of the third.

Mr. Sharp was present at this trial, and procured the attendance of a short-hand-writer to take down the facts, which should come out in the course of it. These he gave to the public afterwards. He communicated them also, with a copy of the trial, to the Lords of the Admiralty, as the guardians of justice upon the seas, and to the Duke of Portland, as principal minister of state. No notice however was taken by any of these, of the information which had been thus sent them.

But though nothing was done by the persons then in power, in consequence of the murder of so many innocent individuals, yet the publication of an account of it by Mr. Sharp in the newspapers, made such an impression upon others, that new coadjutors rose up. For, soon after this, we find Thomas Day entering the lists again as the champion of the injured Africans. He had lived to see his poem of The Dying Negro, which had been published in 1773, make a considerable impression. In 1776, he had written a letter to a friend in America, who

was the possessor of slaves, to dissuade him by a number of arguments from holding such property. And now, when the knowledge of the case of the ship Zong was spreading, he published that letter under the title of Fragment of an Original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes.

In this same year, Dr. Porteus, bishop of Chester, but now bishop of London, came forward as a new advocate for the natives of Africa. The way in which he rendered them service, was by preaching a sermon in their behalf, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Of the wide circulation of this sermon, I shall say something in another place, but much more of the enlightened and pious author of it, who from this time never failed to aid, at every opportunity, the cause, which he had so ably undertaken.

In the year 1784, Dr. Gregory produced his Essays Historical and Moral. He took an opportunity of disseminating in these a circumstantial knowledge of the Slave-trade, and an equal abhorrence of it at the same time. He explained the manner of procuring slaves in Africa; the treatment of them

them in the passage, (in which he mentioned the case of the ship Zong,) and the wicked and cruel treatment of them in the colonies. He recited and refuted also the various arguments adduced in defence of the trade. He showed that it was destructive to our seamen. He produced many weighty arguments also against the slavery itself. He proposed clauses for an act of parliament for the abolition of both; showing the good both to England and her colonies from such a measure, and that a trade might be substituted in Africa, in various articles, for that which he proposed to suppress. By means of the diffusion of light like this, both of a moral and political nature, Dr. Gregory is entitled to be ranked among the benefactors to the African race.

In the same year, Gilbert Wakefield preached a sermon at Richmond in Surry, where, speaking of the people of this nation, he says, "Have we been as renowned for a liberal communication of our religion and our laws as for the possession of them? Have we navigated and conquered to save, to civilize, and to instruct; or to oppress, to plunder, and to destroy? Let India and

Africa give the answer to these questions. The one we have exhausted of her wealth and her inhabitants by violence, by famine, and by every species of tyranny and murder. The children of the other we daily carry from off the land of their nativity, like sheep to the slaughter, to return no more. We tear them from every object of their affection, or, sad alternative, drag them together to the horrors of a mutual servitude! We keep them in the profoundest ignorance. We gall them in a tenfold chain, with an unrelenting spirit of barbarity, inconceivable to all but the spectators of it, unexampled among former ages and other nations, and unrecorded even in the bloody registers of heathen persecution. Such is the conduct of us enlightened Englishmen, reformed Christians! Thus have we profited by our superior advantages, by the favour of God, by the doctrines and example of a meek and lowly Saviour. Will not the blessings which we have abused loudly testify against us? Will not the blood which we have shed cry from the ground for vengeance upon our sins?"

In the same year, James Ramsay, vicar of

of Teston in Kent, became also an able, zealous, and indefatigable patron of the African cause. This gentleman had resided nineteen years in the island of St. Christopher, where he had observed the treatment of the slaves, and had studied the laws relating to them. On his return to England, yielding to his own feelings of duty and the solicitations of some amiable friends, he published a work, which he called An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of the African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies. After having given an account of the relative situation of master and slave in various parts of the world, he explained the low and degrading situation which the Africans held in society in our own islands. He showed that their importance would be increased, and the temporal interest of their masters promoted, by giving them freedom, and by granting them other privileges. He showed the great difficulty of instructing them in the state in which they then were, and such as he himself had experienced both in his private and public attempts, and such as others had experienced also. He stated the way in which private attempts of this nature

nature might probably be successful. He then answered all objections against their capacities, as drawn from philosophy, form, anatomy, and observation; and vindicated these from his own experience. And lastly, he threw out ideas for the improvement of their condition, by an establishment of a greater number of spiritual pastors among them; by giving them more privileges than they then possessed; and by extending towards them the benefits of a proper police. Mr. Ramsay had no other motive for giving this work to the public, than that of humanity, or a wish to serve this much-injured part of the human species. For he compiled it at the hazard of forfeiting that friendship, which he had contracted with many during his residence in the islands, and of suffering much in his private property, as well as subjecting himself to the ill-will and persecution of numerous individuals.

The publication of this book by one, who professed to have been so long resident in the islands, and to have been an eye-witness of facts, produced, as may easily be supposed, a good deal of conversation, and made

be invested? How long will it take? What is the reward of success? What is the penalty of failure?

First let it be observed that the chance of being led into an unprofitable venture is considerably lessened if the project chosen for development is the most promising of a number of interesting research "successes" arising from intensive study of the industry such as progressive concerns carry on to-day.

Now let us assume that first-stage development has been completed, and the product, which has been repeatedly prepared in pound lots, and later in hundred pound lots, has found a reasonable measure of favor with prospective consumers; that a couple of years have been spent by one man and one or more helpers in research and such first-stage development, anticipating optimum conditions of manufacture as nearly as is possible in the small way with disconnected production units; that the precaution has been taken of employing, experimentally, materials of construction that would be feasible in full scale production, and that, under the conditions of time, temperature and what not, all of which appear equally practicable, quality and yields have been found satisfactory. If no radical departure from the industry's established conditions of manufacture

is required, cautious introduction direct into manufacture may be made with reasonable expectation of success. If, on the other hand, we are considering the production of a new product for which no previous manufacturing experience exists or is available, we then have a very different problem. We must introduce one or more steps to provide gradual transition from the small development scale to the factory scale, as outlined above, in order that we may the better study costs and the whole range of changed conditions imposed by large-scale production.

All this takes time, calls for faith on the part of everybody, and requires many times as much money as was spent in research and earlier development. Furthermore financial support must be obtained not for a few months only, but for several years, if need be, during which time expenses will be increasing rapidly; capital will be melting away without return. The road to success in new manufacture is long, and is strewn with the wreckage of attempted short-cuts from small-way experimenting, or none at all, into large-scale production.

Graphically represented, the course of a new project from the initial research through development into successful production is something like that shown in Fig. 2, in which *A* is the curve

made a considerable impression, but particularly at this time, when a storm was visibly gathering over the heads of the oppressors of the African race. These circumstances occasioned one or two persons to attempt to answer it, and these answers brought Mr. Ramsay into the first controversy ever entered into on this subject, during which, as is the case in most controversies, the cause of truth was spread.

The works, which Mr. Ramsay wrote upon this subject, were, the Essay, just mentioned, in 1784. An Enquiry, also, into the Effects of the Abolition of the Slave-trade, in 1784. A Reply to personal Invectives and Objections, in 1785. A Letter to James Tobin, Esq., in 1787. Objections to the Abolition of the Slave-trade, with Answers: and an Examination of Harris's Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-trade, in 1788; —and An Address on the proposed Bill for the Abolition of the Slave-trade, in 1789. In short, from the time when he first took up the cause, he was engaged in it till his death, which was not a little accelerated by his exertions. He lived however to see this cause in a train for parliamentary inquiry, and

and he died satisfied, being convinced, as he often expressed, that the investigation must inevitably lead to the total abolition of the Slave-trade.

In the next year, that is, in the year 1785, another advocate was seen in monsieur Necker, in his celebrated work on the French Finances, which had just been translated into the English language from the original work, in 1784. This virtuous statesman, after having given his estimate of the population and revenue of the French West Indian colonies, proceeds thus: "The colonies of France contain, as we have seen, near five hundred thousand slaves, and it is from the number of these poor wretches that the inhabitants set a value on their plantations. What a dreadful prospect! and how profound a subject for reflection! Alas! how little are we both in our morality and our principles! We preach up humanity, and yet go every year to bind in chains twenty thousand natives of Africa! We call the Moors barbarians and ruffians, because they attack the liberty of Europeans at the risk of their own; yet these Europeans go, without danger, and as mere speculators,

to

to purchase slaves by gratifying the avarice of their masters, and excite all those bloody scenes, which are the usual preliminaries of this traffic!" He goes on still further in the same strain. He then shows the kind of power, which has supported this execrable trade. He throws out the idea of a general compact, by which all the European nations should agree to abolish it. And he indulges the pleasing hope, that it may take place even in the present generation.

In the same year we find other coadjutors coming before our view, but these in a line different from that, in which any other belonging to this class had yet moved. Mr. George White, a clergyman of the established church, and Mr. John Chubb, suggested to Mr. William Tucket, the mayor of Bridgewater, where they resided, and to others of that town, the propriety of petitioning parliament for the abolition of the Slave-trade. This petition was agreed upon, and, when drawn up, was as follows:—

"The humble petition of the inhabitants of Bridgewater showeth,

"That your petitioners, reflecting with the deepest sensibility on the deplorable condition

dition of that part of the human species, the African Negros, who by the most flagitious means are reduced to slavery and misery in the British colonies, beg leave to address this honourable house in their behalf, and to express a just abhorrence of a system of oppression, which no prospect of private gain, no consideration of public advantage, no plea of political expediency, can sufficiently justify or excuse.

"That, satisfied as your petitioners are that this inhuman system meets with the general execration of mankind, they flatter themselves the day is not far distant when it will be universally abolished. And they most ardently hope to see a British parliament, by the extinction of that sanguinary traffic, extend the blessings of liberty to millions beyond this realm, hold up to an enlightened world a glorious and merciful example, and stand foremost in the defence of the violated rights of human nature."

This petition was presented by the honourable Ann Poulet, and Alexander Hood, esq., (now lord Bridport) who were the members for the town of Bridgewater. It was ordered to lie on the table. The answer, which

which these gentlemen gave to their constituents relative to the reception of it in the house of commons, is worthy of notice: "There did not appear," say they in their common letter, "the least disposition to pay any further attention to it. Every one almost says, that the abolition of the Slave-trade must immediately throw the West Indian islands into convulsions, and soon complete their utter ruin. Thus they will not trust Providence for its protection for so pious an undertaking"

In the year 1786, captain J. S. Smith of the royal navy offered himself to the notice of the public in behalf of the African cause. Mr. Ramsay, as I have observed before, had become involved in a controversy in consequence of his support of it. His opponents not only attacked his reputation, but had the effrontery to deny his facts. This circumstance occasioned captain Smith to come forward. He wrote a letter to his friend Mr. Hill, in which he stated that he had seen those things, while in the West Indies, which Mr. Ramsay had asserted to exist, but which had been so boldly denied. He gave also permission to Mr. Hill to publish

lish this letter. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on captain Smith, for thus standing forth in a noble cause, and in behalf of an injured character.

The last of the necessary forerunners and coadjutors of this class, whom I am to mention, was our much-admired poet, Cowper; and a great coadjutor he was, when we consider what value was put upon his sentiments, and the extraordinary circulation of his works. There are few persons, who have not been properly impressed by the following lines:

"My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man. The nat'ral bond
Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
Not colour'd like his own, and having pow'r
T' inforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
Doomes and devotes him as his lawful prey.
Lands intersected by a narrow frith
Abhor each other. Mountains interpos'd,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one.
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;
And, worse than all, and most to be deplor'd

As

As human Nature's broadest, foulest blot,—
Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps, when she sees inflicted on a beast.
Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head to think himself a man?
I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is,—and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,—
I had much rather be myself the slave,
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.
We have no Slaves at home—then why abroad?
And they themselves once ferried o'er the wave
That parts us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall *.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire—that where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

* Expressions used in the great trial, when Mr. Sharp obtained the verdict in favour of Somerset.

CHAPTER IV.

Second class of forerunners and coadjutors, up to May 1787, consists of the Quakers in England—of George Fox, and others—of the body of the Quakers assembled at the yearly meeting in 1727—and at various other times—Quakers, as a body, petition Parliament—and circulate books on the subject—Individuals among them become labourers and associate in behalf of the Africans—Dilwyn—Harrison—and others—This the first association ever formed in England for the purpose.

THE second class of the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause up to May 1787 will consist of the Quakers in England.

The first of this class was George Fox, the venerable founder of this benevolent society.

George Fox was cotemporary with Richard Baxter, being born not long after him and dying much about the same time. Like him, he left his testimony against this wicked trade. When he was in the island of Barbadoes, in the year 1671, he delivered himself

himself to those who attended his religious meetings, in the following manner:—

"Consider with yourselves," says he, "if you were in the same condition as the poor Africans are—who came strangers to you, and were sold to you as slaves—I say, if this should be the condition of you or yours, you would think it a hard measure; yea, and very great bondage and cruelty. And therefore consider seriously of this; and do you for them, and to them, as you would willingly have them, or any others do unto you, were you in the like slavish condition, and bring them to know the Lord Christ." And in his Journal, speaking of the advice, which he gave his friends at Barbadoes, he says, "I desired also, that they would cause their overseers to deal mildly and gently with their Negros, and not to use cruelty towards them, as the manner of some had been, and that after certain years of servitude they should make them free."

William Edmundson, who was a minister of the Society, and, indeed, a fellow-traveller with George Fox, had the boldness in the same island to deliver his sentiments to the governor on the same subject. Having been brought

brought before him and accused of making the Africans Christians, or, in other words, of making them rebel and destroy their owners, he replied, "that it was a good thing to bring them to the knowledge of God and Christ Jesus, and to believe in him who died for them and all men, and that this would keep them from rebelling, or cutting any person's throat; but if they did rebel and cut their throats, as the governor insinuated they would, it would be their own doing, in keeping them in ignorance and under oppression, in giving them liberty to be common with women, like brutes, and, on the other hand, in starving them for want of meat and clothes convenient; thus giving them liberty in that which God restrained, and restraining them in that which was meat and clothing."

I do not find any individual of this society moving in this cause for some time after the death of George Fox and William Edmundson. The first circumstance of moment, which I discover, is a Resolution of the whole Society on the subject, at their yearly meeting held in London in the year 1727. The resolution was contained in the following

ing words:—"It is the sense of this meeting, that the importing of Negros from their native country and relations by Friends, is not a commendable nor allowed practice, and is therefore censured by this meeting."

In the year 1758 the Quakers thought it their duty, as a body, to pass another Resolution upon this subject. At this time the nature of the trade beginning to be better known, we find them more animated upon it, as the following extract will show:—

"We fervently warn all in profession with us, that they carefully avoid being any way concerned in reaping the unrighteous profits arising from the iniquitous practice of dealing in Negro or other slaves; whereby, in the original purchase, one man selleth another, as he doth the beasts that perish, without any better pretension to a property in him, than that of superior force; in direct violation of the Gospel rule, which teacheth all to do as they would be done by, and to do good to all; being the reverse of that covetous disposition, which furnisheth encouragement to those poor ignorant people to perpetuate their savage wars, in order to supply the demands of this most unnatural

traffic, by which great numbers of mankind, free by nature, are subject to inextricable boudage; and which hath often been observed to fill their possessors with haughtiness, tyranny, luxury, and barbarity, corrupting the minds and debasing the morals of their children, to the unspeakable prejudice of religion and virtue, and the exclusion of that holy spirit of universal love, meekness, and charity, which is the unchangeable nature and the glory of true Christianity. We therefore can do no less than, with the greatest earnestness, impress it upon Friends every where, that they endeavour to keep their hands clear of this unrighteous gain of oppression."

The Quakers hitherto, as appears by the two resolutions which have been quoted, did nothing more than seriously warn all those in religious profession with them, against being concerned in this trade. But in three years afterwards, or at the yearly meeting in 1761, they came to a resolution, as we find by the following extract from their Minutes, that any of their members having a concern in it should be disowned. "This meeting, having reason to apprehend that divers under our name are concerned in

the unchristian traffic in Negros, doth recommend it earnestly to the care of Friends every where, to discourage, as much as in them lies, a practice so repugnant to our Christian profession; and to deal with all such as shall persevere in a conduct so reproachful to Christianity; and to disown them, if they desist not therefrom."

The yearly meeting of 1761 having thus agreed to exclude from membership such as should be found concerned in this trade, that of 1763 endeavoured to draw the cords still tighter, by attaching criminality to those, who should aid and abet the trade in any manner. By the minute, which was made on this occasion, I apprehend that no one, belonging to the Society, could furnish even materials for such voyages. "We renew our exhortation, that Friends every where be especially careful to keep their hands clear of giving encouragement in any shape to the Slave-trade, it being evidently destructive of the natural rights of mankind, who are all ransomed by one Saviour, and visited by one divine light, in order to salvation; a traffic calculated to enrich and aggrandize some upon the misery of others, in its na-

ture abhorrent to every just and tender sentiment, and contrary to the whole tenour of the Gospel."

Some pleasing intelligence having been sent on this subject by the Society in America to the Society in England, the yearly meeting of 1772 thought it their duty to notice it, and to keep their former resolutions alive by the following minute:— "It appears that the practice of holding Negros in oppressive and unnatural bondage hath been so successfully discouraged by Friends in some of the colonies, as to be considerably lessened. We cannot but approve of these salutary endeavours, and earnestly entreat they may be continued, that, through the favour of divine Providence, a traffic so unmerciful and unjust in its nature to a part of our own species, made, equally with ourselves, for immortality, may come to be considered by all in its proper light, and be utterly abolished as a reproach to the Christian name."

I must beg leave to stop here for a moment, just to pay the Quakers a due tribute of respect for the proper estimation, in which they have uniformly held the mise-

rable outcasts of society, who have been the subject of these minutes. What a contrast does it afford to the sentiments of many others concerning them! How have we been compelled to prove by a long chain of evidence, that they had the same feelings and capacities as ourselves! How many, professing themselves enlightened, even now view them as of a different species! But in the minutes, which have been cited, we have seen them uniformly represented as persons "ransomed by one and the same Saviour"—"as visited by one and the same light for salvation"—and "as made equally for immortality as others." These practical views of mankind, as they are highly honourable to the members of this society, so they afford a proof both of the reality and of the consistency of their religion.

But to return:—From this time there appears to have been a growing desire in this benevolent society to step out of its ordinary course in behalf of this injured people. It had hitherto confined itself to the keeping of its own members unpolluted by any gain from their oppression. But it was now ready to make an appeal to others, and

and to bear a more public testimony in their favour. Accordingly, in the month of June 1783, when a bill had been brought into the House of Commons for certain regulations to be made with respect to the African trade, the Society sent the following petition to that branch of the legislature:—

"Your petitioners, met in this their annual assembly, having solemnly considered the state of the enslaved Negros, conceive themselves engaged, in religious duty, to lay the suffering situation of that unhappy people before you, as a subject loudly calling for the humane interposition of the legislature.

"Your petitioners regret that a nation, professing the Christian faith, should so far counteract the principles of humanity and justice, as by the cruel treatment of this oppressed race to fill their minds with prejudices against the mild and beneficent doctrines of the Gospel.

"Under the countenance of the laws of this country many thousands of these our fellow-creatures, entitled to the natural rights of mankind, are held as personal property in cruel bondage; and your petitioners being informed that a Bill for the Regulation of the

the African Trade is now before the House, containing a clause which restrains the officers of the African Company from exporting Negros, your petitioners, deeply affected with a consideration of the rapine, oppression, and bloodshed, attending this traffic, humbly request that this restriction may be extended to all persons whomsoever, or that the House would grant such other relief in the premises as in its wisdom may seem meet."

This petition was presented by Sir Cecil Wray, who, on introducing it, spoke very respectfully of the Society. He declared his hearty approbation of their application, and said he hoped he should see the day when not a slave would remain within the dominions of this realm. Lord North seconded the motion, saying he could have no objection to the petition, and that its object ought to recommend it to every humane breast; that it did credit to the most benevolent society in the world; but that, the session being so far advanced, the subject could not then be taken into consideration; and he regretted that the Slave-trade, against which the petition was so justly directed,

was

was in a commercial view become necessary to almost every nation of Europe. The petition was then brought up and read, after which it was ordered to lie on the table. This was the first petition (being two years earlier than that from the inhabitants of Bridgewater), which was ever presented to parliament for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

But the Society did not stop here; for having at the yearly meeting of 1783 particularly recommended the cause to a standing committee appointed to act at intervals, called the Meeting for Sufferings, the latter in this same year resolved upon an address to the public, entitled, The Case of our Fellow-creatures, the oppressed Africans, respectfully recommended to the serious Consideration of the Legislature of Great Britain, by the People called Quakers: in which they endeavoured in the most pathetic manner to make the reader acquainted with the cruel nature of this trade; and they ordered two thousand copies of it to be printed.

In the year 1784 they began the distribution of this case. The first copy was sent to the King through Lord Carmarthen, and the second

second and the third, through proper officers, to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. Others were sent by a deputation of two members of the society to Mr. Pitt, as prime-minister; to the Lord Chancellor Thurlow; to Lord Gower, as president of the council; to Lords Carmarthen and Sidney, as secretaries of state; to Lord Chief Justice Mansfield; to Lord Howe, as first lord of the Admiralty; and to C. F. Cornwall, Esq. as speaker of the House of Commons. Copies were sent also to every member of both Houses of Parliament.

The Society, in the same year, anxious that the conduct of its members should be consistent with its public profession on this great subject, recommended it to the quarterly and monthly meetings to inquire through their respective districts, whether any, bearing its name, were in any way concerned in the traffic, and to deal with such, and to report the success of their labours in the ensuing year. Orders were also given for the reprinting and circulation of ten thousand other copies of 'The Case.'

In the year 1785, the Society interested itself again in a similar manner. For the meeting

meeting for sufferings, as representing it, recommended to the quarterly meetings to distribute a work, written by Anthony Benezet, in America, called, A Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies, in a short Representation of the calamitous State of the enslaved Negros in the British Dominions. This book was accordingly forwarded to them for this purpose. On receiving it, they sent it among several public bodies, the regular and dissenting clergy, justices of the peace, and particularly among the great schools of the kingdom, that the rising youth might acquire a knowledge, and at the same time a detestation, of this cruel traffic. In this latter case, a deputation of the Society waited upon the masters, to know if they would allow their scholars to receive it. The schools of Westminster, the Charter-house, St. Paul, Merchant-Taylors, Eton, Winchester, and Harrow, were among those visited. Several academies also were visited for this purpose.

But I must now take my leave of the Quakers as a public body*, and go back to

* The Quakers, as a public body, kept the subject alive at their yearly meeting in 1784, 1785, 1787, &c.

the

the year 1783, to record an event, which will be found of great importance in the present history, and in which only individuals belonging to the Society were concerned. This event seems to have arisen naturally out of existing or past circumstances. For the Society, as I have before stated, had sent a petition to Parliament in this year, praying for the abolition of the Slave-trade. It had also laid the foundation for a public distribution of the books as just mentioned, with a view of enlightening others on this great subject. The case of the ship Zong, which I have before had occasion to explain, had occurred this same year. A letter also had been presented, much about the same time, by Benjamin West, from Anthony Benezet before mentioned, to our Queen, in behalf of the injured Africans, which she had received graciously. These subjects occupied at this time the attention of many Quaker families, and among others, that of a few individuals, who were in close intimacy with each other. These, when they met together, frequently conversed upon them. They perceived, as facts came out in conversation, that there was a growing knowledge and hatred of the Slave-

Slave-trade, and that the temper of the times was ripening towards its abolition. Hence a disposition manifested itself among these, to unite as labourers for the furtherance of so desirable an object. An union was at length proposed and approved of, and the following persons (placed in alphabetical order) came together to execute the offices growing out of it:

William Dillwyn,	Thomas Knowles, M.D.
George Harrison,	John Lloyd,
Samuel Hoare,	Joseph Woods.

The first meeting was held on the seventh of July, 1783. At this "they assembled to consider what steps they should take for the relief and liberation of the Negro slaves in the West Indies, and for the discouragement of the Slave-trade on the coast of Africa."

To promote this object they conceived it necessary that the public mind should be enlightened respecting it. They had recourse therefore to the public papers, and they appointed their members in turn to write in these, and to see that their productions were inserted. They kept regular minutes for this purpose. It was not however known to the world that such an association existed.

It

It appears that they had several meetings in the course of this year. Before the close of it they had secured a place in the General Evening Post, in Lloyd's Evening Post, in the Norwich, Bath, York, Bristol, Sherborne, Liverpool, Newcastle, and other provincial papers, for such articles as they chose to send to them. These consisted principally of extracts from such authors, both in prose and verse, as they thought would most enlighten and interest the mind upon the subject of their institution.

In the year 1784 they pursued the same plan; but they began now to print books. The first was from a manuscript composed by Joseph Woods, one of the committee. It was entitled, Thoughts on the Slavery of the Negros. This manuscript was well put together. It was a manly and yet feeling address in behalf of the oppressed Africans. It contained a sober and dispassionate appeal to the reason of all, without offending the prejudices of any. It was distributed at the expense of the association, and proved to be highly useful to the cause which it was intended to promote.

A communication having been made to the

the committee, that Dr. Porteus, then bishop of Chester, had preached a sermon before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in behalf of the injured Africans, (which sermon was noticed in the last chapter,) Samuel Hoare was deputed to obtain permission to publish it. This led him to a correspondence with Mr Ramsay before mentioned. The latter applied in consequence to the bishop, and obtained his consent. Thus this valuable sermon was also given to the world.

In the year 1785 the association continued their exertions as before; but I have no room to specify them. I may observe, however, that David Barclay, a grandson of the great apologist of that name, assisted at one of their meetings, and (what is singular) that he was in a few years afterwards unexpectedly called to a trial of his principles on this very subject. For he and his brother John became, in consequence of a debt due to them, possessed of a large grazing farm, or pen, in Jamaica, which had thirty-two slaves upon it. Convinced, however, that the retaining of their fellow-creatures in bondage was not only irreconcileable with the principles of Christianity,

Christianity, but subversive of the rights of human nature, they determined upon the emancipation of these. And they* performed this generous office to the satisfaction of their minds, to the honour of their characters, to the benefit of the public, and to the happiness of the slave†. I mention this anecdote, not only to gratify myself, by paying a proper respect to those generous persons who sacrificed their interest to principle, but also to show the sincerity of David Barclay, (who is now the

* They engaged an agent to embark for Jamaica in 1795 to effect this business, and had the slaves conveyed to Philadelphia, where they were kindly received by the Society for improving the Condition of free Black People. Suitable situations were found for the adults, and the young ones were bound out apprentices to handicraft trades, and to receive school learning.

† James Pemberton, of Philadelphia, made the following observation in a letter to a Friend in England :— "David Barclay's humane views towards the Blacks from Jamaica have been so far realized, that these objects of his concern enjoy their freedom with comfort to themselves, and are respectable in their characters, keeping up a friendly intercourse with each other, and avoiding to intermix with the common Blacks of this city, being sober in their conduct and industrious in their business."

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only surviving brother,) as he actually put in practice what at one of these meetings he was desirous of recommending to others.

Having now brought up the proceedings of this little association towards the year 1786, I shall take my leave of it, remarking, that it was the first ever formed in England for the promotion of the abolition of the Slave-trade. That Quakers have had this honour is unquestionable. Nor is it extraordinary that they should have taken the lead on this occasion, when we consider how advantageously they have been situated for so doing. For the Slave-trade, as we have not long ago seen, came within the discipline of the Society in the year 1727. From thence it continued to be an object of it till 1783. In 1783 the Society petitioned Parliament, and in 1784 it distributed books to enlighten the public concerning it. Thus we see that every Quaker, born since the year 1727, was nourished as it were in a fixed hatred against it. He was taught, that any concern in it was a crime of the deepest dye. He was taught, that the bearing of his testimony against it was a test of unity with those of

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the same religious profession. The discipline of the Quakers was therefore a school for bringing them up as advocates for the abolition of this trade. To this it may be added, that the Quakers knew more about the trade and the slavery of the Africans, than any other religious body of men, who had not been in the land of their sufferings. For there had been a correspondence between the Society in America and that in England on the subject, the contents of which must have been known to the members of each. American ministers also were frequently crossing the Atlantic on religious missions to England. These, when they travelled through various parts of our island, frequently related to the Quaker families in their way the cruelties they had seen and heard-of in their own country. English ministers were also frequently going over to America on the same religious errand. These, on their return, seldom failed to communicate what they had learned or observed, but more particularly relative to the oppressed Africans, in their travels. The journals also of these, which gave occasional

accounts of the sufferings of the slaves, were frequently published. Thus situated in point of knowledge, and brought up moreover from their youth in a detestation of the trade, the Quakers were ready to act whenever a favourable opportunity should present itself.

CHAPTER V.

Third class of forerunners and coadjutors, up to 1787, *consists of the Quakers and others in America—Yearly meeting for Pennsylvania and the Jerseys takes up the subject in* 1696—*and continue it till* 1787—*Other five yearly meetings take similar measures—Quakers, as individuals, also become labourers—William Burling and others—Individuals of other religious denominations take up the cause also—Judge Sewell and others—Union of the Quakers with others in a society for Pennsylvania, in* 1774—*James Pemberton—Dr. Rush—Similar union of the Quakers with others for New York and other provinces.*

THE next class of the forerunners and coadjutors, up to the year 1787, will consist, first, of the Quakers in America; and then of others, as they were united to these for the same object.

It may be asked, How the Quakers living there should have become forerunners and coadjutors in the great work now under our consideration. I reply, first, That it was an object for many years with these to do away the Slave-trade as it was carried on

in their own ports. But this trade was conducted in part, both before and after the independence of America, by our own countrymen. It was, secondly, an object with these to annihilate slavery in America; and this they have been instruments in accomplishing to a considerable extent. But any abolition of slavery within given boundaries must be a blow to the Slave-trade there. The American Quakers, lastly, living in a land where both the commerce and slavery existed, were in the way of obtaining a number of important facts relative to both, which made for their annihilation; and communicating many of these facts to those in England, who espoused the same cause, they became fellow-labourers with these in producing the event in question.

The Quakers in America, it must be owned, did most of them originally as other settlers there with respect to the purchase of slaves. They had lands without a sufficient number of labourers, and families without a sufficient number of servants, for their work. Africans were poured in to obviate these difficulties, and these were bought promiscuously by all. In these days, indeed,

deed, the purchase of them was deemed favourable to both parties, for there was little or no knowledge of the manner in which they had been procured as slaves. There was no charge of inconsistency on this account, as in later times. But though many of the Quakers engaged, without their usual consideration, in purchases of this kind, yet those constitutional principles, which belong to the Society, occasioned the members of it in general to treat those whom they purchased with great tenderness, considering them, though of a different colour, as brethren, and as persons for whose spiritual welfare it became them to be concerned; so that slavery, except as to the power legally belonging to it, was in general little more than servitude in their hands.

This treatment, as it was thus mild on the continent of America where the members of this Society were the owners of slaves, so it was equally mild in the West India islands where they had a similar property. In the latter countries, however, where only a few of them lived, it began soon to be productive of serious consequences; for it was so different from that, which the rest of the inhabitants

bitants considered to be proper, that the latter became alarmed at it. Hence in Barbadoes an act was passed in 1676, under Governor Atkins, which was entitled, An Act to prevent the people called Quakers from bringing their Negros into their meetings for worship, though they held these in their own houses. This act was founded on the pretence, that the safety of the island might be endangered, if the slaves were to imbibe the religious principles of their masters. Under this act Ralph Fretwell and Richard Sutton were fined in the different sums of eight hundred and of three hundred pounds, because each of them had suffered a meeting of the Quakers at his own house, at the first of which eighty Negros, and at the second of which thirty of them, were present. But this matter was carried still further; for in 1680, Sir Richard Dutton, then governor of the island, issued an order to the Deputy Provost Marshal and others, to prohibit all meetings of this Society. In the island of Nevis the same bad spirit manifested itself.—So early as in 1661, a law was made there prohibiting members of this Society from coming on shore,

shore. Negros were put in irons for being present at their meetings, and they themselves were fined also. At length, in 1677, another act was passed, laying a heavy penalty on every master of a vessel, who should even bring a Quaker to the island. In Antigua and Bermudas similar proceedings took place, so that the Quakers were in time expelled from this part of the world. By these means a valuable body of men were lost to the community in these islands, whose example might have been highly useful; and the poor slave, who saw nothing but misery in his temporal prospects, was deprived of the only balm, which could have soothed his sorrow—the comfort of religion.

But to return to the continent of America.—Though the treatment, which the Quakers adopted there towards those Africans who fell into their hands, was so highly commendable, it did not prevent individuals among them from becoming uneasy about holding them in slavery at all. Some of these bore their private testimony against it from the beginning as a wrong practice, and in process of time brought it before the notice

tice of their brethren as a religious body. So early as in the year 1688, some emigrants from Krieshiem in Germany, who had adopted the principles of William Penn, and followed him into Pennsylvania, urged in the yearly meeting of the Society there, the inconsistency of buying, selling, and holding men in slavery, with the principles of the Christian religion.

In the year 1696, the yearly meeting for that province took up the subject as a public concern, and the result was, advice to the members of it to guard against future importations of African slaves, and to be particularly attentive to the treatment of those, who were then in their possession.

In the year 1711, the same yearly meeting resumed the important subject, and confirmed and renewed the advice, which had been before given.

From this time it continued to keep the subject alive; but finding at length, that, though individuals refused to purchase slaves, yet others continued the custom, and in greater numbers than it was apprehended would have been the case after the public declarations which had been made, it determined

mined, in the year 1754, upon a fuller and more serious publication of its sentiments; and therefore it issued, in the same year, the following pertinent letter to all the members within its jurisdiction:—

"Dear Friends,

"It hath frequently been the concern of our yearly meeting to testify their uneasiness and disunity with the importation and purchasing of Negros and other slaves, and to direct the overseers of the several meetings to advise and deal with such as engage therein. And it hath likewise been the continual care of many weighty Friends to press those, who bear our name, to guard, as much as possible, against being in any respect concerned in promoting the bondage of such unhappy people. Yet, as we have with sorrow to observe, that their number is of late increased among us, we have thought it proper to make our advice and judgment more public, that none may plead ignorance of our principles therein; and also again earnestly to exhort all to avoid, in any manner, encouraging that practice, of making slaves of our fellow-creatures.

"Now,

" Now, dear Friends, if we continually bear in mind the royal law of doing to others as we would be done by, we should never think of bereaving our fellow-creatures of that valuable blessing—liberty, nor endure to grow rich by their bondage. To live in ease and plenty by the toil of those, whom violence and cruelty have put in our power, is neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice; and, we have good reason to believe, draws down the displeasure of Heaven; it being a melancholy but true reflection, that, where slave-keeping prevails, pure religion and sobriety decline, as it evidently tends to harden the heart, and render the soul less susceptible of that holy spirit of love, meekness, and charity, which is the peculiar characteristic of a true Christian.

" How then can we, who have been concerned to publish the Gospel of universal love and peace among mankind, be so inconsistent with ourselves, as to purchase such as are prisoners of war, and thereby encourage this antichristian practice; and more especially as many of these poor creatures are stolen away, parents from children, and children

children from parents; and others, who were in good circumstances in their native country, inhumanly torn from what they esteemed a happy situation, and compelled to toil in a state of slavery, too often extremely cruel! What dreadful scenes of murder and cruelty those barbarous ravages must occasion in these unhappy people's country are too obvious to mention. Let us make their case our own, and consider what we should think, and how we should feel, were we in their circumstances. Remember our Blessed Redeemer's positive command—to do unto others as we would have them do unto us;—and that with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again. And we intreat you to examine, whether the purchasing of a Negro, either born here or imported, doth not contribute to a further importation, and, consequently, to the upholding of all the evils above mentioned, and to the promoting of man-stealing, the only theft which by the Mosaic law was punished with death;—'He that stealeth a man, and selleth him; or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.'

"The characteristic and badge of a true

true Christian is love and good works. Our Saviour's whole life on earth was one continual exercise of them. 'Love one another,' says he, 'as I have loved you.' But how can we be said to love our brethren, who bring, or, for selfish ends, keep them, in bondage? Do we act consistently with this noble principle, who lay such heavy burthens on our fellow-creatures? Do we consider that they are called, and do we sincerely desire that they may become heirs with us in glory, and that they may rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God, whilst we are withholding from them the common liberties of mankind? Or can the Spirit of God, by which we have always professed to be led, be the author of those oppressive and unrighteous measures? Or do we not thereby manifest, that temporal interest hath more influence on our conduct herein, than the dictates of that merciful, holy, and unerring Guide?

"And we likewise earnestly recommend to all, who have slaves, to be careful to come up in the performance of their duty towards them, and to be particularly watchful over their own hearts, it being by sorrowful

rowful experience remarkable, that custom, and a familiarity with evil of any kind, have a tendency to bias the judgement and to deprave the mind. And it is obvious that the future welfare of these poor slaves, who are now in bondage, is generally too much disregarded by those who keep them. If their daily task of labour be but fulfilled, little else perhaps is thought of. Nay, even that which in others would be looked upon with horror and detestation, is little regarded in them by their masters,—such as the frequent separation of husbands from wives and wives from husbands, whereby they are tempted to break their marriage covenants, and live in adultery, in direct opposition to the laws of God and men, although we believe that Christ died for all men without respect of persons. How fearful then ought we to be of engaging in what hath so natural a tendency to lessen our humanity, and of suffering ourselves to be inured to the exercise of hard and cruel measures, lest thereby in any degree we lose our tender and feeling sense of the miseries of our fellow-creatures, and become worse than those who have not believed.

" And,

" And, dear Friends, you, who by inheritance have slaves born in your families, we beseech you to consider them as souls committed to your trust, whom the Lord will require at your hand, and who, as well as you, are made partakers of the Spirit of Grace, and called to be heirs of salvation. And let it be your constant care to watch over them for good, instructing them in the fear of God, and the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, that they may answer the end of their creation, and that God may be glorified and honoured by them as well as by us. And so train them up, that if you should come to behold their unhappy situation, in the same light, that many worthy men, who are at rest, have done, and many of your brethren now do, and should think it your duty to set them free, they may be the more capable of making proper use of their liberty.

" Finally, Brethren, we entreat you, in the bowels of gospel love, seriously to weigh the cause of detaining them in bondage. If it be for your own private gain, or any other motive than their good, it is much to be feared that the love of God and the influence

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of the Holy Spirit are not the prevailing principles in you, and that your hearts are not sufficiently redeemed from the world, which, that you with ourselves may more and more come to witness, through the cleansing virtue of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, is our earnest desire. With the salutation of our love we are your friends and brethren—

"*Signed, in behalf of the yearly meeting, by*

"John Evans,	Abraham Farringdon,
John Smith,	Joseph Noble,
Thomas Carleton,	James Daniel,
William Trimble,	Joseph Gibson,
John Scarborough,	John Shotwell,
Joseph Hampton,	Joseph Parker."

This truly Christian letter, which was written in the year 1754, was designed, as we collect from the contents of it, to make the sentiments of the Society better known and attended to on the subject of the Slave-trade. It contains, as we see, exhortations to all the members within the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys, to desist from purchasing and importing slaves, and, where they possessed them, to have a tender consideration of their condition. But

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that the first part of the subject of this exhortation might be enforced, the yearly meeting for the same provinces came to a resolution in 1755, That if any of the members belonging to it bought or imported slaves, the overseers were to inform their respective monthly meetings of it, that "these might treat with them, as they might be directed in the wisdom of truth."

In the year 1774, we find the same yearly meeting legislating again on the same subject. By the preceding resolution they, who became offenders, were subjected only to exclusion from the meetings for discipline, and from the privilege of contributing to the pecuniary occasions of the Society; but by the resolution of the present year, all members concerned in importing, selling, purchasing, giving, or transferring Negro or other slaves, or otherwise acting in such manner as to continue them in slavery beyond the term limited by law * or custom, were directed to be excluded from membership or disowned. At this meeting also all

* This alludes to the term of servitude for white persons in these provinces.

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the members of it were cautioned and advised against acting as executors or administrators to estates, where slaves were bequeathed, or likely to be detained in bondage.

In the year 1776, the same yearly meeting carried the matter still further. It was then enacted, That the owners of slaves, who refused to execute proper instruments for giving them their freedom, were to be disowned likewise.

In 1778 it was enacted by the same meeting, That the children of those, who had been set free by members, should be tenderly advised, and have a suitable education given them.

It is not necessary to proceed further on this subject. It may be sufficient to say, that from this time, the Minutes of the yearly meeting for Pennsylvania and the Jerseys exhibit proofs of an almost incessant attention, year after year*, to the means not only of wiping away the stain of slavery

* Thus in 1779, 1780,-1,-2,-4,-5,-6. The members also of this meeting petitioned their own legislature on this subject both in 1783 and in 1786.

from their religious community, but of promoting the happiness of those restored to freedom, and of their posterity also. And as the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania and the Jerseys set this bright example, so those of New England, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and of the Carolinas and Georgia, in process of time followed it.

But whilst the Quakers were making these exertions at their different yearly meetings in America, as a religious body, to get rid both of the commerce and slavery of their fellow-creatures, others in the same profession were acting as individuals (that is, on their own grounds and independently of any influence from their religious communion) in the same cause, whose labours it will now be proper, in a separate narrative, to detail.

The first person of this description in the Society, was William Burling of Long Island. He had conceived an abhorrence of slavery from early youth. In process of time he began to bear his testimony against it, by representing the unlawfulness of it to those of his own Society, when assembled at one of their yearly meetings. This expression of his

his public testimony he continued annually on the same occasion. He wrote also several tracts with the same design, one of which, published in the year 1718, he addressed to the elders of his own church, on the inconsistency of compelling people and their posterity to serve them continually and arbitrarily, and without any proper recompense for their services.

The next was Ralph Sandiford, a merchant in Philadelphia. This worthy person had many offers of pecuniary assistance, which would have advanced him in life, but he declined them all because they came from persons, who had acquired their independence by the oppression of their slaves. He was very earnest in endeavouring to prevail upon his friends, both in and out of the Society, to liberate those whom they held in bondage. At length he determined upon a work called The Mystery of Iniquity, in a brief Examination of the Practice of the Times. This he published in the year 1729, though the chief judge had threatened him if he should give it to the world, and he circulated it free of expense wherever he believed it would be useful. The above work

was excellent as a composition. The language of it was correct. The style manly and energetic. And it abounded with facts, sentiments, and quotations, which, while they showed the virtue and talents of the author, rendered it a valuable appeal in behalf of the African cause.

The next public advocate was Benjamin Lay *, who lived at Abington, at the distance of twelve or fourteen miles from Philadelphia. Benjamin Lay was known, when in England, to the royal family of that day, into whose private presence he was admitted. On his return to America, he took an active part in behalf of the oppressed Africans. In the year 1737, he published a treatise on Slave-keeping. This he gave away among his neighbours and others, but more particularly among the rising youth, many of whom he visited in their respective schools. He applied also to several of the governors for interviews, with whom he held con-

* Benjamin Lay attended the meetings for worship, or associated himself with the religious society of the Quakers. His wife too was an approved minister of the gospel in that Society. But I believe he was not long an acknowledged member of it himself.

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ferences on the subject. Benjamin Lay was a man of strong understanding and of great integrity, but of warm and irritable feelings, and more particularly so when he was called forth on any occasion in which the oppressed Africans were concerned. For he had lived in the island of Barbadoes, and he had witnessed there scenes of cruelty towards them, which had greatly disturbed his mind, and which unhinged it, as it were, whenever the subject of their sufferings was brought before him. Hence if others did not think precisely as he did, when he conversed with them on the subject, he was apt to go out of due bounds. In bearing what he believed to be his testimony against this system of oppression, he adopted sometimes a singularity of manner, by which, as conveying demonstration of a certain eccentricity of character, he diminished in some degree his usefulness to the cause which he had undertaken; as far indeed as this eccentricity might have the effect of preventing others from joining him in his pursuit, lest they should be thought singular also, so far it must be allowed that he ceased to become beneficial. But there

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can be no question, on the other hand, that his warm and enthusiastic manners awakened the attention of many to the cause, and gave them first impressions concerning it, which they never afterwards forgot, and which rendered them useful to it in the subsequent part of their lives.

The person, who laboured next in the Society, in behalf of the oppressed Africans, was John Woolman.

John Woolman was born at Northampton, in the county of Burlington and province of Western New Jersey, in the year 1720. In his very early youth he attended, in an extraordinary manner, to the religious impressions which he perceived upon his mind, and began to have an earnest solicitude about treading in the right path. "From what I had read and heard," says he, in his Journal *, "I believed there had been in past ages people, who walked in uprightness before God in a degree exceeding any, that I knew or heard of, now living. And the apprehension of there being less steadiness

* This short sketch of the life and labours of John Woolman, is made up from his Journal.

and

and firmness among people of this age, than in past ages, often troubled me while I was a child." An anxious desire to do away, as far as he himself was concerned, this merited reproach, operated as one among other causes to induce him to be particularly watchful over his thoughts and actions, and to endeavour to attain that purity of heart, without which he conceived there could be no perfection of the Christian character. Accordingly, in the twenty-second year of his age, he had given such proof of the integrity of his life, and of his religious qualifications, that he became an acknowledged minister of the gospel in his own Society.

At a time prior to his entering upon the ministry, being in low circumstances, he agreed for wages to " attend shop for a person at Mount Holly, and to keep his books." In this situation we discover, by an occurrence that happened, that he had thought seriously on the subject, and that he had conceived proper views of the Christian unlawfulness of slavery. " My employer," says he, " having a Negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale, the man being waiting, who bought her. The

thing was sudden, and though the thought of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures made me feel uneasy, yet I remembered I was hired by the year, that it was my master who directed me to do it, and that it was an elderly man, a member of our Society, who bought her. So through weakness I gave way and wrote, but, at executing it, I was so afflicted in my mind, that I said before my master and the friend, that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion. This in some degree abated my uneasiness; yet, as often as I reflected seriously upon it, I thought I should have been clearer, if I had desired to have been excused from it, as a thing against my conscience; for such it was. And some time after this, a young man of our Society spoke to me to write a conveyance of a slave to him, he having lately taken a Negro into his house. I told him I was not easy to write it; for though many of our meeting, and in other places, kept slaves, I still believed the practice was not right, and desired to be excused from the writing. I spoke to him in good-will; and he told me that keeping

slaves

slaves was not altogether agreeable to his mind, but that the slave being a gift to his wife he had accepted of her."

We may easily conceive that a person so scrupulous and tender on this subject (as indeed John Woolman was on all others) was in the way of becoming in time more eminently serviceable to his oppressed fellow-creatures. We have seen already the good seed sown in his heart, and it seems to have wanted only providential seasons and occurrences to be brought into productive fruit. Accordingly we find that a journey, which he took as a minister of the gospel in 1746, through the provinces of Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, which were then more noted than others for the number of slaves in them, contributed to prepare him as an instrument for the advancement of this great cause. The following are his own observations upon this journey. "Two things were remarkable to me in this journey; First, in regard to my entertainment. When I ate, drank, and lodged free-cost, with people who lived in ease on the hard labour of their slaves, I felt uneasy; and, as my mind was inward

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to the Lord, I found, from place to place, this uneasiness return upon me at times through the whole visit. Where the masters bore a good share of the burthen, and lived frugally, so that their servants were well provided for, and their labour moderate, I felt more easy. But where they lived in a costly way, and laid heavy burthens on their slaves, my exercise was often great, and I frequently had conversations with them in private concerning it. Secondly, This trade of importing slaves from their native country being much encouraged among them, and the White people and their children so generally living without much labour, was frequently the subject of my serious thoughts: and I saw in these southern provinces so many vices and corruptions, increased by this trade and this way of life, that it appeared to me as a gloom over the land."

From the year 1747 to the year 1753, he seems to have been occupied chiefly as a minister of religion, but in the latter year he published a work upon Slave-keeping; and in the same year, while travelling within the compass of his own monthly meeting, a circumstance

circumstance happened, which kept alive his attention to the same subject. "About this time," says he, "a person at some distance lying sick, his brother came to me to write his will. I knew he had slaves, and, asking his brother, was told, he intended to leave them as slaves to his children. As writing was a profitable employ, and as offending sober people was disagreeable to my inclination, I was straitened in my mind, but as I looked to the Lord he inclined my heart to his testimony; and I told the man, that I believed the practice of continuing slavery to this people was not right, and that I had a scruple in my mind against doing writings of that kind; that, though many in our Society kept them as slaves, still I was not easy to be concerned in it, and desired to be excused from going to write the will. I spoke to him in the fear of the Lord; and he made no reply to what I said, but went away: he also had some concerns in the practice, and I thought he was displeased with me. In this case, I had a fresh confirmation, that acting contrary to present outward interest from a motive of Divine love, and in regard to truth and righteousness,

ness, opens the way to a treasure better than silver, and to a friendship exceeding the friendship of men."

From 1753 to 1755, two circumstances of a similar kind took place, which contributed greatly to strengthen him in the path he had taken; for in both these cases the persons who requested him to make their wills, were so impressed by the principle upon which he refused them, and by his manner of doing it, that they bequeathed liberty to their slaves.

In the year 1756, he made a religious visit to several of the Society in Long Island. Here it was that the seed, now long fostered by the genial influences of Heaven, began to burst forth into fruit. Till this time he seems to have been a passive instrument, attending only to such circumstances as came in his way on this subject. But now he became an active one, looking out for circumstances for the exercise of his labours. "My mind," says he, "was deeply engaged in this visit, both in public and private; and at several places observing that members kept slaves, I found myself under a necessity, in a friendly way, to labour

bour with them on that subject, expressing, as the way opened, the inconsistency of that practice with the purity of the Christian religion, and the ill effects of it as manifested amongst us.

In the year 1757, he felt his mind so deeply interested on the same subject, that he resolved to travel over Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina, in order to try to convince persons, principally in his own Society, of the inconsistency of holding slaves. He joined his brother with him in this arduous service. Having passed the Susquehanna into Maryland, he began to experience great agitation of mind. "Soon after I entered this province," says he, "a deep and painful exercise came upon me, which I often had some feeling of since my mind was drawn towards these parts, and with which I had acquainted my brother, before we agreed to join as companions.

"As the people in this and the southern provinces live much on the labour of slaves, many of whom are used hardly, my concern was that I might attend with singleness of heart to the voice of the true Shepherd,

herd, and be so supported, as to remain unmoved at the faces of men."

It is impossible for me to follow him in detail, through this long and interesting journey, when I consider the bounds I have prescribed to myself in this work. I shall say therefore, what I purpose to offer generally and in a few words.

It appears that he conversed with persons occasionally, who were not of his own Society, with a view of answering their arguments, and of endeavouring to evince the wickedness and impolicy of slavery. In discoursing with these, however strenuous he might appear, he seems never to have departed from a calm, modest, and yet dignified and even friendly demeanour. At the public meetings for discipline, held by his own Society in these provinces, he endeavoured to display the same truths and in the same manner, but particularly to the elders of his own Society, exhorting them, as the most conspicuous rank, to be careful of their conduct, and to give a bright example in the liberation of their slaves. He visited also families for the same purpose: and he had

had the well-earned satisfaction of finding his admonitions kindly received by some, and of seeing a disposition in others to follow the advice he had given them.

In the year 1758, he attended the yearly meeting at Philadelphia, where he addressed his brethren on the propriety of dealing with such members, as should hereafter purchase slaves. On the discussion of this point he spoke a second time, and this to such effect that he had the satisfaction at this meeting to see minutes made more fully than any before, and a committee appointed, for the advancement of the great object, to which he had now been instrumental in turning the attention of many, and to witness a considerable spreading of the cause. In the same year also, he joined himself with two others of the Society to visit such members of it, as possessed slaves in Chester county. In this journey he describes himself to have met with several, who were pleased with his visit, but to have found difficulties with others, towards whom however he felt a sympathy and tenderness on account of their being entangled by the spirit of the world.

In

In the year 1759, he visited several of the Society who held slaves in Philadelphia. In about three months afterwards, he travelled there again, in company with John Churchman, to see others under similar circumstances. He then went to different places on the same errand. In this last journey he went alone. After this he joined himself to John Churchman again, but he confined his labours to his own province. Here he had the pleasure of finding that the work prospered. Soon after this he took Samuel Eastburne as a coadjutor, and pleaded the cause of the poor Africans with many of the Society in Bucks county, who held them in bondage there.

In the year 1760, he travelled, in company with his friend Samuel Eastburne, to Rhode Island, to promote the same object. This island had been long noted for its trade to Africa for slaves. He found at Newport, the great sea-port town belonging to it, that a number of them had been lately imported. He felt his mind deeply impressed on this account. He was almost overpowered in consequence of it, and became ill. He thought once of promoting a petition to the legis-

legislature, to discourage all such importations in future. He then thought of going and speaking to the House of Assembly, which was then sitting; but he was discouraged from both these proceedings. He held, however, a conference with many of his own Society in the meeting-house-chamber, where the subject of his visit was discussed on both sides, with a calm and peaceable spirit. Many of those present manifested the concern they felt at their former practices, and others a desire of taking suitable care of their slaves at their decease. From Newport he proceeded to Nantucket; but observing the members of the Society there to have few or no slaves, he exhorted them to persevere in abstaining from the use of them, and returned home.

In the year 1761, he visited several families in Pennsylvania, and, in about three months afterwards, others about Shrewsbury and Squan in New Jersey. On his return he added a second part to the treatise before published on the keeping of slaves, a care which had been growing upon him for some years.

In the year 1762, he printed, published, and distributed this treatise.

In 1767, he went on foot to the western shores of the same province on a religious visit. After having crossed the Susquehanna, his old feelings returned to him; for coming amongst people living in outward ease and greatness, chiefly on the labour of slaves, his heart was much affected, and he waited with humble resignation, to learn how he should further perform his duty to this injured people. The travelling on foot, though it was agreeable to the state of his mind, he describes to have been wearisome to his body. He felt himself weakly at times, in consequence of it, but yet continued to travel on. At one of the quarterly meetings of the Society, being in great sorrow and heaviness, and under deep exercise on account of the miseries of the poor Africans, he expressed himself freely to those present, who held them in bondage. He expatiated on the tenderness and loving-kindness of the apostles, as manifested in labours, perils, and sufferings, towards the poor Gentiles, and contrasted their treatment

ment of the Gentiles with it, whom he described in the persons of their slaves; and was much satisfied with the result of his discourse.

From this time we collect little more from his journal concerning him, than that, in 1772, he embarked for England on a religious visit. After his arrival there, he travelled through many counties, preaching in different meetings of the Society, till he came to the city of York. But even here, though he was far removed from the sight of those whose interests he had so warmly espoused, he was not forgetful of their wretched condition. At the quarterly meeting for that county, he brought their case before those present in an affecting manner. He exhorted these to befriend their cause. He remarked that as they, the Society, when under outward sufferings, had often found a concern to lay them before the legislature, and thereby, in the Lord's time, had obtained relief; so he recommended this oppressed part of the creation to their notice, that they might, as the way opened, represent their sufferings as individuals, if not as a religious society, to those in authority in

this land. This was the last opportunity that he had of interesting himself in behalf of this injured people; for soon afterwards he was seized with the small-pox at the house of a friend in the city of York, where he died.

The next person belonging to the Society of the Quakers, who laboured in behalf of the oppressed Africans, was Anthony Benezet. He was born before, and he lived after, John Woolman; of course he was cotemporary with him. I place him after John Woolman, because he was not so much known as a labourer, till two or three years after the other had begun to move in the same cause.

Anthony Benezet was born at St. Quintin in Picardy, of a respectable family, in the year 1713. His father was one of the many protestants, who, in consequence of the persecutions which followed the revocation of the edict of Nantz, sought an asylum in foreign countries. After a short stay in Holland, he settled, with his wife and children, in London, in 1715.

Anthony Benezet, having received from his father a liberal education, served an

apprenticeship in an eminent mercantile house in London. In 1731, however, he removed with his family to Philadelphia, where he joined in profession with the Quakers. His three brothers then engaged in trade, and made considerable pecuniary acquisitions in it. He himself might have partaken both of their concerns and of their prosperity; but he did not feel himself at liberty to embark in their undertakings. He considered the accumulation of wealth as of no importance, when compared with the enjoyment of doing good; and he chose the humble situation of a schoolmaster, as according best with this notion, believing, that by endeavouring to train up youth in knowledge and virtue, he should become more extensively useful than in any other way to his fellow-creatures.

He had not been long in his new situation, before he manifested such an uprightness of conduct, such a courtesy of manners, such a purity of intention, and such a spirit of benevolence, that he attracted the notice, and gained the good opinion, of the inhabitants among whom he lived. He had ready access to them, in consequence, upon

upon all occasions; and, if there were any whom he failed to influence at any of these times, he never went away without the possession of their respect.

In the year 1756, when a considerable number of French families were removed from Acadia into Pennsylvania, on account of some political suspicions, he felt deeply interested about them. In a country where few understood their language, they were wretched and helpless; but Anthony Benezet endeavoured to soften the rigour of their situation, by his kind attention towards them. He exerted himself also in their behalf, by procuring many contributions for them, which, by the consent of his fellow-citizens, were entrusted to his care.

As the principle of benevolence, when duly cultivated, brings forth fresh shoots, and becomes enlarged, so we find this amiable person extending the sphere of his usefulness, by becoming an advocate for the oppressed African race. For this service he seems to have been peculiarly qualified. Indeed, as in all great works a variety of talents is necessary to bring them to perfection,

fection, so Providence seems to prepare different men as instruments, with dispositions and qualifications so various, that each, in pursuing that line which seems to suit him best, contributes to furnish those parts, which, when put together, make up a complete whole. In this point of view, John Woolman found, in Anthony Benezet, the coadjutor, whom, of all others, the cause required. The former had occupied himself principally on the subject of Slavery. The latter went to the root of the evil, and more frequently attacked the Trade. The former chiefly confined his labours to America, and chiefly to those of his own Society there. The latter, when he wrote, did not write for America only, but for Europe also, and endeavoured to spread a knowledge and hatred of the traffic through the great society of the world.

One of the means which Anthony Benezet took to promote the cause in question, (and an effectual one it proved, as far as it went.) was to give his scholars a due knowledge and proper impressions concerning it. Situated as they were likely to be, in after-life, in a country where slavery was a custom,

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he thus prepared many, and this annually, for the promotion of his plans.

To enlighten others, and to give them a similar bias, he had recourse to different measures from time to time. In the almanacs published annually in Philadelphia, he procured articles to be inserted, which he believed would attract the notice of the reader, and make him pause, at least for a while, as to the licitness of the Slave-trade. He wrote, also, as he saw occasion, in the public papers of the day. From small things he proceeded to greater. He collected, at length, further information on the subject, and, winding it up with observations and reflections, he produced several little tracts, which he circulated successively (but generally at his own expense), as he considered them adapted to the temper and circumstances of the times.

In the course of this his employment, having found some who had approved his tracts, and to whom, on that account, he wished to write, and sending his tracts to others, to whom he thought it proper to introduce them by letter, he found himself engaged in a correspondence, which much engrossed

engrossed his time, but which proved of great importance in procuring many advocates for his cause.

In the year 1762, when he had obtained a still greater store of information, he published a larger work. This, however, he entitled, A short Account of that Part of Africa inhabited by the Negros. In 1767 he published, A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies, on the Calamitous State of the enslaved Negros in the British Dominions:—and soon after this, appeared, An Historical Account of Guinea, its Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of its Inhabitants; with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave-Trade, its Nature, and Calamitous Effects. This pamphlet contained a clear and distinct development of the subject, from the best authorities. It contained also the sentiments of many enlightened men upon it; and it became instrumental, beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge and detestation of this trade.

Anthony Benezet may be considered as one of the most zealous, vigilant, and active

tive advocates, which the cause of the oppressed Africans ever had. He seemed to have been born and to have lived for the promotion of it, and therefore he never omitted any the least opportunity of serving it. If a person called upon him who was going a journey, his first thoughts usually were, how he could make him an instrument in its favour; and he either gave him tracts to distribute, or he sent letters by him, or he gave him some commission on the subject, so that he was the means of employing several persons at the same time, in various parts of America, in advancing the work he had undertaken.

In the same manner he availed himself of every other circumstance, as far as he could, to the same end. When he heard that Mr. Granville Sharp had obtained, in the year 1772, the noble verdict in the cause of Somerset the slave, he opened a correspondence with him, which he kept up, that there might be an union of action between them for the future, as far as it could be effected, and that they might each give encouragement to the other to proceed.

He opened also a correspondence with George Whitfield and John Wesley, that these might assist him in promoting the cause of the oppressed.

He wrote also a letter to the Countess of Huntingdon on the following subject.—She had founded a college, at the recommendation of George Whitfield, called the Orphan house, near Savannah, in Georgia, and had endowed it. The object of this institution was, to furnish scholastic instruction to the poor, and to prepare some of them for the ministry. George Whitfield, ever attentive to the cause of the poor Africans, thought that this institution might have been useful to them also; but soon after his death, they who succeeded him bought slaves, and these in unusual numbers, to extend the rice and indigo plantations belonging to the college. The letter then in question was written by Anthony Benezet, in order to lay before the Countess, as a religious woman, the misery she was occasioning in Africa, by allowing the managers of her college in Georgia to give encouragement to the Slave-trade. The Countess replied

replied, that such a measure should never have her countenance, and that she would take care to prevent it.

On discovering that the Abbé Raynal had brought out his celebrated work, in which he manifested a tender feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, he entered into a correspondence with him, hoping to make him yet more useful to their cause.

Finding, also, in the year 1783, that the Slave-trade, which had greatly declined during the American war, was reviving, he addressed a pathetic letter to our Queen, (as I mentioned in the last chapter,) who, on hearing the high character of the writer of it from Benjamin West, received it with marks of peculiar condescension and attention. The following is a copy of it.

"*To* CHARLOTTE *Queen of Great Britain.*

"IMPRESSED with a sense of religious duty, and encouraged by the opinion generally entertained of thy benevolent disposition to succour the distressed, I take the liberty, very respectfully, to offer to thy perusal some tracts, which, I believe, faithfully

fully describe the suffering condition of many hundred thousands of our fellow-creatures of the African race, great numbers of whom, rent from every tender connection in life, are annually taken from their native land, to endure, in the American islands and plantations, a most rigorous and cruel slavery; whereby many, very many of them, are brought to a melancholy and untimely end.

" When it is considered that the inhabitants of Great Britain, who are themselves so eminently blessed in the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, have long been, and yet are, very deeply concerned in this flagrant violation of the common rights of mankind, and that even its national authority is exerted in support of the African Slave-trade, there is much reason to apprehend, that this has been, and, as long as the evil exists, will continue to be, an occasion of drawing down the Divine displeasure on the nation and its dependencies. May these considerations induce thee to interpose thy kind endeavours in behalf of this greatly injured people, whose abject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and assistance

assistance of the generous mind, inasmuch as they are altogether deprived of the means of soliciting effectual relief for themselves; that so thou mayest not only be a blessed instrument in the hand of him 'by whom kings reign and princes decree justice,' to avert the awful judgments by which the empire has already been so remarkably shaken, but that the blessings of thousands ready to perish may come upon thee, at a time when the superior advantages attendant on thy situation in this world will no longer be of any avail to thy consolation and support.

"To the tracts on this subject to which I have thus ventured to crave thy particular attention, I have added some which at different times I have believed it my duty to publish*, and which, I trust, will afford thee some satisfaction, their design being for the furtherance of that universal peace and goodwill amongst men, which the gospel was intended to introduce.

"I hope thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion by an ancient

* These related to the principles of the religious society of the Quakers.

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man, whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common intercourse of the world, and long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries under which so large a part of mankind, equally with us the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression, and who sincerely desires thy temporal and eternal felicity, and that of thy royal consort.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Anthony Benezet, besides the care he bestowed upon forwarding the cause of the oppressed Africans in different parts of the world, found time to promote the comforts, and improve the condition of those in the state in which he lived. Apprehending that much advantage would arise both to them and the public, from instructing them in common learning, he zealously promoted the establishment of a school for that purpose. Much of the two last years of his life he devoted to a personal attendance on this school, being earnestly desirous that they who came to it might be better qualified for the enjoyment of that freedom to which

which great numbers of them had been then restored. To this he sacrificed the superior emoluments of his former school, and his bodily ease also, although the weakness of his constitution seemed to demand indulgence. By his last will he directed, that, after the decease of his widow, his whole little fortune (the savings of the industry of fifty years) should, except a few very small legacies, be applied to the support of it. During his attendance upon it he had the happiness to find, (and his situation enabled him to make the comparison,) that Providence had been equally liberal to the Africans in genius and talents as to other people.

After a few days' illness this excellent man died at Philadelphia in the spring of 1784. The interment of his remains was attended by several thousands of all ranks, professions, and parties, who united in deploring their loss. The mournful procession was closed by some hundreds of those poor Africans, who had been personally benefited by his labours, and whose behaviour on the occasion showed the gratitude and affection they considered to be due to him as their own private

private benefactor, as well as the benefactor of their whole race.

Such, then, were the labours of the Quakers, in America, of individuals, from 1718 to 1784, and of the body at large, from 1696 to 1787, in this great cause of humanity and religion. Nor were the effects produced from these otherwise than corresponding with what might have been expected from such an union of exertion in such a cause; for both the evils, that is, the evil of buying and selling, and the evil of using, slaves, ceased at length with the members of this benevolent Society. The leaving off all concern with the Slave-trade took place first. The abolition of slavery, though it followed, was not so speedily accomplished; for, besides the loss of property, when slaves were manumitted without any pecuniary consideration in return, their owners had to struggle, in making them free, against the laws and customs of the times. In Pennsylvania, where the law in this respect was the most favourable, the parties wishing to give freedom to a slave were obliged to enter into a bond for the payment of thirty pounds currency, in case

the said slave should become chargeable for maintenance. In New Jersey the terms were far less favourable, as the estate of the owner remained liable to the consequences of misconduct in the slave, or even in his posterity. In the southern parts of America manumission was not permitted but on terms amounting nearly to a prohibition. But, notwithstanding these difficulties, the Quakers could not be deterred, as they became convinced of the unlawfulness of holding men in bondage, from doing that which they believed to be right. Many liberated their slaves, whatever the consequences were; and some gave the most splendid example in doing it, not only by consenting, as others did, thus to give up their property, and to incur the penalties of manumission, but by calculating and giving what was due to them, over and above their food and clothing, for wages* from the beginning of their slavery to the day when their liberation commenced. Thus manu-

* One of the brightest instances was that afforded by Warner Mifflin. He gave unconditional liberty to his slaves. He paid all the adults, on their discharge, the sum, which arbitrators, mutually chosen, awarded them.

mission

mission went on, some sacrificing more, and others less; some granting it sooner, and others later; till, in the year 1787*, there was not a slave in the possession of an acknowledged Quaker.

Having given to the reader the history of the third class of forerunners and coadjutors, as it consisted of the Quakers in America, I am now to continue it, as it consisted of an union of these with others on the same continent in the year 1774, in behalf of the African race. To do this I shall begin with the causes which led to the production of this great event.

And in the first place, as example is more powerful than precept, we cannot suppose that the Quakers could have shown these noble instances of religious principle, without supposing also that individuals of other religious denominations would be morally instructed by them. They who lived in the neighbourhood where they took place, must have become acquainted with the motives which led to them. Some of them must at least have praised the action, though

* Previously to the year 1787, several of the states had made the terms of manumission more easy.

they might not themselves have been ripe to follow the example. Nor is it at all improbable that these might be led, in the course of the workings of their own minds, to a comparison between their own conduct and that of the Quakers on this subject, in which they themselves might appear to be less worthy in their own eyes. And as there is sometimes a spirit of rivalship among the individuals of religious sects, where the character of one is sounded forth as higher than that of another; this, if excited by such a circumstance, would probably operate for good. It must have been manifest also to many, after a lapse of time, that there was no danger in what the Quakers had done, and that there was even sound policy in the measure. But whatever were the several causes, certain it is, that the example of the Quakers in leaving off all concern with the Slave-trade, and in liberating their slaves (scattered as they were over various parts of America) contributed to produce in many of a different religious denomination from themselves, a more tender disposition than had been usual towards the African race.

But

But a similar disposition towards these oppressed people was created in others by means of other circumstances or causes. In the early part of the eighteenth century, Judge Sewell of New England came forward as a zealous advocate for them. He addressed a memorial to the legislature, which he called The Selling of Joseph, and in which he pleaded their cause both as a lawyer and a Christian. This memorial produced an effect upon many, but particularly upon those of his own persuasion; and from this time the presbyterians appear to have encouraged a sympathy in their favour.

In the year 1739, the celebrated George Whitfield became an instrument in turning the attention of many others to their hard case, and of begetting in these a fellow sympathy towards them. This laborious minister, having been deeply affected with what he had seen in the course of his religious travels in America, thought it his duty to address a letter from Georgia to the inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina. This letter was printed

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in the year above mentioned, and is in part as follows—

"As I lately passed through your provinces in my way hither, I was sensibly touched with a fellow-feeling for the miseries of the poor Negros. Whether it be lawful for Christians to buy slaves, and thereby encourage the nations from whom they are bought to be at perpetual war with each other, I shall not take upon me to determine. Sure I am it is sinful, when they have bought them, to use them as bad as though they were brutes, nay worse; and whatever particular exceptions there may be (as I would charitably hope there are some) I fear the generality of you, who own Negros, are liable to such a charge; for your slaves, I believe, work as hard, if not harder, than the horses whereon you ride. These, after they have done their work, are fed and taken proper care of; but many Negros, when wearied with labour in your plantations, have been obliged to grind their corn after their return home. Your dogs are caressed and fondled at your table; but your slaves, who are frequently styled dogs

or

or beasts, have not an equal privilege. They are scarce permitted to pick up the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Not to mention what numbers have been given up to the inhuman usage of cruel task-masters, who, by their unrelenting scourges have ploughed their backs, and made long furrows, and at length brought them even unto death. When passing along I have viewed your plantations cleared and cultivated, many spacious houses built, and the owners of them faring sumptuously every day, my blood has frequently almost run cold within me, to consider how many of your slaves had neither convenient food to eat, nor proper raiment to put on, notwithstanding most of the comforts you enjoy were solely owing to their indefatigable labours."

The letter, from which this is an extract, produced a desirable effect upon many of those, who perused it, but particularly upon such as began to be seriously disposed in these times. And as George Whitfield continued a firm friend to the poor Africans, never losing an opportunity of serving them, he interested, in the course of his useful life, many

many thousands of his followers in their favour.

To this account it may be added, that from the year 1762, ministers, who were in the connection of John Wesley, began to be settled in America, and that as these were friends to the oppressed Africans also, so they contributed in their turn* to promote a softness of feeling towards them among those of their own persuasion.

In consequence then of these and other causes, a considerable number of persons of various religious denominations had appeared at different times in America, besides the Quakers, who, though they had not distinguished themselves by resolutions and manumissions, as religious bodies, were yet highly friendly to the African cause.

* It must not be forgotten that the example of the Moravians had its influence, also, in directing men to their duty towards these oppressed people; for though, when they visited this part of the world for their conversion, they never meddled with the political state of things, by recommending it to masters to alter the condition of their slaves, as believing religion could give comfort in the most abject situations in life, yet they uniformly freed those slaves, who came into their own possession.

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This friendly disposition began to manifest itself about the year 1770: for when a few Quakers, as individuals, began at that time to form little associations in the middle provinces of North America, to discourage the introduction of slaves among people in their own neighbourhoods, who were not of their own Society, and to encourage the manumission of those already in bondage, they were joined as colleagues by several persons of this description *, who cooperated with them in the promotion of their design.

This disposition however became more manifest in the year 1772; for the house of burgesses of Virginia presented a petition to the King, beseeching his majesty to remove all those restraints on his governors of that colony, which inhibited their assent to such laws, as might check that inhuman and impolitic commerce, the Slave-trade: and it is remarkable, that the refusal of the British government to permit the Virginians

* It then appeared that individuals among those of the church of England, Roman catholics, presbyterians, methodists, and others, had begun in a few instances to liberate their slaves.

to exclude slaves from among them by law, was enumerated afterwards among the public reasons for separating from the mother country.

But this friendly disposition was greatly increased in the year 1773, by the literary labours of Dr. Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia *, who, I believe, is a member of the presbyterian church. For in this year, at the instigation of Anthony Benezet, he took up the cause of the oppressed Africans in a little work, which he entitled An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements on the Slavery of the Negros; and soon afterwards in another, which was a vindication of the first, in answer to an acrimonious attack by a West Indian planter. These publications contained many new observations. They were written in a polished style; and while they exhibited the erudition and talents, they showed the liberality and benevolence, of the author. Having had a considerable circulation, they spread con-

* Dr. Rush has been better known since for his other literary works; such as his Medical Dissertations, his Treatises on the Discipline of Schools, Criminal Law, &c.

viction

viction among many, and promoted the cause for which they had been so laudably undertaken. Of the great increase of friendly disposition towards the African cause in this very year, we have this remarkable proof;—that when the Quakers, living in East and West Jersey, wished to petition the legislature to obtain an act of assembly for the more equitable manumission of slaves in that province, so many others of different persuasions joined them, that the petition was signed by upwards of three thousand persons.

But in the next year, or in the year 1774*, the increased good-will towards the Africans became so apparent, but more particularly in Pennsylvania, where the Quakers were more numerous than in any other state, that they, who considered themselves more immediately as the friends of these injured people, thought it right to avail themselves of it: and accordingly James Pemberton, one of the most conspicuous of the Quakers

* In this year, Elhanan Winchester, a supporter of the doctrine of universal redemption, turned the attention of many of his hearers to this subject, both by private interference and by preaching expressly upon it.

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in Pennsylvania, and Dr. Rush, one of the most conspicuous of those belonging to the various other religious communities in that province, undertook, in conjunction with others, the important task of bringing those into a society who were friendly to this cause. In this undertaking they succeeded. And hence arose that union of the Quakers with others, to which I have been directing the attention of the reader, and by which the third class of forerunners and coadjutors becomes now complete. This society, which was confined to Pennsylvania, was the first ever formed in America, in which there was an union of persons of different religious denominations in behalf of the African race.

But this society had scarcely begun to act, when the war broke out between England and America, which had the effect of checking its operations. This was considered as a severe blow upon it. But as those things which appear most to our disadvantage, turn out often the most to our benefit, so the war, by giving birth to the independence of America, was ultimately favourable to its progress. For as this contest had produced

during its continuance, so it left, when it was over, a general enthusiasm for liberty. Many talked of little else but of the freedom they had gained. These were naturally led to the consideration of those among them, who were groaning in bondage. They began to feel for their hard case. They began to think that they should not deserve the new blessing which they had acquired, if they denied it to others. Thus the discussions, which originated in this contest, became the occasion of turning the attention of many, who might not otherwise have thought of it, towards the miserable condition of the slaves.

Nor were writers wanting, who, influenced by considerations on the war and the independence resulting from it, made their works subservient to the same benevolent end. A work, entitled, A Serious Address to the Rulers of America on the Inconsistency of their Conduct respecting Slavery, forming a Contrast between the Encroachments of England on American Liberty and American Injustice in tolerating Slavery, which appeared in 1783, was particularly instrumental in producing this effect. This excited

excited a more than usual attention to the case of these oppressed people, and where most of all it could be useful. For the author compared in two opposite columns the animated speeches and resolutions of the members of congress in behalf of their own liberty with their conduct in continuing slavery to others. Hence the legislature began to feel the inconsistency of the practice; and so far had the sense of this inconsistency spread there, that when the delegates met from each state, to consider of a federal union, there was a desire that the abolition of the Slave-trade should be one of the articles in it. This was, however, opposed by the delegates from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Georgia, the five states which had the greatest concern in slaves. But even these offered to agree to the article, provided a condition was annexed to it, (which was afterwards done,) that the power of such abolition should not commence in the legislature till the first of January 1808.

In consequence then of these different circumstances, the society of Pennsylvania, the object of which was "for promoting the

the abolition of slavery and the relief of free Negros unlawfully held in bondage," became so popular, that in the year 1787 it was thought desirable to enlarge it. Accordingly several new members were admitted into it. The celebrated Dr. Franklin, who had long warmly espoused the cause of the injured Africans, was appointed president; James Pemberton and Jonathan Penrose were appointed vice-presidents; Dr. Benjamin Rush and Tench Coxe, secretaries; James Star, treasurer; William Lewis, John D. Coxe, Miers Fisher, and William Rawle, counsellors; Thomas Harrison, Nathan Boys, James Whiteall, James Reed, John Todd, Thomas Armatt, Norris Jones, Samuel Richards, Francis Bayley, Andrew Carson, John Warner, and Jacob Shoemaker, junior, an electing committee; and Thomas Shields, Thomas Parker, John Oldden, William Zane, John Warner, and William Mc Elhenny, an acting committee for carrying on the purposes of the institution.

I shall now only observe further upon this subject, that as a society, consisting of an union of the Quakers, with others of

other religious denominations, was established for Pennsylvania in behalf of the oppressed Africans, so different societies, consisting each of a similar union of persons, were established in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and other states for the same object, and that these afterwards held a correspondence and personal communion with each other for the promotion of it.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

rvations on the three classes already introduced—Coincidence of extraordinary circumstances—Individuals in each of these classes, who seem to have had an education as it were to qualify them for promoting the cause of the abolition—Sharp and Ramsay in the first—Dillwyn in the second—Pemberton and Rush in the third—These, with their respective classes, acted on motives of their own, and independently of each other—and yet, from circumstances neither foreseen nor known by them, they were in the way of being easily united in 1787—*William Dillwyn, the great medium of connection between them all.*

If the reader will refer to his recollection, he will find, that I have given the history of three of the classes of the forerunners and coadjutors in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave-trade up to the time proposed. He will of course expect that I should proceed with the history of the fourth. But, as I foresee that, by making certain observations upon the classes already introduced in the present rather than in any future place, I shall be able to give him

clearer views on the subject, I shall postpone the history of the remaining class to the next chapter.

The account, which I shall now give, will exhibit a concurrence of extraordinary and important circumstances. It will show, first, that in each of the three classes now introduced, there were individuals in the year 1787, who had been educated as it were for the purpose of becoming peculiarly qualified to act together for the promotion of the abolition of the Slave-trade. It will show, secondly, that these, with their respective classes, acted upon their own principles, distinctly and independently of each other. And, lastly, that by means of circumstances, which they themselves had neither foreseen nor contrived, a junction between them was rendered easily practicable, and that it was beginning to take place at the period assigned.

The first class of forerunners and coadjutors consisted principally, as it has appeared, of persons in England of various descriptions. These, I may observe, had no communication with each other as to any plan for the abolition of the Slave-trade.

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There were two individuals, however, among them, who were more conspicuous than the rest, namely, Granville Sharp, the first labourer, and Mr. Ramsay, the first controversial writer, in the cause.

That Granville Sharp received an education as if to become qualified to unite with others, in the year 1787, for this important object, must have appeared from the history of his labours, as detailed in several of the preceding pages. The same may be said of Mr. Ramsay; for it has already appeared that he lived in the island of St. Christopher, where he made his observations, and studied the laws, relative to the treatment of slaves, for nineteen years.

That Granville Sharp acted on grounds distinct from those in any of the other classes is certain. For he knew nothing at this time either of the Quakers in England or of those in America, any more than that they existed by name. Had it not been for the case of Jonathan Strong, he might never have attached himself to the cause. A similar account may be given of Mr. Ramsay; for, if it had not been for what he had seen in the island of St. Christopher, he had never

embarked in it. It was from scenes, which he had witnessed there, that he began to feel on the subject. These feelings he communicated to others on his return to England, and these urged him into action.

With respect to the second class, the reader will recollect that it consisted of the Quakers in England: first, of George Fox; then of the Quakers as a body; then of individuals belonging to that body, who formed themselves into a committee, independently of it, for the promotion of the object in question. This committee, it may be remembered, consisted of six persons, of whom one was William Dillwyn.

That William Dillwyn became fitted for the station, which he was afterwards to take, will be seen shortly. He was born in America, and was a pupil of the venerable Benezet, who took pains very early to interest his feelings on this great subject. Benezet employed him occasionally, I mean in a friendly manner, as his amanuensis, to copy his manuscripts for publication, as well as several of his letters written in behalf of the cause. This gave his scholar an insight into the subject, who, living besides in the land

where

where both the Slave-trade and slavery were established, obtained an additional knowledge of them, so as to be able to refute many of those objections, to which others for want of local observation could never have replied.

In the year 1772 Anthony Benezet introduced William Dillwyn by letter to several of the principal people of Carolina, with whom he had himself before corresponded on the sufferings of the poor Africans, and desired him to have interviews with them on the subject. He charged him also to be very particular in making observations as to what he should see there. This journey was of great use to the latter in fixing him as the friend of these oppressed people, for he saw so much of their cruel treatment in the course of it, that he felt an anxiety ever afterwards, amounting to a duty, to do every thing in his power for their relief.

In the year 1773 William Dillwyn, in conjunction with Richard Smith and Daniel Wells, two of his own Society, wrote a pamphlet in answer to arguments then prevailing, that the manumission of slaves would be injurious. This pamphlet,—which

was

was entitled, Brief Considerations on Slavery, and the Expediency of its Abolition; with some Hints on the Means whereby it may be gradually effected,—proved that in lieu of the usual security required, certain sums paid at the several periods of manumission would amply secure the public, as well as the owners of the slaves, from any future burthens. In the same year also, when the Society, joined by several hundreds of others in New Jersey, presented a petition to the legislature, (as mentioned in the former chapter,) to obtain an act of assembly for the more equitable manumission of slaves in that province, William Dillwyn was one of a deputation, which was heard at the bar of the assembly for that purpose.

In 1774 he came to England, but his attention was still kept alive to the subject. For he was the person, by whom Anthony Benezet sent his letter to the Countess of Huntingdon, as before related. He was also the person, to whom the same venerable defender of the African race sent his letter, before spoken of, to be forwarded to the Queen.

That William Dillwyn and those of his own

own class in England acted upon motives very distinct from those of the former class may be said with truth, for they acted upon the constitutional principles of their own Society, as incorporated into its discipline, which principles would always have incited them to the subversion of slavery, as far as they themselves were concerned, whether any other persons had abolished it or not. To which it may be added, as a further proof of the originality of their motives, that the Quakers have had ever since their institution as a religious body, but little intercourse with the world.

The third class, to which I now come, consisted, as we have seen, first, of the Quakers in America; and secondly, of an union of these with others on the same continent. The principal individuals concerned in this union were James Pemberton and Dr. Rush. The former of these, having taken an active part in several of the yearly meetings of his own Society relative to the oppressed Africans, and having been in habits of intimacy and friendship with John Woolman and Anthony Benezet, with the result of whose labours he was acquainted, may be supposed

posed to have become qualified to take a leading station in the promotion of their cause. Dr. Rush also had shown himself, as has appeared, an able advocate, and had even sustained a controversy in their favour. That the two last mentioned acted also on motives of their own, or independently of those belonging to the other two classes, when they formed their association in Pennsylvania, will be obvious from these circumstances; first, that most of those of the first class, who contributed to throw the greatest light and odium upon the Slave-trade, had not then made their public appearance in the world. And, with respect to the second class, the little committee belonging to it had neither been formed nor thought of.

And as the individuals in each of the three classes, who have now been mentioned, had an education as it were to qualify them for acting together in this great cause, and had moved independently of each other, so it will appear that, by means of circumstances which they themselves had neither foreseen nor contrived, a junction between them was rendered easily practicable, and

that

that it was beginning to take place at the period assigned.

To show this, I must first remind the reader that Anthony Benezet, as soon as he heard of the result of the case of Somerset, opened a correspondence with Granville Sharp, which was kept up to the encouragement of both. In the year 1774, when he learned that William Dillwyn was going to England, he gave him letters to that gentleman. Thus one of the most conspicuous of the second class was introduced, accidentally as it were, to one of the most conspicuous of the first. In the year 1775 William Dillwyn went back to America, but, on his return to England to settle, he renewed his visits to Granville Sharp. Thus the connection was continued. To these observations I may now add; that Samuel Hoare, of the same class as William Dillwyn, had, in consequence of the Bishop of Chester's sermon, begun a correspondence in 1784, as before mentioned, with Mr. Ramsay, who was of the same class as Mr. Sharp. Thus four individuals of the two first classes were in the way of an union with one another.

But circumstances equally natural contributed

buted to render an union between the members of the second and the third classes easily practicable also. For what was more natural than that William Dillwyn, who was born and who had resided long in America, should have connections there? He had long cultivated a friendship (not then knowing to what it would lead) with James Pemberton. His intimacy with him was like that of a family connection. They corresponded together. They corresponded also as kindred hearts, relative to the Slave-trade. Thus two members of the second and third classes had opened an intercourse on the subject, and thus was William Dillwyn the great medium, through whom the members of the two classes now mentioned, as well as the members of all the three might be easily united also, if a fit occasion should offer.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VII.

Fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787—Dr. Peckard, vice-chancellor of the University of Cambridge, the first of these—gives out the Slave-trade as the subject for one of the annual prizes—Author writes and obtains the first of these—reads his Dissertation in the Senate-house in the summer of 1785—his feelings on the subject during his return home—is desirous of aiding the cause of the Africans, but sees great difficulties—determines to publish his prize-essay for this purpose—is accidentally thrown into the way of James Phillips, who introduces him to W. Dillwyn, the connecting medium of the three classes before mentioned—and to G. Sharp, and Mr. Ramsay—and to R. Phillips.

I PROCEED now to the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to the year 1787 in the great cause of the abolition of the Slave-trade.

The first of these was Dr. Peckard. This gentleman had distinguished himself in the earlier part of his life by certain publications on the intermediate state of the soul, and by

by others in favour of civil and religious liberty. To the latter cause he was a warm friend, seldom omitting any opportunity of declaring his sentiments in its favour. In the course of his preferment he was appointed by Sir John Griffin, afterwards Lord Howard, of Walden, to the mastership of Magdalen College in the University of Cambridge. In this high office he considered it to be his duty to support those doctrines which he had espoused when in an inferior station; and accordingly, when in the year 1784 it devolved upon him to preach a sermon before the University of Cambridge, he chose his favourite subject, in the handling of which he took an opportunity of speaking of the Slave-trade in the following nervous manner:—

"Now, whether we consider the crime, with respect to the individuals concerned in this most barbarous and cruel traffic, or whether we consider it as patronized and encouraged by the laws of the land, it presents to our view an equal degree of enormity. A crime, founded on a dreadful preeminence in wickedness—A crime, which being both of individuals and the nation, must

must sometime draw down upon us the heaviest judgment of Almighty God, who made of one blood all the sons of men, and who gave to all equally a natural right to liberty; and who, ruling all the kingdoms of the earth with equal providential justice, cannot suffer such deliberate, such monstrous iniquity, to pass long unpunished."

But Dr. Peckard did not consider this delivery of his testimony, though it was given before a learned and religious body, as a sufficient discharge of his duty, while any opportunity remained of renewing it with effect, And, as such an one offered in the year 1785, when he was vice-chancellor of the University, he embraced it. In consequence of his office, it devolved upon him to give out two subjects for Latin dissertations, one to the middle bachelors, and the other to the senior bachelors of arts. They who produced the best were to obtain the prizes. To the latter, he proposed the following: "Anne liceat Invitos in Servitutem dare?" or, "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?"

This circumstance of giving out the subjects for the prizes, though only an ordinary measure,

measure, became the occasion of my own labours, or of the real honour which I feel in being able to consider myself as the next coadjutor of this class in the cause of the injured Africans. For it happened in this year that, being of the order of senior bachelors, I became qualified to write. I had gained a prize for the best Latin dissertation in the former year, and, therefore, it was expected that I should obtain one in the present, or I should be considered as having lost my reputation both in the eyes of the University and of my own College. It had happened also, that I had been honoured with the first of the prizes* in that year, and therefore it was expected again, that I should obtain the first on this occasion. The acquisition of the second, however honourable, would have been considered as a falling off, or as a loss of former fame. I felt myself, therefore, particularly called upon to maintain my post. And, with feelings of this kind, I began to prepare myself for the question.

In studying the thesis, I conceived it to

* There are two prizes on each subject, one for the best and the other for the second-best essays.

point directly to the African Slave-trade, and more particularly as I knew that Dr. Peckard, in the sermon which I have mentioned, had pronounced so warmly against it. At any rate, I determined to give it this construction. But, alas! I was wholly ignorant of this subject; and, what was unfortunate, a few weeks only were allowed for the composition. I was determined, however, to make the best use of my time. I got access to the manuscript papers of a deceased friend, who had been in the trade. I was acquainted also with several officers who had been in the West Indies, and from these I gained something. But I still felt myself at a loss for materials, and I did not know where to get them; when going by accident into a friend's house, I took up a newspaper then lying on his table. One of the articles, which attracted my notice, was an advertisement of Anthony Benezet's Historical Account of Guinea. I soon left my friend and his paper, and, to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all I wanted. I obtained, by means of it, a knowledge of, and gained access to, the great authorities of Adanson, Moore,

Moore, Barbot, Smith, Bosman and others. It was of great consequence to know what these persons had said upon this subject. For, having been themselves either long resident in Africa, or very frequently there, their knowledge of it could not be questioned. Having been concerned also in the trade, it was not likely that they would criminate themselves more than they could avoid. Writing too at a time, when the abolition was not even thought of, they could not have been biassed with any view to that event. And, lastly, having been dead many years, they could not have been influenced, as living evidences may be supposed to have been, either to conceal or to exaggerate, as their own interest might lead them, either by being concerned in the continuance of the trade, or by supporting the opinions of those of their patrons in power, who were on the different sides of this question.

Furnished then in this manner, I began my work. But no person can tell the severe trial, which the writing of it proved to me. I had expected pleasure from the invention of the arguments, from the arrangement of them, from the putting of them together,

and from the thought in the interim that I was engaged in an innocent contest for literary honour. But all my pleasure was damped by the facts which were now continually before me. It was but one gloomy subject from morning to night. In the day-time I was uneasy. In the night I had little rest. I sometimes never closed my eye-lids for grief. It became now not so much a trial for academical reputation, as for the production of a work, which might be useful to injured Africa. And keeping this idea in my mind ever after the perusal of Benezet, I always slept with a candle in my room, that I might rise out of bed and put down such thoughts as might occur to me in the night, if I judged them valuable, conceiving that no arguments of any moment should be lost in so great a cause. Having at length finished this painful task I sent my Essay to the vice-chancellor, and soon afterwards found myself honoured as before with the first prize.

As it is usual to read these essays publicly in the senate-house soon after the prize is adjudged, I was called to Cambridge for this purpose. I went and performed my

office. On returning however to London, the subject of it almost wholly engrossed my thoughts. I became at times very seriously affected while upon the road. I stopped my horse occasionally, and dismounted and walked. I frequently tried to persuade myself in these intervals that the contents of my Essay could not be true. The more however I reflected upon them, or rather upon the authorities on which they were founded, the more I gave them credit. Coming in sight of Wades Mill in Hertfordshire, I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the roadside and held my horse. Here a thought came into my mind, that if the contents of the Essay were true, it was time some person should see these calamities to their end. Agitated in this manner I reached home. This was in the summer of 1785.

In the course of the autumn of the same year I experienced similar impressions. I walked frequently into the woods, that I might think on the subject in solitude, and find relief to my mind there. But there the question still recurred, "Are these things true?"—Still the answer followed as instantaneously "They are."—Still the result accompanied

accompanied it, "Then surely some person should interfere." I then began to envy those who had seats in parliament, and who had great riches, and widely extended connections, which would enable them to take up this cause. Finding scarcely any one at that time who thought of it, I was turned frequently to myself. But here many difficulties arose. It struck me, among others, that a young man of only twenty-four years of age could not have that solid judgment, or knowledge of men, manners, and things, which were requisite to qualify him to undertake a task of such magnitude and importance;—and with whom was I to unite? I believed also, that it looked so much like one of the feigned labours of Hercules, that my undersanding would be suspected if I proposed it. On ruminating however on the subject, I found one thing at least practicable, and that this also was in my power. I could translate my Latin dissertation. I could enlarge it usefully. I could see how the public received it, or how far they were likely to favour any serious measures, which should have a tendency to produce the abolition of the Slave-trade. Upon this then I

determined; and in the middle of the month of November 1785, I began my work.

By the middle of January, I had finished half of it, though I had made considerable additions. I now thought of engaging with some bookseller to print it when finished. For this purpose I called upon Mr. Cadell, in the Strand, and consulted him about it. He said that as the original Essay had been honoured by the University of Cambridge with the first prize, this circumstance would ensure it a respectable circulation among persons of taste. I own I was not much pleased with his opinion. I wished the Essay to find its way among useful people, and among such as would think and act with me. Accordingly I left Mr. Cadell, after having thanked him for his civility, and determined, as I thought I had time sufficient before dinner, to call upon a friend in the city. In going past the Royal Exchange, Mr. Joseph Hancock, one of the religious society of the Quakers, and with whose family my own had been long united in friendship, suddenly met me. He first accosted me by saying that I was the person, whom he was wishing to see. He then asked

asked me why I had not published my Prize Essay. I asked him in return what had made him think of that subject in particular. He replied, that his own Society had long taken it up as a religious body, and individuals among them were wishing to find me out. I asked him who. He answered, James Phillips, a bookseller, in George-yard, Lombard-street, and William Dillwyn, of Walthamstow, and others. Having but little time to spare, I desired him to introduce me to one of them. In a few minutes he took me to James Phillips, who was then the only one of them in town; by whose conversation I was so much interested and encouraged, that without any further hesitation I offered him the publication of my work. This accidental introduction of me to James Phillips was, I found afterwards, a most happy circumstance for the promotion of the cause, which I had then so deeply at heart, as it led me to the knowledge of several of those, who became afterwards material coadjutors in it. It was also of great importance to me with respect to the work itself. For he possessed an acute penetration, a solid judgment, and a literary

literary knowledge, which he proved by the many alterations and additions he proposed, and which I believe I uniformly adopted, after mature consideration, from a sense of their real value. It was advantageous to me also, inasmuch as it led me to his friendship, which was never interrupted but by his death.

On my second visit to James Phillips, at which time I brought him about half my manuscript for the press, I desired him to introduce me to William Dillwyn, as he also had mentioned him to me on my first visit, and as I had not seen Mr. Hancock since. Matters were accordingly arranged, and a day appointed before I left him. On this day I had my first interview with my new friend. Two or three others of his own religious society were present, but who they were I do not now recollect. There seemed to be a great desire among them to know the motive by which I had been actuated in contending for the prize. I told them frankly, that I had no motive but that which other young men in the University had on such occasions; namely, the wish of being distinguished, or of obtaining literary honour;

honour; but that I had felt so deeply on the subject of it, that I had lately interested myself in it from a motive of duty. My conduct seemed to be highly approved by those present, and much conversation ensued, but it was of a general nature.

As William Dillwyn wished very much to see me at his house at Walthamstow, I appointed the thirteenth of March to spend the day with him there. We talked for the most part, during my stay, on the subject of my Essay. I soon discovered the treasure I had met with in his local knowledge, both of the Slave-trade and of slavery, as they existed in the United States, and I gained from him several facts, which with his permission I afterwards inserted in my work. But how surprised was I to hear in the course of our conversation of the labours of Granville Sharp, of the writings of Ramsay, and of the controversy in which the latter was engaged, of all which I had hitherto known nothing! How surprised was I to learn, that William Dillwyn himself, had two years before associated himself with five others for the purpose of enlightening the public mind upon this great sub-

ject! How astonished was I to find that a society had been formed in America for the same object, with some of the principal members of which he was intimately acquainted! And how still more astonished at the inference which instantly rushed upon my mind, that he was capable of being made the great medium of connection between them all. These thoughts almost overpowered me. I believe that after this I talked but little more to my friend. My mind was overwhelmed with the thought that I had been providentially directed to his house; that the finger of Providence was beginning to be discernible; that the day-star of African liberty was rising, and that probably I might be permitted to become a humble instrument in promoting it.

In the course of attending to my work, as now in the press, James Phillips introduced me also to Granville Sharp, with whom I had afterwards many interesting interviews from time to time, and whom. I discovered to be a distant relation by my father's side.

He introduced me also by letter to a correspondence with Mr. Ramsay, who in a short

short time afterwards came to London to see me.

He introduced me also to his cousin, Richard Phillips of Lincoln's Inn, who was at that time on the point of joining the religious society of the Quakers. In him I found much sympathy, and a willingness to cooperate with me. When dull and disconsolate, he encouraged me. When in spirits, he stimulated me further. Him I am now to mention as a new, but soon afterwards as an active and indefatigable coadjutor in the cause. But I shall say more concerning him in a future chapter. I shall only now add, that my work was at length printed; that it was entitled, An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the human Species, particularly the African, translated from a Latin Dissertation, which was honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785; with Additions;—and that it was ushered into the world in the month of June 1786, or in about a year after it had been read in the Senate-house in its first form.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787—*Bennet Langton—Dr. Baker—Lord and Lady Scarsdale—Author visits Ramsay at Teston—Lady Middleton and Sir Charles (now Lord Barham)—Author declares himself at the house of the latter ready now to devote himself to the cause—reconsiders this declaration or pledge—his reasoning and struggle upon it—persists in it—returns to London—and pursues the work as now a business of his life.*

I HAD purposed, as I said before, when I determined to publish my Essay, to wait to see how the world would receive it, or what disposition there would be in the public to favour my measures for the abolition of the Slave-trade. But the conversation, which I had held on the thirteenth of March with William Dillwyn, continued to make such an impression upon me, that I thought now there could be no occasion for waiting for such a purpose. It seemed now only necessary

cessary to go forward. Others I found had already begun the work. I had been thrown suddenly among these, as into a new world of friends. I believed also that a way was opening under Providence for support. And I now thought that nothing remained for me but to procure as many coadjutors as I could.

I had long had the honour of the friendship of Mr. Bennet Langton, and I determined to carry him one of my books, and to interest his feelings in it, with a view of procuring his assistance in the cause. Mr. Langton was a gentleman of an ancient family, and respectable fortune in Lincolnshire, but resided then in Queen's-square, Westminster. He was known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, Jonas Hanway, Edmund Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds,' and others. Among his acquaintance indeed were most of the literary, and eminent professional, and public-spirited men of the times. At court also he was well known, and had the esteem of his present Majesty, with whom he frequently conversed. His friends were numerous also in both houses of the legislature. As to himself, he was much noted for his learning,

learning, but most of all for the great example he gave with respect to the usefulness and integrity of his life.

By introducing my work to the sanction of a friend of such high character and extensive connections, I thought I should be doing great things. And so the event proved. For when I went to him after he had read it, I found that it had made a deep impression upon his mind. As a friend to humanity he lamented over the miseries of the oppressed Africans, and over the crimes of their tyrants as a friend to morality and religion. He cautioned me, however, against being too sanguine in my expectations, as so many thousands were interested in continuing the trade. Justice, however, which he said weighed with him beyond all private or political interest, demanded a public inquiry, and he would assist me to the utmost of his power in my attempts towards it. From this time he became a zealous and active coadjutor in the cause, and continued so to the end of his valuable life.

The next person, to whom I gave my work with a like view, was Dr. Baker, a clergyman

clergyman of the Establishment, and with whom I had been in habits of intimacy for some time. Dr. Baker was a learned and pious man. He had performed the duties of his profession from the time of his initiation into the church in an exemplary manner, not only by paying a proper attention to the customary services, but by the frequent visitation of the sick and the instruction of the poor. This he had done too to admiration in a particularly extensive parish. At the time I knew him he had May-fair chapel, of which an unusual portion of the congregation consisted then of persons of rank and fortune. With most of these he had a personal acquaintance. This was of great importance to me in the promotion of my views. Having left him my book for a month, I called upon him. The result was that which I expected from so good a man. He did not wait for me to ask him for his cooperation, but he offered his services in any way which I might think most eligible, feeling it his duty, as he expressed it, to become an instrument in exposing such a complication of guilt and misery to the world. Dr. Baker became from this time

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an active coadjutor also, and continued so to his death.

The person, to whom I sent my work next, was the late lord Scarsdale, whose family I had known for about two years. Both he and his lady read it with attention. They informed me, after the perusal of it, that both of them were desirous of assisting me in promoting the cause of the poor Africans. Lady Scarsdale lamented that she might possibly offend near and dear connections, who had interests in the West Indies, by so doing; but that conscious of no intention to offend these, and considering the duties of religion to be the first to be attended to, she should be pleased to become useful in so good a cause. Lord Scarsdale also assured me, that, if the subject should ever come before the house of lords, it should have his constant support.

While attempting to make friends in this manner, I received a letter from Mr. Ramsay, with an invitation to spend a month at his house at Teston, near Maidstone in Kent. This I accepted, that I might communicate to him the progress I had made, that I might gain more knowledge from him on the subject,

ject, and that I might acquire new strength and encourgement to proceed. On hearing my account of my proceedings, which I detailed to him on the first evening of our meeting, he seemed almost overpowered with joy. He said he had been long of opinion, that the release of the Africans from the scourges of this cruel trade, was within the determined views of Providence, and that by turning the public attention to their misery, we should be the instruments of beginning the good work. He then informed me how long he himself had had their cause at heart; that, communicating his feelings to sir Charles Middleton (now lord Barham) and his lady, the latter had urged him to undertake a work in their behalf; that her importunities were great respecting it; and that he had on this account, and in obedience also to his own feelings, as has been before mentioned, begun it; but that, foreseeing the censure and abuse, which such a subject, treated in any possible manner, must bring upon the author, he had laid it aside for some time. He had, however, resumed it at the solicitation of Dr. Porteus, then bishop of Chester, after which,

which, in the year 1784, it made its appearance in the world.

I was delighted with this account on the first evening of my arrival; but more particularly as I collected from it, that I might expect in the bishop of Chester and sir Charles Middleton, two new friends to the cause. This expectation was afterwards fully realized, as the reader will see in its proper place. But I was still more delighted, when I was informed that sir Charles and lady Middleton, with Mrs Bouverie, lived at Teston-hall, in a park, which was but a few yards from the house in which I then was. In the morning I desired an introduction to them, which accordingly took place, and I found myself much encouraged and supported by this visit.

It is not necessary, nor indeed is there room, to detail my employments in this village, or the lonely walks I took there, or the meditations of my mind at such seasons. I will therefore come at once to a particular occurrence. When at dinner one day with the family at Teston-hall, I was much pleased with the turn which the conversation had taken on the subject, and in the joy

joy of my heart, I exclaimed that, "I was ready to devote myself to the cause." This brought great commendation from those present; and Sir Charles Middleton added, that if I wanted any information in the course of my future inquiries relative to Africa, which he could procure me as comptroller of the navy, such as extracts from the journals of the ships of war to that continent, or from other papers, I should have free access to his office. This offer I received with thankfulness, and it operated as a new encouragement to me to proceed.

The next morning, when I awoke, one of the first things that struck me was, that I had given a pledge to the company the day before, that I would devote myself to the cause of the oppressed Africans. I became a little uneasy at this. I questioned whether I had considered matters sufficiently to be able to go so far with propriety. I determined therefore to give the subject a full consideration, and accordingly I walked to the place of my usual meditations, the woods.

Having now reached a place of solitude, I began to balance every thing on both sides

of the question. I considered first, that I had not yet obtained information sufficient on the subject, to qualify me for the undertaking of such a work. But I reflected, on the other hand, that Sir Charles Middleton had just opened to me a new source of knowledge; that I should be backed by the local information of Dillwyn and Ramsay, and that surely, by taking pains, I could acquire more.

I then considered, that I had not yet a sufficient number of friends to support me. This occasioned me to review them. I had now Sir Charles Middleton, who was in the House of Commons. I was sure of Dr. Porteus, who was in the House of Lords. I could count upon Lord Scarsdale, who was a peer also. I had secured Mr. Langton, who had a most extensive acquaintance with members of both houses of the legislature. I had also secured Dr. Baker, who had similar connections. I could depend upon Granville Sharp, James Phillips, Richard Phillips, Ramsay, Dillwyn, and the little committee to which he belonged, as well as the whole society of the Quakers. I thought therefore upon the whole, that, considering

the short time I had been at work, I was well off with respect to support. I believed also that there were still several of my own acquaintance, whom I could interest in the question, and I did not doubt that, by exerting myself diligently, persons, who were then strangers to me, would be raised up in time.

I considered next, that it was impossible for a great cause like this to be forwarded without large pecuniary funds. I questioned whether some thousand pounds would not be necessary, and from whence was such a sum to come? In answer to this, I persuaded myself that generous people would be found, who would unite with me in contributing their mite towards the undertaking, and I seemed confident that, as the Quakers had taken up the cause as a religious body, they would not be behind-hand in supporting it.

I considered lastly, that, if I took up the question, I must devote myself wholly to it. I was sensible that a little labour now and then would be inadequate to the purpose, or that, where the interests of so many thousand persons were likely to be

affected, constant exertion would be necessary. I felt certain that, if ever the matter were to be taken up, there could be no hope of success, except it should be taken up by some one, who would make it an object or business of his life. I thought too that a man's life might not be more than adequate to the accomplishment of the end. But I knew of no one who could devote such a portion of time to it. Sir Charles Middleton, though he was so warm and zealous, was greatly occupied in the discharge of his office. Mr. Langton spent a great portion of his time in the education of his children. Dr. Baker had a great deal to do in the performance of his parochial duty. The Quakers were almost all of them in trade. I could look therefore to no person but myself; and the question was, whether I was prepared to make the sacrifice. In favour of the undertaking I urged to myself, that never was any cause, which had been taken up by man in any country or in any age, so great and important; that never was there one in which so much misery was heard to cry for redress; that never was there one, in which so much good could be done;

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never one, in which the duty of Christian charity could be so extensively exercised; never one, more worthy of the devotion of a whole life towards it; and that, if a man thought properly, he ought to rejoice to have been called into existence, if he were only permitted to become an instrument in forwarding it in any part of its progress. Against these sentiments on the other hand I had to urge, that I had been designed for the church; that I had already advanced as far as deacon's orders in it; that my prospects there on account of my connections were then brilliant: that, by appearing to desert my profession, my family would be dissatisfied, if not unhappy. These thoughts pressed upon me, and rendered the conflict difficult. But the sacrifice of my prospects staggered me, I own, the most. When the other objections, which I have related, occurred to me, my enthusiasm instantly, like a flash of lightning, consumed them: but this stuck to me, and troubled me. I had ambition. I had a thirst after worldly interest and honours, and I could not extinguish it at once. I was more than two hours in solitude under this painful conflict. At

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length I yielded, not because I saw any reasonable prospect of success in my new undertaking (for all cool-headed and cool-hearted men would have pronounced against it), but in obedience, I believe, to a higher Power. And this I can say, that both on the moment of this resolution, and for some time afterwards I had more sublime and happy feelings than at any former period of my life.

Having now made up my mind on the subject, I informed Mr. Ramsay, that in a few days I should be leaving Teston, that I might begin my labours, according to the pledge I had given him.

CHAPTER IX.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787—Author resolves upon the distribution of his Book—Mr. Sheldon—Sir Herbert Mackworth—Lord Newhaven—Lord Balgonie (now Leven)—Lord Hawke—Bishop Porteus—Author visits African vessels in the Thames—and various persons for further information—Visits also Members of Parliament—Sir Richard Hill—Mr. Powys (late Lord Lilford) Mr. Wilberforce and others—Conduct of the latter on this occasion.

On my return to London, I called upon William Dillwyn, to inform him of the resolution I had made at Teston, and found him at his town lodgings in the Poultry. I informed him also, that I had a letter of introduction in my pocket from Sir Charles Middleton to Samuel Hoare, with whom I was to converse on the subject. The latter gentleman had interested himself the year before as one of the committee for the Black poor in London, whom Mr. Sharp was sending under the auspices of government to Sierra

Sierra Leone. He was also, as the reader may see by looking back, a member of the second class of coadjutors, or of the little committee which had branched out of the Quakers in England as before described. William Dillwyn said he would go with me and introduce me himself. On our arrival in Lombard-street, I saw my new friend, with whom we conversed for some time. From thence I proceeded, accompanied by both, to the house of James Phillips in George-yard, to whom I was desirous of communicating my resolution also. We found him at home, conversing with a friend of the same religious society, whose name was Joseph Gurney Bevan. I then repeated my resolution before them all. We had much friendly and satisfactory conversation together. I received much encouragement on every side, and I fixed to meet them again at the place where we then were in three days.

On the evening of the same day I waited upon Granville Sharp to make the same communication to him. He received it with great pleasure, and he hoped I should have strength to proceed. From thence I went to the

the Baptist-head coffee-house, in Chancery-lane, and having engaged with the master of the house, that I should always have one private room to myself when I wanted it, I took up my abode there, in order to be near my friend Richard Phillips of Lincoln's Inn, from whose advice and assistance I had formed considerable expectations.

The first matter for our deliberation, after we had thus become neighbours, was, what plan I ought to pursue to give effect to the resolution I had taken.

After having discussed the matter two or three times at his chambers, it seemed to be our opinion, That, as members of the legislature could do more to the purpose in this question than any other persons, it would be proper to circulate all the remaining copies of my work among these, in order that they might thus obtain information upon the subject. Secondly, That it would be proper that I should wait personally upon several of these also. And thirdly, That I should be endeavouring in the interim to enlarge my own knowledge, that I might thus be enabled to answer the various objections, which might be advanced on the other

other side of the question, as well as become qualified to be a manager of the cause.

On the third day, or at the time appointed, I went with Richard Phillips to George-yard, Lombard-street, where I met all my friends as before. I communicated to them the opinion we had formed at Lincoln's Inn, relative to my future proceedings in the three different branches as now detailed. They approved the plan. On desiring a number of my books to be sent to me at my new lodgings for the purpose of distribution, Joseph Gurney Bevan, who was stated to have been present at the former interview, seemed uneasy, and at length asked me if I was going to distribute these at my own expense. I replied, I was. He appealed immediately to those present whether it ought to be allowed. He asked whether, when a young man was giving up his time from morning till night, they, who applauded his pursuit and seemed desirous of cooperating with him, should allow him to make such a sacrifice, or whether they should not at least secure him from loss; and he proposed directly that the remaining part of the edition should be taken off by subscription,

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and, in order that my feelings might not be hurt from any supposed stain arising from the thought of gaining any thing by such a proposal, they should be paid for only at the prime cost. I felt myself much obliged to him for this tender consideration about me, and particularly for the latter part of it, under which alone I accepted the offer. Samuel Hoare was charged with the management of the subscription, and the books were to be distributed as I had proposed, and in any way which I myself might prescribe.

This matter having been determined upon, my first care was that the books should be put into proper hands. Accordingly I went round among my friends from day to day, wishing to secure this before I attended to any of the other objects. In this I was much assisted by my friend Richard Phillips. Mr. Langton began the distribution of them. He made a point either of writing to or of calling upon those, to whom he sent them. Dr. Baker took the charge of several for the same purpose. Lord and Lady Scarsdale of others. Sir Charles and Lady Middleton of others. Mr. Sheldon, at the request

request of Richard Phillips, introduced me by letter to several members of parliament, to whom I wished to deliver them myself. Sir Herbert Mackworth, when spoken to by the latter, offered his services also. He seemed to be particularly interested in the cause. He went about to many of his friends n the House of Commons, and this from lay to day, to procure their favour towards it. Lord Newhaven was applied to, and distributed some. Lord Balgonie (now Leven) took a similar charge. The late Lord Hawke, who told me that he had long felt for the sufferings of the injured Africans, desired to be permitted to take his share of the distribution among members of the House of Lords, and Dr. Porteus, now bishop of London, became another coadjutor in the same work.

This distribution of my books having been consigned to proper hands, I began to qualify myself, by obtaining further knowledge, for the management of this great cause. As I had obtained the principal part of it from reading, I thought I ought now to see what could be seen, and to know from living persons what could be known,

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on the subject. With respect to the first of these points, the river Thames presented itself as at hand. Ships were going occasionally from the port of London to Africa, and why could I not get on board them and examine for myself? After diligent inquiry, I heard of one which had just arrived. I found her to be a little wood-vessel, called the Lively, captain Williamson, or one which traded to Africa in the natural productions of the country, such as ivory, bees-wax, Malaguetta pepper, palm-oil, and dye-woods. I obtained specimens of some of these, so that I now became possessed of some of those things of which I had only read before. On conversing with the mate, he showed me one or two pieces of the cloth made by the natives, and from their own cotton. I prevailed upon him to sell me a piece of each. Here new feelings arose, and particularly when I considered that persons of so much apparent ingenuity, and capable of such beautiful work as the Africans, should be made slaves, and reduced to a level with the brute creation. My reflections here on the better use which might be made of Africa by the substitution of another

another trade, and on the better use which might be made of her inhabitants, served greatly to animate, and to sustain me amidst the labour of my pursuits.

The next vessel I boarded was the Fly, captain Colley:—Here I found myself for the first time on the deck of a slave-vessel.—The sight of the rooms below and of the gratings above, and of the barricado across the deck, and the explanation of the uses of all these, filled me both with melancholy and horror. I found soon afterwards a fire of indignation kindling within me. I had now scarce patience to talk with those on board. I had not the coolness this first time to go leisurely over the places that were open to me.—I got away quickly.—But that which I thought I saw horrible in this vessel had the same effect upon me as that which I thought I had seen agreeable in the other, namely, to animate and to invigorate me in my pursuit.

But I will not trouble the reader with any further account of my water-expeditions, while attempting to perfect my knowledge on this subject. I was equally assiduous in obtaining intelligence wherever it could be had;

had; and being now always on the watch, I was frequently falling in with individuals, from whom I gained something. My object was to see all who been in Africa, but more particularly those who had never been interested, or who at any rate were not then interested, in the trade. I gained accordingly access very early to General Rooke; to Lieutenant Dalrymple, of the army; to Captain Fiddes, of the engineers; to the reverend Mr. Newton; to Mr. Nisbett, a surgeon in the Minories; to Mr. Devaynes, who was then in parliament, and to many others; and I made it a rule to put down in writing, after every conversation, what had taken place in the course of it. By these means things began to unfold themselves to me more and more, and I found my stock of knowledge almost daily on the increase.

While, however, I was forwarding this, I was not inattentive to the other objects of my pursuit, which was that of waiting upon members personally. The first I called upon was Sir Richard Hill.—At the first interview he espoused the cause. I waited then upon others, and they professed themselves friendly; but they seemed to make this profession

fession more from the emotion of good hearts, revolting at the bare mention of the Slave-trade, than from any knowledge concerning it. One, however, whom I visited, Mr. Powys (the late Lord Lilford), with whom I had been before acquainted in Northamptonshire, seemed to doubt some of the facts in my book, from a belief that human nature was not capable of proceeding to such a pitch of wickedness. I asked him to name his facts. He selected the case of the hundred-and-thirty-two slaves who were thrown alive into the sea to defraud the underwriters. I promised to satisfy him fully upon this point, and went immediately to Granville Sharp, who lent me his account of the trial, as reported at large from the notes of the short-hand writer, whom he had employed on the occasion. Mr. Powys read the account.—He became, in consequence of it, convinced, as, indeed, he could not otherwise be, of the truth of what I had asserted, and he declared at the same time that, if this were true, there was nothing so horrible related of this trade, which might not immediately be believed. Mr. Powys had been always friendly to this question,

tion, but now he took a part in the distribution of my books.

Among those, whom I visited, was Mr. Wilberforce. On my first interview with him, he stated frankly, that the subject had often employed his thoughts, and that it was near his heart. He seemed earnest about it, and also very desirous of taking the trouble of inquiring further into it. Having read my book, which I had delivered to him in person, he sent for me. He expressed a wish that I would make him acquainted with some of my authorities for the assertions in it, which I did afterwards to his satisfaction. He asked me if I could support it by any other evidence. I told him I could.—I mentioned Mr. Newton, Mr. Nisbett, and several others to him. He took the trouble of sending for all these. He made memorandums of their conversation, and, sending for me afterwards, showed them to me. On learning my intention to devote myself to the cause, he paid me many handsome compliments. He then desired me to call upon him often, and to acquaint him with my progress from time to time. He expressed also his willingness to afford me any assist-

ance in his power in the prosecution of my pursuits.

The carrying on of these different objects, together with the writing which was connected with them, proved very laborious, and occupied almost all my time. I was seldom engaged less than sixteen hours in the day. When I left Teston to begin the pursuit as an object of my life, I promised my friend Mr. Ramsay a weekly account of my progress. At the end of the first week my letter to him contained little more than a sheet of paper. At the end of the second it contained three; at the end of the third six; and at the end of the fourth I found it would be so voluminous, that I was obliged to decline writing it.

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CHAPTER X.

Continuation of the fourth class of forerunners and coadjutors up to 1787—*Author goes on to enlarge his knowledge in the different departments of the subject—communicates more frequently with Mr. Wilberforce—Meetings now appointed at the house of the latter—Dinner at Mr. Langton's—Mr. Wilberforce pledges himself there to take up the subject in parliament—Remarkable junction, in consequence, of all the four classes of forerunners and coadjutors before mentioned—Committee formed out of these on the* 22*d of May,* 1787, *for the abolition of the Slave-trade.*

THE manner in which Mr. Wilberforce had received me, and the pains which he had taken, and was still taking, to satisfy himself of the truth of those enormities which had been charged upon the Slave-trade, tended much to enlarge my hope, that they might become at length the subject of a parliamentary inquiry. Richard Phillips also, to whom I made a report at his chambers almost every evening of the proceedings of the day, had begun to entertain a similar expectation. Of course, we unfolded our thoughts to one

another. From hence a desire naturally sprung up in each of us to inquire, whether any alteration in consequence of this new prospect should be made in my pursuits. On deliberating upon this point, it seemed proper to both of us, that the distribution of the books should be continued; that I should still proceed in enlarging my own knowledge; and that I should still wait upon members of the legislature, but with this difference, that I should never lose sight of Mr. Wilberforce, but, on the other hand, that I should rather omit visiting some others, than paying a proper attention to him.

One thing however appeared now to be necessary, which had not yet been done. This was to inform our friends in the city, upon whom I had all along occasionally called, that we believed the time was approaching, when it would be desirable that we should unite our labours, if they saw no objection to such a measure; for, if the Slave-trade were to become a subject of parliamentary inquiry with a view to the annihilation of it, no individual could perform the work which would be necessary for such a pur-

a purpose. This work must be a work of many; and who so proper to assist in it as they, who had before so honourably laboured in it? In the case of such an event large funds also would be wanted, and who so proper to procure and manage them as these? A meeting was accordingly called at the house of James Phillips, when these our views were laid open. When I stated that from the very time of my hopes beginning to rise I had always had those present in my eye as one day to be fellow-labourers, William Dillwyn replied, that from the time they had first heard of the Prize Essay, they also had had their eyes upon me, and, from the time they had first seen me, had conceived a desire of making the same use of me as I had now expressed a wish of making of them, but that matters did not appear ripe at our first interview. Our proposal, however, was approved, and an assurance was given, that an union should take place, as soon as it was judged to be seasonable. It was resolved also, that one day in the week*

* At these weekly meetings I met occasionally Joseph Woods, George Harrison, and John Lloyd, three of the other members, who belonged to the committee of the second

should be appointed for a meeting at the house of James Phillips, where as many might attend as had leisure, and that I should be there to make a report of my progress, by which we might all judge of the fitness of the time of calling ourselves an united body. Pleased now with the thought that matters were put into such a train, I returned to my former objects.

It is not necessary to say any thing more of the first of these objects, which was that of the further distribution of my book, than that it was continued, and chiefly by the same hands.

With respect to the enlargement of my knowledge, it was promoted likewise. I now gained access to the Custom-house in London, where I picked up much valuable information for my purpose.

Having had reason to believe that the Slave-trade was peculiarly fatal to those employed in it, I wished much to get copies of many of the muster-rolls from the Custom-house at Liverpool for a given time.

second class of forerunners and coadjutors as before described. I had seen all of them before, but I do not recollect the time when I first met them.

James

James Phillips wrote to his friend William Rathbone, who was one of his own religious society, and who resided there, to procure them. They were accordingly sent up. The examination of these, which took place at the chambers of Richard Phillips, was long and tedious. We looked over them together. We usually met for this purpose at nine in the evening, and we seldom parted till one, and sometimes not till three in the morning. When our eyes were inflamed by the candle, or tired by fatigue, we used to relieve ourselves by walking out within the precincts of Lincoln's Inn, when all seemed to be fast asleep, and thus, as it were, in solitude and in stillness to converse upon them, as well as upon the best means of the further promotion of our cause. These scenes of our early friendship and exertions I shall never forget. I often think of them both with astonishment and with pleasure. Having recruited ourselves in this manner, we used to return to our work. From these muster-rolls I may now observe, that we gained the most important information. We ascertained beyond the power of contradiction, that more than half of the seamen,

men, who went out with the ships in the Slave-trade, did not return with them, and that of these so many perished, as amounted to one-fifth of all employed. As to what became of the remainder, the muster-rolls did not inform us. This, therefore, was left to us as a subject for our future inquiry.

In endeavouring to enlarge my knowledge, my thoughts were frequently turned to the West Indian part of the question, and in this department my friend Richard Phillips gained me important intelligence. He put into my hands several documents concerning estates in the West Indies, which he had mostly from the proprietors themselves, where the slaves by mild and prudent usage had so increased in population, as to supersede the necessity of the Slave-trade.

By attending to these and to various other parts of the subject, I began to see as it were with new eyes: I was enabled to make several necessary discriminations, to reconcile things before seemingly contradictory, and to answer many objections which had hitherto put on a formidable shape. But most of all was I rejoiced at the thought that I should soon be able to prove that which

I had never doubted, but which had hitherto been beyond my power in this case, that Providence, in ordaining laws relative to the agency of man, had never made that to be wise which was immoral, and that the Slave-trade would be found as impolitic as it was inhuman and unjust.

In keeping up my visits to members of parliament, I was particularly attentive to Mr. Wilberforce, whom I found daily becoming more interested in the fate of Africa. I now made to him a regular report of my progress, of the sentiments of those in parliament whom I had visited, of the disposition of my friends in the City of whom he had often heard me speak, of my discoveries from the Custom-houses of London and Liverpool, of my documents concerning West India estates, and of all, indeed, that had occurred to me worth mentioning. He had himself also been making his inquiries, which he communicated to me in return. Our intercourse had now become frequent, no one week elapsing without an interview. At one of these, I suggested to him the propriety of having occasional meetings at his own house, consisting of a few friends in par-

parliament, who might converse on the subject. Of this he approved. The persons present at the first meeting were Mr. Wilberforce, the Honourable John Villiers, Mr. Powys, Sir Charles Middleton, Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Ramsay, Dr. Gregory, (who had written on the subject, as before mentioned,) and myself. At this meeting I read a paper, giving an account of the light I had collected in the course of my inquiries, with observations as well on the impolicy as on the wickedness of the trade. Many questions arose out of the reading of this little Essay. Many answers followed. Objections were started and canvassed. In short, this measure was found so useful, that certain other evenings as well as mornings were fixed upon for the same purpose.

On reporting my progress to my friends in the City, several of whom now assembled once in the week, as I mentioned before to have been agreed upon, and particularly on reporting the different meetings which had taken place at the house of Mr. Wilberforce, on the subject, they were of opinion that the time was approaching when we might

unite, and that this union might prudently commence as soon as ever Mr. Wilberforce would give his word that he would take up the question in parliament. Upon this I desired to observe, that though the latter gentleman had pursued the subject with much earnestness, he had never yet dropped the least hint that he would proceed so far in the matter, but I would take care that the question should be put to him, and I would bring them his answer.

In consequence of the promise I had now made, I went to Mr. Wilberforce. But when I saw him, I seemed unable to inform him of the object of my visit. Whether this inability arose from any sudden fear that his answer might not be favourable, or from a fear that I might possibly involve him in a long and arduous contest upon this subject, or whether it arose from an awful sense of the importance of the mission, as it related to the happiness of hundreds of thousands then alive and of millions then unborn, I cannot say. But I had a feeling within me for which I could not account, and which seemed to hinder me from proceeding. And I actually went away without informing him of my errand.

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In this situation I began to consider what to do, when I thought I would call upon Mr. Langton, tell him what had happened, and ask his advice. I found him at home. We consulted together. The result was, that he was to invite Mr. Wilberforce and some others to meet me at a dinner at his own house, in two or three days, when he said he had no doubt of being able to procure an answer, by some means or other, to the question which I wished to have resolved.

On receiving a card from Mr. Langton, I went to dine with him. I found the party consist of Sir Charles Middleton, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Hawkins Browne, Mr. Windham, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Mr. Boswell. The latter was then known as the friend of Dr. Johnson, and afterwards as the writer of his Tour to the Hebrides. After dinner the subject of the Slave-trade was purposely introduced. Many questions were put to me, and I dilated upon each in my answers, that I might inform and interest those present as much as I could. They seemed to be greatly impressed with my account of the loss of seamen in the trade, and with the little samples of African cloth, which I had procured for

their

their inspection. Sir Joshua Reynolds gave his unqualified approbation of the abolition of this cruel traffic. Mr. Hawkins Browne joined heartily with him in sentiment; he spoke with much feeling upon it, and pronounced it to be barbarous, and contrary to every principle of morality and religion. Mr. Boswell, after saying the planters would urge that the Africans were made happier by being carried from their own country to the West Indies, observed, "Be it so. But we have no right to make people happy against their will." Mr. Windham, when it was suggested that the great importance of our West Indian islands, and the grandeur of Liverpool, would be brought against those who should propose the abolition of the Slave-trade, replied, "We have nothing to do with the policy of the measure. Rather let Liverpool and the Islands be swallowed up in the sea, than this monstrous system of iniquity be carried on*." While such conversation was passing, and when

* I do not know upon what grounds, after such strong expressions, Mr. Boswell, in the next year, and Mr. Windham, after having supported the cause for three or four years, became inimical to it.

all

all appeared to be interested in the cause, Mr. Langton put the question, about the proposal of which I had been so diffident, to Mr. Wilberforce, in the shape of a delicate compliment. The latter replied, that he had no objection to bring forward the measure in parliament, when he was better prepared for it, and provided no person more proper could be found. Upon this, Mr. Hawkins Browne and Mr. Windham both said they would support him there. Before I left the company, I took Mr. Wilberforce aside, and asked him if I might mention this his resolution to those of my friends in the City, of whom he had often heard me speak, as desirous of aiding him by becoming a committee for the purpose. He replied, I might. I then asked Mr. Langton, privately, if he had any objection to belong to a society of which there might be a committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade. He said he should be pleased to become a member of it. Having received these satisfactory answers, I returned home.

The next day, having previously taken down the substance of the conversation at

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the dinner, I went to James Phillips, and desired that our friends might be called together as soon as they conveniently could, to hear my report. In the interim I wrote to Dr. Peckard, and waited upon Lord Scarsdale, Dr. Baker, and others, to know (supposing a society were formed for the abolition of the Slave-trade) if I might say they would belong to it? All of them replied in the affirmative, and desired me to represent them, if there should be any meeting for this purpose.

At the time appointed, I met my friends. I read over the substance of the conversation which had taken place at Mr. Langton's. No difficulty occurred. All were unanimous for the formation of a committee. On the next day we met by agreement for this purpose. It was then resolved unanimously, among other things, That the Slave-trade was both impolitic and unjust. It was resolved also, That the following persons be a committee for procuring such information and evidence, and publishing the same, as may tend to the abolition of the Slave-trade, and for directing the application of such moneys as have been already, and may here-

hereafter be collected for the above purpose.

Granville Sharp.

William Dilwyn
Samuel Hoare.
George Harrison.
John Lloyd.
Joseph Woods.

Thomas Clarkson.
Richard Phillips.

John Barton.
Joseph Hooper.
James Phillips.
Philip Sansom.

All these were present. Granville Sharp, who stands at the head of the list, and who, as the father of the cause in England, was called to the chair, may be considered as representing the first class of forerunners and coadjutors, as it has been before described. The five next, of whom Samuel Hoare was chosen as the treasurer, were they who had been the committee of the second class, or of the Quakers in England, with the exception of Dr. Knowles, who was then dying, but who, having heard of our meeting, sent

sent a message to us, to exhort us to proceed. The third class, or that of the Quakers in America, may be considered as represented by William Dillwyn, by whom they were afterwards joined to us in correspondence. The two who stand next, and in which I am included, may be considered as representing the fourth, most of the members of which we had been the means of raising. Thus, on the twenty-second of May 1787, the representatives of all the four classes, of which I have been giving a history from the year 1516, met together, and were united in that committee, to which I have been all along directing the attention of the reader; a committee, which, labouring afterwards with Mr. Wilberforce as a parliamentary head, did, under Providence, in the space of twenty years, contribute to put an end to a trade, which, measuring its magnitude by its crimes and sufferings, was the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the human race.

After the formation of the committee*, notice

* All the members were of the society of the Quakers, except Mr. Sharp, Sansom, and myself. Joseph Gurney

notice was sent to Mr. Wilberforce of the event, and a friendship began, which has continued uninterruptedly between them, from that to the present day.

Bevan was present on the day before this meeting. He desired to belong to the society, but to be excused from belonging to the committee.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XI.

The preceding history of the different classes of the forerunners and coadjutors, to the time of the formation of the committee, collected into one view by means of a map—Explanation of this map—and observations upon it.

As the preceding history of the different classes of the forerunners and coadjutors, to the time of their junction, or to the formation of the committee, as just explained, may be thought interesting by many, I have endeavoured, by means of the annexed map, so to bring it before the reader, that he may comprehend the whole of it at a single view.

The figure beginning at A and reaching down to X represents the first class of forerunners and coadjutors up to the year 1787, as consisting of so many springs or rivulets, which assisted in making and swelling the torrent which swept away the Slave-trade.

The figure from B to C and from C to X represents the second class, or that of the Quakers in England, up to the same

time. The stream on the right-hand represents them as a body, and that on the left, the six individuals belonging to them, who formed the committee in 1783.

The figure from B to D represents the third class, or that of the Quakers in America when joined with others in 1774. The stream passing from D through E to X shows how this class was conveyed down, as it were, so as to unite with the second. That passing from D to Y shows its course in its own country, to its enlargement in 1787. And here I may observe, that as the different streams which formed a junction at X, were instrumental in producing the abolition of the Slave-trade in England, in the month of March 1807, so those, whose effects are found united at Y, contributed to produce the same event in America, in the same month of the same year.

The figure from F to X represents the fourth class up to 1787.

X represents the junction of all the four classes in the committee instituted in London on the twenty-second day of May, 1787.

The parallel lines G, H, I, K, represent different

different periods of time, showing when the forerunners and coadjutors lived. The space between G and H includes the space of fifty years, in which we find but few labourers in this cause. That between H and I includes the same portion of time, in which we find them considerably increased, or nearly doubled. That between I and K represents the next thirty-seven years. But here we find their increase beyond all expectation, for we find four times more labourers in this short term, than in the whole of the preceding century.

In looking over the map, as thus explained, a number of thoughts suggest themselves, some of which it may not be improper to detail. And first, in looking between the first and second parallel, we perceive, that Morgan Godwyn, Richard Baxter, and George Fox, the first a clergyman of the Established Church, the second a divine at the head of the Nonconformists, and the third the founder of the religious society of the Quakers, appeared each of them the first in his own class, and all of them about the same time, in behalf of the oppressed Africans. We see then this great truth

truth first apparent, that the abolition of the Slave-trade took its rise, not from persons, who set up a cry for liberty, when they were oppressors themselves, nor from persons who were led to it by ambition, or a love of reputation among men, but where it was most desirable, namely, from the teachers of Christianity in those times.

This account of its rise will furnish us with some important lessons. And first, it shows us the great value of religion. We see, when moral disorders become known, that the virtuous are they who rise up for the removal of them. Thus Providence seems to have appointed those, who devote themselves most to his service, to the honourable office of becoming so many agents, under his influence, for the correction of the evils of life. And as this account of the rise of the abolition of the Slave-trade teaches us the necessity of a due cultivation of religion, so it should teach us to have a brotherly affection for those, who, though they may differ from us in speculative opinions concerning it, do yet show by their conduct that they have a high regard for it. For though Godwyn, and Baxter, and Fox,

differed

differed as to the articles of their faith, we find them impelled by the spirit of christianity, which is of infinitely more importance than a mere agreement in creeds, to the same good end.

In looking over the different streams in the map, as they are discoverable both in Europe and America, we are impressed with another truth on the same subject, which is, that the Christian religion is capable of producing the same good fruit in all lands. However men may differ on account of climate, or language, or government, or laws, or however they may be situated in different quarters of the globe, it will produce in them the same virtuous disposition, and make them instruments for the promotion of happiness in the world.

In looking between the two first parallels, where we see so few labourers, and in contemplating the great increase of these between the others, we are taught the consoling lesson, that however small the beginning and slow the progress may appear in any good work which we may undertake, we need not be discouraged as to the ultimate result of our labours; for though our

cause

cause may appear stationary, it may only become so, in order that it may take a deeper root, and thus be enabled to stand better against the storms which may afterwards beat about it.

In taking the same view again, we discover the manner in which light and information proceed under a free government in a good cause. An individual, for example, begins; he communicates his sentiments to others. Thus, while alive, he enlightens; when dead, he leaves his works behind him. Thus, though departed, he yet speaks, and his influence is not lost. Of those enlightened by him, some become authors, and others actors in their turn. While living, they instruct, like their predecessors; when dead, they speak also. Thus a number of dead persons are encouraging us in libraries, and a number of living are conversing and diffusing zeal among us at the same time. This, however, is not true in any free and enlightened country, with respect to the propagation of evil. The living find no permanent encouragement, and the dead speak to no purpose in such a case.

This account of the manner in which light

light and information proceed in a free country, furnishes us with some valuable knowledge. It shows us, first, the great importance of education; for all they who can read may become enlightened. They may gain as much from the dead as from the living. They may see the sentiments of former ages. Thus they may contract, by degrees, habits of virtuous inclination, and become fitted to join with others in the removal of any of the evils of life.

It shows us, secondly, how that encouraging maxim may become true, That no good effort is ever lost. For if he, who makes the virtuous attempt, should be prevented by death from succeeding in it, can he not speak, though in the tomb? Will not his works still breathe his sentiments upon it? May not the opinions, and the facts, which he has recorded, meet the approbation of ten thousand readers, of whom it is probable, in the common course of things, that some will branch out of him as authors, and others as actors or labourers, in the same cause?

And, lastly, it will show us the difficulty (if any attempt should be made) of reversing

ing permanently the late noble act of the legislature for the abolition of the Slave-trade. For let us consider how many, both of the living and the dead, could be made to animate us. Let us consider, too, that this is the cause of mercy, justice, and religion; that as such, it will always afford renewed means of rallying; and that the dead will always be heard with interest, and the living with enthusiasm, upon it.

CHAPTER XII.

Author devotes this chapter to considerations relative to himself—fears that by the frequent introduction of himself to the notice of the reader he may incur the charge of ostentation—Observations on such a charge.

HAVING brought my History of the Abolition of the Slave-trade up to the month of May 1787, I purpose taking the liberty, before I proceed with it, to devote this chapter to considerations relative to myself. This, indeed, seems to be now necessary: for I have been fearful for some pages past, and, indeed, from the time when I began to introduce myself to the notice of the reader, as one of the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause, that I might appear to have put myself into a situation too prominent, so as even to have incurred the charge of ostentation. But if there should be some, who, in consequence of what they have already read of this history, should think thus unfavourably of me, what must their opinion ultimately be, when, unfortunately, I must

must become still more prominent in it! Nor do I know in what manner I shall escape their censure. For if, to avoid egotism, I should write, as many have done, in the third person, what would this profit me? The delicate situation, therefore, in which I feel myself to be placed, makes me desirous of saying a few words to the reader on this subject.

And first, I may observe, that several of my friends urged me from time to time, and this long before the abolition of the Slave-trade had been effected, to give a history of the rise and progress of the attempt, as far as it had been then made. But I uniformly resisted their application.

When the question was decided last year, they renewed their request. They represented to me, that no person knew the beginning and progress of this great work so well as myself; that it was a pity that such knowledge should die with me; that such a history would be useful; that it would promote good feelings among men; that it would urge them to benevolent exertions; that it would supply them with hope in the midst of these; that it would

teach them many valuable lessons:—these and other things were said to me. But, encouraging as they were, I never lost sight of the objection, which is the subject of this chapter; nor did I ever fail to declare, that though, considering the part I had taken in this great cause, I might be qualified better than some others, yet it was a task too delicate for me to perform. I always foresaw that I could not avoid making myself too prominent an object in such a history, and that I should be liable, on that account, to the suspicion of writing it for the purpose of sounding my own praise.

With this objection my friends were not satisfied. They answered, that I might treat the History of the Abolition of the Slave-trade as a species of biography, or as the history of a part of my own life: that people, who had much less weighty matters to communicate, wrote their own histories; and that no one charged them with vanity for so doing.

I own I was not convinced by this answer. I determined, however, in compliance with their wishes, to examine the objection

jection more minutely, and to see if I could overcome it more satisfactorily to my own mind. With this view, I endeavoured to anticipate the course which such a history would take. I saw clearly, in the first place, that there were times, for months together, when the committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade was labouring without me, and when I myself for an equal space of time was labouring in distant parts of the kingdom without them. Hence I perceived that, if my own exertions were left out, there would be repeated chasms in this history, and, indeed, that it could not be completed without the frequent mention of myself. And I was willing to hope that this would be so obvious to the good sense of the reader, that if he should think me vain-glorious in the early part of it, he would afterwards, when he advanced in the perusal of it, acquit me of such a charge. This consideration was the first, which removed my objection on this head. That there can be no ground for any charge of ostentation, as far as the origin of this history is concerned, so I hope to convince him there can be none, by showing

ing him in what light I have always viewed myself in connection with the committee, to which I have had the honour to belong.

I have uniformly considered our committee for the abolition of the Slave-trade, as we usually consider the human body, that is, as made up of a head and of various members, which had different offices to perform. Thus, if one man was an eye, another was an ear, another an arm, and another a foot. And here I may say, with great truth, that I believe no committee was ever made up of persons, whose varied talents were better adapted to the work before them. Viewing then the committee in this light, and myself as in connection with it, I may deduce those truths, with which the analogy will furnish me. And first, it will follow, that if every member has performed his office faithfully, though one may have done something more than another, yet no one of them in particular has any reason to boast. With what propriety could the foot, though in the execution of its duty it had become weary, say to the finger, "Thou hast done less than I;" when the finger could reply with truth, "I have done all that

that has been given me to do?" It will follow also, that as every limb is essentially necessary for the completion of a perfect work; so in the case before us, every one was as necessary in his own office, or department, as another. For what, for example, could I myself have done if I had not derived so much assistance from the committee? What could Mr. Wilberforce have done in parliament, if I, on the other hand, had not collected that great body of evidence, to which there was such a constant appeal? And what could the committee have done without the parliamentary aid of Mr. Wilberforce? And in mentioning this necessity of distinct offices and talents for the accomplishment of the great work, in which we have been all of us engaged, I feel myself bound by the feelings of justice to deliver it as my opinion in this place, (for, perhaps, I may have no other opportunity,) that knowing, as I have done, so many members of both houses of our legislature, for many of whom I have had a sincere respect, there was never yet one, who appeared to me to be so properly qualified, in all respects, for the management of the great cause of the abolition

of

of the Slave-trade, as he, whose name I have just mentioned. His connections, but more particularly his acquaintance with the first minister of state, were of more service in the promotion of it, than they, who are but little acquainted with political movements, can well appreciate. His habits also of diligent and persevering inquiry made him master of all the knowledge that was requisite for conducting it. His talents both in and out of parliament made him a powerful advocate in its favour. His character, free from the usual spots of human imperfection, gave an appropriate lustre to the cause, making it look yet more lovely, and enticing others to its support. But most of all the motive, on which he undertook it, insured its progress. For this did not originate in views of selfishness, or of party, or of popular applause, but in an awful sense of his duty as a Christian. It was this, which gave him alacrity and courage in his pursuit. It was this, which made him continue in his elevated situation of a legislator, though it was unfavourable, if not to his health, at least to his ease and comfort. It was this, which made him in-

corporate this great object among the pursuits of his life, so that it was daily in his thoughts. It was this, which, when year after year of unsuccessful exertion returned, occasioned him to be yet fresh and vigorous in spirit, and to persevere till the day of triumph.

But to return:—There is yet another consideration, which I shall offer to the reader on this subject, and with which I shall conclude it. It is this; that no one ought to be accused of vanity until he has been found to assume to himself some extraordinary merit. This being admitted, I shall now freely disclose the view, which I have always been desirous of taking of my own conduct on this occasion, in the following words:—

As Robert Barclay, the apologist for the Quakers, when he dedicated his work to Charles the Second, intimated to this prince, that any merit, which the work might have, would not be derived from his patronage of it, but from the Author of all spiritual good; so I say to the reader, with respect to myself, that I disclaim all praise on account of any part I may have taken in the promotion of this

this great cause, for that I am desirous above all things to attribute my best endeavours in it to the influence of a superior Power; of Him, I mean, who gave me a heart to feel—who gave me courage to begin—and perseverance to proceed—and that I am thankful to Him, and this with the deepest feeling of gratitude and humility, for having permitted me to become useful, in any degree, to my fellow-creatures.

CHAPTER XIII.

Author returns to his History—Committee formed as before mentioned—its proceedings—Author produces a summary view of the Slave-trade and of the probable consequences of its abolition—Wrongs of Africa, by Mr. Roscoe, generously presented to the committee—Important discussion as to the object of the committee—Emancipation declared to be no part of it—Committee decides on its public title—Author requested to go to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster, to collect further information on the subject of the trade.

I RETURN now, after this long digression, to the continuation of my History.

It was shown in the latter part of the tenth chapter, that twelve individuals, all of whom were then named, met together, by means which no one could have foreseen, on the twenty-second of May 1787; and that, after having voted the Slave-trade to be both unjust and impolitic, they formed themselves into a committee for procuring such information and evidence, and for publishing the same, as might tend to the abolition of

of it, and for directing the application of such money, as had been already and might hereafter be collected for that purpose. At this meeting it was resolved also, that no less than three members should form a quorum; that Samuel Hoare should be the treasurer; that the treasurer should pay no money but by order of the committee; and that copies of these resolutions should be printed and circulated, in which it should be inserted that the subscriptions of all such, as were willing to forward the plans of the committee, should be received by the treasurer or any member of it.

On the twenty-fourth of May the committee met again to promote the object of its institution.

The treasurer reported at this meeting, that the subscriptions already received, amounted to one hundred and thirty-six pounds.

As I had foreseen, long before this time, that my Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species was too large for general circulation, and yet that a general circulation of knowledge on this subject was absolutely necessary, I determined, directly

rectly after the formation of the committee, to write a short pamphlet consisting only of eight or ten pages for this purpose. I called it A Summary View of the Slave-trade, and of the probable Consequences of its Abolition. It began by exhibiting to the reader the various unjustifiable ways in which persons living on the coast of Africa became slaves. It then explained the treatment which these experienced on their passage, the number dying in the course of it, and the treatment of the survivors in the colonies of those nations to which they were carried. It then announced the speedy publication of a work on the Impolicy of the Trade, the contents of which, as far as I could then see, I gave generally under the following heads :— Part the first, it was said, would show, that Africa was capable of offering to us a trade in its own natural productions as well as in the persons of men; that the trade in the persons of men was profitable but to a few; that its value was diminished from many commercial considerations; that it was also highly destructive to our seamen; and that the branch of it, by which we supplied the island of St. Domingo with slaves, was peculiarly

culiarly impolitic on that account. Part the second, it was said, would show, that, if the slaves were kindly treated in our colonies, they would increase; that the abolition of the trade would necessarily secure such a treatment to them, and that it would produce many other advantages which would be then detailed.

This little piece I presented to the committee at this their second meeting. It was then duly read and examined; and the result was, that, after some little correction, it was approved, and that two thousand copies of it were ordered to be printed, with lists of the subscribers and of the committee, and to be sent to various parts of the kingdom.

On June the seventh the committee met again for the dispatch of business, when, among other things, they voted their thanks to Dr. Baker, of Lower Grosvenor Street, who had been one of my first assistants, for his services to the cause.

At this committee John Barton, one of the members of it, stated that he was commissioned by the author of a poem, entitled The Wrongs of Africa, to offer the profits, which might arise from the sale of that work,

work, to the committee, for the purpose of enabling them to pursue the object of their institution. This circumstance was not only agreeable, inasmuch as it showed us, that there were others who felt with us for the injured Africans, and who were willing to aid us in our designs, but it was rendered still more so, when we were given to understand that the poem was written by Mr. Roscoe, of Liverpool, and the preface to it by the late Dr. Currie, who then lived in the same place. To find friends to our cause rising up from a quarter, where we expected scarcely any thing but opposition, was very consolatory and encouraging. As this poem was well written, but cannot now be had, I shall give the introductory part of it, which is particularly beautiful, to the perusal of the reader. 'It begins thus,—

" Offspring of Love divine, Humanity !
To whom, his eldest born, th' Eternal gave
Dominion o'er the heart; and taught to touch
Its varied stops in sweetest unison;
And strike the string that from a kindred breast
Responsive vibrates ! from the noisy haunts
Of mercantile confusion, where thy voice
Is heard not; from the meretricious glare
Of crowded theatres, where in thy place
Sits Sensibility, with watry eye,

Dropping

Dropping o'er fancied woes her useless tear;—
Come thou, and weep with me substantial ills;
And execrate the wrongs, that Afric's sons,
Torn from their natal shore, and doom'd to bear
The yoke of servitude in foreign climes,
Sustain. Nor vainly let our sorrows flow,
Nor let the strong emotion rise in vain;
But may the kind contagion widely spread,
Till in its flame the unrelenting heart
Of avarice melt in softest sympathy—
And one bright blaze of universal love
In grateful incense rises up to Heaven!

"Form'd with the same capacity of pain,
The same desire of pleasure and of ease,
Why feels not man for man! When nature shrinks
From the slight puncture of an insect's sting,
Faints, if not screen'd from sultry suns, and pines
Beneath the hardship of an hour's delay
Of needful nutriment;—when Liberty
Is priz'd so dearly, that the slightest breath,
That ruffles but her mantle, can awake
To arms unwarlike nations, and can rouse
Confed'rate states to vindicate her claims:—
How shall the suff'rer man his fellow doom
To ills he mourns or spurns at; tear with stripes
His quiv'ring flesh; with hunger and with thirst
Waste his emaciate frame; in ceaseless toils
Exhaust his vital powers; and bind his limbs
In galling chains! Shall he, whose fragile form
Demands continual blessings to support
Its complicated texture, air, and food,
Raiment, alternate rest, and kindly skies,
And healthful seasons, dare with impious voice

To

To ask those mercies, whilst his selfish aim
Arrests the general freedom of their course;
And, gratified beyond his utmost wish,
Debars another from the bounteous store!"

In this manner was the subject of this beautiful poem introduced to the notice of the public. But I have no room for any further extracts, nor time to make any further comment upon it. I can only add, that the committee were duly sensible as well of its merits, as of the virtuous and generous disposition of the author, and that they requested John Barton to thank him in an appropriate manner for his offer, which he was to say they accepted gratefully.

At this sitting, at which ten members were present out of the twelve, a discussion unexpectedly arose on a most important subject. The committee, finding that their meetings began to be approved by many, and that the cause under their care was likely to spread, and foreseeing also the necessity there would soon be of making themselves known as a public body throughout the kingdom, thought it right that they should assume some title, which should be a permanent one, and which should be expres-

sive of their future views. This gave occasion to them to reconsider the object, for which they had associated, and to fix and define it in such a manner, that there should be no misunderstanding about it in the public mind. In looking into the subject, it appeared to them that there were two evils, quite distinct from each other, which it might become their duty to endeavour to remove. The first was the evil of the Slave-trade, in consequence of which many thousand persons were every year fraudulently and forcibly taken from their country, their relations, and friends, and from all that they esteemed valuable in life. The second was the evil of slavery itself, in consequence of which the same persons were forced into a situation, where they were deprived of the rights of men, where they were obliged to linger out their days subject to excessive labour and cruel punishments, and where their children were to inherit the same hard lot. Now the question was, which of the two evils the committee should select as that, to which they should direct their attention with a view of the removal of it; or whether, with the same view,

view, it should direct its attention to both of them.

It appeared soon to be the sense of the committee, that to aim at the removal of both would be to aim at too much, and that by doing this we might lose all.

The question then was, which of the two they were to take as their object. Now in considering this question it appeared that it did not matter where they began, or which of them they took, as far as the end to be produced was the thing desired. For, first, if the Slave-trade should be really abolished, the bad usage of the slaves in the colonies, that is, the hard part of their slavery, if not the slavery itself, would fall. For, the planters and others being unable to procure more slaves from the coast of Africa, it would follow directly, whenever this great event should take place, that they must treat those better, whom they might then have. They must render marriage honourable among them. They must establish the union of one man with one wife. They must give the pregnant women more indulgencies. They must pay more attention to the rearing

ing of their offspring. They must work and punish the adults with less rigour. Now it was to be apprehended that they could not do these things, without seeing the political advantages which would arise to themselves from so doing; and that, reasoning upon this, they might be induced to go on to give them greater indulgencies, rights, and privileges in time. But how would every such successive improvement of their condition operate, but to bring them nearer to the state of freemen? In the same manner it was contended, that the better treatment of the slaves in the colonies, or that the emancipation of them there, when fit for it, would of itself lay the foundation for the abolition of the Slave-trade. For, if the slaves were kindly treated, that is, if marriage were encouraged among them; if the infants who should be born were brought up with care; if the sick were properly attended to; if the young and the adult were well fed and properly clothed, and not overworked, and not worn down by the weight of severe punishments, they would necessarily increase, and this on an extensive scale.

But

But if the planters were thus to get their labourers from the births on their own estates, then the Slave-trade would in time be no longer necessary to them, and it would die away as an useless and a noxious plant. Thus it was of no consequence, which of the two evils the committee were to select as the object for their labours; for, as far as the end in view only was concerned, that the same end would be produced in either case.

But in looking further into this question, it seemed to make a material difference which of the two they selected, as far as they had in view the due execution of any laws, which might be made respecting them, and their own prospect of success in the undertaking. For, by aiming at the abolition of the Slave-trade, they were laying the axe at the very root. By doing this, and this only, they would not incur the objection, that they were meddling with the property of the planters, and letting loose an irritated race of beings, who, in consequence of all the vices and infirmities, which a state of slavery entails upon those who undergo

dergo it, were unfit for their freedom. By asking the government of the country to do this, and this only, they were asking for that, which it had an indisputable right to do; namely, to regulate or abolish any of its branches of commerce; whereas it was doubtful, whether it could interfere with the management of the internal affairs of the colonies, or whether this was not wholly the province of the legislatures established there. By asking the government, again, to do this and this only, they were asking what it could really enforce. It could station its ships of war, and command its custom-houses, so as to carry any act of this kind into effect. But it could not ensure that an act to be observed in the heart of the islands should be enforced*. To this it was added, that if the committee were to fix upon the annihilation of slavery as the object for their labours,

* The late correspondence of the governors of our colonies with Lord Camden in his official situation, but particularly the statements made by Lord Seaforth and General Prevost, have shown the wisdom of this remark, and that no dependence was to be had for the better usage of the slaves but upon the total abolition of the trade.

the

the Slave-trade would not fall so speedily as it would by a positive law for the abolition; because, though the increase from the births might soon supply all the estates now in cultivation with labourers, yet new plantations might be opened from time to time in different islands, so that no period could be fixed upon, when it could be said that it would cease.

Impressed by these arguments, the committee were clearly of opinion, that they should define their object to be the abolition of the Slave-trade, and not of the slavery which sprung from it. Hence from this time, and in allusion to the month when this discussion took place, they styled themselves in their different advertisements, and reports, though they were first associated in the month of May, The Committee instituted in June 1787, for effecting the Abolition of the Slave-trade. Thus, at the very outset, they took a ground which was for ever tenable. Thus they were enabled also to answer the objection, which was afterwards so constantly and so industriously circulated against them, that they were going

ing to emancipate the slaves. And I have no doubt that this wise decision contributed greatly to their success; for I am persuaded that, if they had adopted the other object, they could not for years to come, if ever, have succeeded in their attempt.

Before the committee broke up, I represented to them the necessity there was of obtaining further knowledge on all those individual points, which might be said to belong to the great subject of the abolition of the Slave-trade. In the first place, this knowledge was necessary for me, if I were to complete my work on the Impolicy of this Trade, which work the Summary View, just printed, had announced to the world. It would be necessary also, in case the Slave-trade should become a subject of parliamentary inquiry; for this inquiry could not proceed without evidence. And if any time was peculiarly fit for the procuring of such information or evidence, it was the present. At this time the passions of men had not been heated by any public agitation of the question, nor had interest felt itself biassed to conceal the truth. But as soon as ever it

should be publicly understood, that a parliamentary inquiry was certain, (which we ourselves believed would be the case, but which interested men did not then know,) we should find many of the avenues to information closed against us. I proposed therefore that some one of the committee should undertake a journey to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster, where he should reside for a time to collect further light upon this subject; and that if others should feel their occupations or engagements to be such as would make such a journey unsuitable, I would undertake it myself. I begged therefore the favour of the different members of the committee, to turn the matter over in their minds by the next meeting, that we might then talk over and decide upon the propriety of the measure.

The committee held its fourth meeting on the twelfth of June. Among the subjects, which were then brought forward, was that of the journey before mentioned. The propriety and indeed even the necessity of it was so apparent, that I was requested by all present to undertake it and a plan

for that purpose was entered upon our records. Of this journey, as gradually unfolding light on the subject, and as peculiarly connected with the promotion of our object, I shall now give an account; after which I shall return to the proceedings of the committee.

CHAPTER XIV.

Author arrives at Bristol—Introduction to Quaker families there—Objects of his inquiry—Ill usage of seamen on board the ship Brothers—Obtains a knowledge of several articles of African produce—Dr. Camplin—Dean Tucker—Mr. Henry Sulgar—Procures an authenticated account of the treacherous massacre at Calebar—Ill usage of the seamen of the ship Alfred—Painful feelings of the author on this occasion.

HAVING made preparations for my journey, I took my leave of the different individuals of the committee. I called upon Mr. Wilberforce, also, with the same design. He was then very ill, and in bed. Sir Richard Hill and others were sitting by his bed-side. After conversing as much as he well could in his weak state, he held out his hand to me, and wished me success. When I left him, I felt much dejected. It appeared to me as if it would be in this case, as it is often in that of other earthly things, that we scarcely possess what we repute a treasure, when it is taken from us.

I determined to take this journey on

horseback, not only on account of the relaxed state in which I found myself, after such close and constant application, but because I wished to have all my time to myself upon the road, in order the better to reflect upon the proper means of promoting this great cause. The first place I resolved to visit was Bristol. Accordingly I directed my course thither. On turning a corner, within about a mile of that city, at about eight in the evening, I came within sight of it. The weather was rather hazy, which occasioned it to look of unusual dimensions. The bells of some of the churches were then ringing; the sound of them did not strike me, till I had turned the corner before mentioned, when it came upon me at once. It filled me, almost directly, with a melancholy for which I could not account. I began now to tremble, for the first time, at the arduous task I had undertaken, of attempting to subvert one of the branches of the commerce of the great place which was then before me. I began to think of the host of people I should have to encounter in it. I anticipated much persecution in it also; and I questioned whether I should even

even get out of it alive. But in journeying on, I became more calm and composed. My spirits began to return. In these latter moments I considered my first feelings as useful, inasmuch as they impressed upon me the necessity of extraordinary courage, and activity, and perseverance, and of watchfulness, also, over my own conduct, that I might not throw any stain upon the cause I had undertaken. When, therefore, I entered the city, I entered it with an undaunted spirit, determining that no labour should make me shrink, nor danger, nor even persecution, deter me from my pursuit.

My first introduction was by means of a letter to Harry Gandy, who had then become one of the religious society of the Quakers. This introduction to him was particularly useful to me, for he had been a seafaring man. In his early youth he had been of a roving disposition; and, in order to see the world, had been two voyages in the Slave-trade, so that he had known the nature and practices of it. This enabled him to give me much useful information on the subject; and as he had frequently felt,

felt, as he grew up, deep affliction of mind for having been concerned in it, he was impelled to forward my views as much as possible, under an idea that he should be thus making some reparation for the indiscreet and profane occupations of his youth.

I was also introduced to the families of James Harford, John Lury, Matthew Wright, Philip Debell Tucket, Thomas Bonville, and John Waring; all of whom were of the same religious society. I gained an introduction, also, soon afterwards, to George Fisher. These were my first and only acquaintance at Bristol for some time. I derived assistance in the promotion of my object from all of them; and it is a matter of pleasing reflection, that the friendships then formed have been kept alive to the present time.

The objects I had marked down as those to be attended to, were—to ascertain what were the natural productions of Africa, and, if possible, to obtain specimens of them, with a view of forming a cabinet or collection—to procure as much information as I could, relative to the manner of obtaining

slaves

slaves on the continent of Africa, of transporting them to the West Indies, and of treating them there—to prevail upon persons, having a knowledge of any or all of these circumstances, to come forward to be examined as evidences before parliament, if such an examination should take place—to make myself still better acquainted with the loss of seamen in the Slave-trade—also with the loss of those who were employed in the other trades from the same port—to know the nature, and quantity, and value of the imports and exports of goods in the former case:—there were some other objects, which I classed under the head of Miscellaneous.

In my first movements about this city, I found that people talked very openly on the subject of the Slave-trade. They seemed to be well acquainted with the various circumstances belonging to it. There were facts, in short, in every body's mouth, concerning it; and every body seemed to execrate it, though no one thought of its abolition. In this state of things I perceived that my course was obvious; for I had little

little else to do, in pursuing two or three of my objects, than to trace the foundation of those reports which were in circulation.

On the third of July I heard that the ship Brothers*, then lying in King-road for Africa, could not get her seamen, and that a party which had been put on board, becoming terrified by the prospect of their situation, had left her on Sunday morning. On inquiring further, I found that those who had navigated her on her last voyage, thirty-two of whom had died, had been so dreadfully used by the captain, that he could not get hands in the present. It was added, that the treatment of seamen was a crying evil in this trade, and that consequently few would enter into it, so that there was at all times a great difficulty in procuring them, though they were ready enough to enter into other trades.

The relation of these circumstances made me acquainted with two things, of which I had not before heard; namely, the aversion

* I abstain from mentioning the names of the captain of this or of other vessels, lest the recording of them should give pain to relatives who can have had no share in their guilt.

of

of seamen to engage, and the bad usage of them when engaged, in this cruel trade; into both which I determined immediately to inquire.

I conceived that it became me to be very cautious about giving ear too readily to reports; and therefore, as I could easily learn the truth of one of the assertions which had been made to me, I thought it prudent to ascertain this, and to judge, by the discovery I should make concerning it, what degree of credit might be due to the rest. Accordingly, by means of my late friend, Truman Harford, the eldest son of the respectable family of that name, to which I have already mentioned myself to have been introduced, I gained access to the muster-roll of the ship Brothers. On looking over the names of her last crew, I found the melancholy truth confirmed, that thirty-two of them had been placed among the dead.

Having ascertained this circumstance, I became eager to inquire into the truth of the others, but more particularly of the treatment of one of the seamen, which, as it was reported to me, exceeded all belief. His name was John Dean; he was a Black man,

but free. The report was, that for a trifling circumstance, for which he was in no-wise to blame, the captain had fastened him with his belly to the deck, and that, in this situation, he had poured hot pitch upon his back, and made incisions in it with hot tongs.

Before, however, I attempted to learn the truth of this barbarous proceeding, I thought I would look into the ship's muster-roll, to see if I could find the name of such a man. On examination I found it to be the last on the list. John Dean, it appeared, had been one of the original crew, having gone on board, from Bristol, on the twenty-second day of July, 1785.

On inquiring where Dean was to be found, my informant told me that he had lately left Bristol for London. I was shown, however, to the house where he had lodged. The name of his landlord was Donovan. On talking with him on the subject, he assured me that the report which I had heard was true; for that while he resided with him he had heard an account of his usage from some of his ship-mates, and

and that he had often looked at his scarred and mutilated back.

On inquiring of Donovan if any other person in Bristol could corroborate this account, he referred me to a reputable tradesman living in the Market-place. Having been introduced to him, he told me that he had long known John Dean to be a sober and industrious man; that he had seen the terrible indentures on his back; and that they were said to have been made by the captain, in the manner related, during his last voyage.

While I was investigating this matter further, I was introduced to Mr. Sydenham Teast, a respectable ship-builder in Bristol, and the owner of vessels trading to Africa in the natural productions of that country. I mentioned to him by accident what I had heard relative to the treatment of John Dean. He said it was true. An attorney* in London had then taken up his cause, in consequence of which the captain had been

* I afterwards found out this attorney. He described the transaction to me, as, by report, it had taken place, and informed me that he had made the captain of the Brothers pay for his barbarity.

prevented

prevented from sailing, till he could find persons who would be answerable for the damages which might be awarded against him in a court of law. Mr. Teast further said, that, not knowing, at that time, the cruelty of the transaction to its full extent, he himself had been one of the securities for the captain at the request of the purser* of the ship. Finding, however, afterwards, that it was as the public had stated, he was sorry that he had ever interfered in such a barbarous case.

This transaction, which I now believed to be true, had the effect of preparing me for crediting whatever I might hear concerning the barbarities said to be practised in this trade. It kindled also a fire of indignation within me, and produced in me both anxiety and spirit to proceed. But that which excited these feelings the most, was the consideration, that the purser of this ship, knowing, as he did, of this act of cruelty, should have sent out this monster

* The purser of a ship, at Bristol, is the person who manages the out-fit, as well as the trade, and who is often in part owner of her.

again.

again. This, I own, made me think that there was a system of bad usage to be deliberately practised upon the seamen in this employment, for some purpose or other which I could then neither comprehend nor ascertain.

But while I was in pursuit of this one object, I was not unmindful of the others which I had marked out for myself. I had already procured an interview, as I have mentioned, with Mr. Sydenham Teast. I had done this with a view of learning from him what were the different productions of the continent of Africa, as far as he had been able to ascertain from the imports by his own vessels. He was very open and communicative. He had imported ivory, red-wood, cam-wood, and gum copal. He purposed to import palm oil. He observed that bees-wax might be collected also upon the coast. Of his gum copal he gave me a specimen. He furnished me also with two different specimens of unknown woods, which had the appearance of being useful. One of his captains, he informed me, had been told by the natives, that cotton, pink

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in the pod, grew in their country. He was of opinion, that many valuable productions might be found upon this continent.

Mr. Biggs, to whom I gained an introduction also, was in a similar trade with Mr. Teast; that is, he had one or two vessels, which skimmed, as it were, the coast and rivers, for what they could get of the produce of Africa, without having any concern in the trade for slaves. Mr. Biggs gave me a specimen of gum Senegal, of yellow wood, and of Malaguetta and Cayenne pepper. He gave me also small pieces of cloth made and dyed by the natives, the colours of which they could only have obtained from materials in their own country. Mr. Biggs seemed to be assured, that if proper persons were sent to Africa on discovery, they would find a rich mine of wealth in the natural productions of it, and in none more advantageous to this as a manufacturing nation, than in the many beautiful dyes which it might furnish.

From Thomas Bonville I collected two specimens of cloth made by the natives, and from others a beautiful piece of tulip-wood,

wood, a small piece of wood similar to mahogany, and a sample of fine rice, all of which had been brought from the same continent.

Among the persons whom I found out at Bristol, and from whom I derived assistance, were Dr. Camplin, and the celebrated Dean Tucker. The former was my warm defender; for the West-Indian and African merchants, as soon as they discovered my errand, began to calumniate me. The Dean though in a very advanced age, felt himself much interested in my pursuit. He had long moved in the political world himself, and was desirous of hearing of what was going forward that was new in it, but particularly about so desirable a measure as that of the abolition of the Slave-trade*. He introduced me to the Custom-house at Bristol. He used to call upon me at the Merchants' Hall, while I was transcribing the muster-rolls of the seamen there. In short,

* Dean Tucker, in his Reflections on the Disputes between Great Britain and Ireland, published in 1785, had passed a severe censure on the British planters for the inhuman treatment of their slaves.

he

he seemed to be interested in all my movements. He became also a warm supporter both of me and of my cause.

Among others, who were useful to me in my pursuit, was Mr. Henry Sulgar, an amiable minister of the gospel belonging to the religious society of the Moravians in the same city. From him I first procured authentic documents relative to the treacherous massacre at Calabar. This cruel transaction had been frequently mentioned to me; but as it had taken place twenty years before, I could not find one person who had been engaged in it, nor could I come, in a satisfactory manner, at the various particulars belonging to it. My friend, however, put me in possession of copies of the real depositions which had been taken in the case of the King against Lippincott and others, relative to this event, namely, of captain Floyd, of the city of Bristol, who had been a witness to the scene, and of Ephraim Robin John, and of Ancona Robin Robin John, two African chiefs, who had been sufferers by it. These depositions had been taken before Jacob Kirby, and Thomas Symons, esquires, commissioners at Bristol for taking

affidavits in the court of King's Bench. The tragedy, of which they gave a circumstantial account, I shall present to the reader in as concise a manner as I can.

In the year 1767, the ships Indian Queen, Duke of York, Nancy, and Concord, of Bristol, the Edgar, of Liverpool, and the Canterbury, of London, lay in old Calabar river.

It happened at this time, that a quarrel subsisted between the principal inhabitants of Old Town and those of New Town, Old Calabar, which had originated in a jealousy respecting slaves. The captains of the vessels now mentioned joined in sending several letters to the inhabitants of Old Town, but particularly to Ephraim Robin John, who was at that time a grandee or principal inhabitant of the place. The tenor of these letters was, that they were sorry that any jealousy or quarrel should subsist between the two parties; that if the inhabitants of Old Town would come on board, they would afford them security and protection; adding at the same time, that their intention in inviting them was, that they might become mediators, and thus heal their disputes.

The

The inhabitants of Old Town, happy to find that their differences were likely to be accommodated, joyfully accepted the invitation. The three brothers of the grandee just mentioned, the eldest of whom was Amboe Robin John, first entered their canoe, attended by twenty-seven others, and, being followed by nine canoes, directed their course to the Indian Queen. They were dispatched from thence the next morning to the Edgar, and afterwards to the Duke of York, on board of which they went, leaving their canoe and attendants by the side of the same vessel. In the mean time the people on board the other canoes were either distributed on board, or lying close to, the other ships.

This being the situation of the three brothers, and of the principal inhabitants of the place, the treachery now began to appear. The crew of the Duke of York, aided by the captain and mates, and armed with pistols and cutlasses, rushed into the cabin, with an intent to seize the persons of their three innocent and unsuspicious guests. The unhappy men, alarmed at this violation of the rights of hospitality, and struck with

astonishment at the behaviour of their supposed friends, attempted to escape through the cabin windows, but being wounded were obliged to desist, and to submit to be put in irons.

In the same moment, in which this atrocious attempt had been made, an order had been given to fire upon the canoe, which was then lying by the side of the Duke of York. The canoe soon filled and sunk, and the wretched attendants were either seized, killed, or drowned. Most of the other ships followed the example. Great numbers were additionally killed and drowned on the occasion, and others were swimming to the shore.

At this juncture the inhabitants of New Town, who had concealed themselves in the bushes by the water-side, and between whom and the commanders of the vessels the plan had been previously concerted, came out from their hiding-places, and, embarking in their canoes, made for such as were swimming from the fire of the ships. The ships' boats also were manned, and joined in the pursuit. They butchered the greatest part of those whom they caught. Many dead

dead bodies were soon seen upon the sands, and others were floating upon the water; and including those who were seized and carried off, and those who were drowned and killed, either by the firing of the ships or by the people of New Town, three hundred were lost to the inhabitants of Old Town on that day.

The carnage, which I have been now describing, was scarcely over, when a canoe, full of the principal people of New Town, who had been the promoters of the scheme, dropped along-side of the Duke of York. They demanded the person of Amboe Robin John, the brother of the grandee of Old Town, and the eldest of the three on board. The unfortunate man put the palms of his hands together, and beseeched the commander of the vessel, that he would not violate the rights of hospitality by giving up an unoffending stranger to his enemies. But no entreaties could avail. The commander received from the New Town people a slave, of the name of Econg, in his stead, and then forced him into the canoe, where his head was immediately struck off in the sight of the crew, and of his afflicted and disconsolate

solate brothers. As for them, they escaped his fate; but they were carried off with their attendants to the West Indies, and sold for slaves.

The knowledge of this tragical event now fully confirmed me in the sentiment, that the hearts of those, who were concerned in this traffic, became unusually hardened, and that I might readily believe any atrocities, however great, which might be related of them. It made also my blood boil as it were within me. It gave a new spring to my exertions. And I rejoiced, sorrowful as I otherwise was, that I had visited Bristol, if it had been only to gain an accurate statement of this one fact.

In pursuing my objects, I found that reports were current, that the crew of the Alfred slave-vessel, which had just returned, had been barbarously used, but particularly a young man of the name of Thomas, who had served as the surgeon's mate on board her. The report was, that he had been repeatedly knocked down by the captain; that he had become in consequence of his ill usage so weary of his life, that he had three times jumped over board to destroy it; that

on being taken up the last time he had been chained to the deck of the ship, in which situation he had remained night and day for some time; that in consequence of this his health had been greatly impaired; and that it was supposed he could not long survive this treatment.

It was with great difficulty, notwithstanding all my inquiries, that I could trace this person. I discovered him, however, at last. He was confined to his bed when I saw him, and appeared to me to be delirious. I could collect nothing from himself relative to the particulars of his treatment. In his intervals of sense, he exclaimed against the cruelty both of the captain and of the chief mate, and pointing to his legs, thighs and body, which were all wrapped up in flannel, he endeavoured to convince me how much he had suffered there. At one time he said he forgave them. At another he asked, if I came to befriend him. At another he looked wildly, and asked if I meant to take the captain's part and to kill him.

I was greatly affected by the situation of this poor man, whose image haunted me both night and day, and I was meditating how

how most effectually to assist him, when I heard that he was dead.

I was very desirous of tracing something further on this subject, when Walter Chandler, of the society of the Quakers, who had been daily looking out for intelligence for me, brought a young man to me of the name of Dixon. He had been one of the crew of the same ship. He told me the particulars of the treatment of Thomas, with very little variation from those contained in the public report. After cross-examining him in the best manner I was able, I could find no inconsistency in his account.

I asked Dixon, how the captain came to treat the surgeon's mate in particular so ill. He said he had treated them all much alike. A person of the name of Bulpin, he believed, was the only one who had escaped bad usage in the ship. With respect to himself, he had been cruelly used so early as in the outward bound passage, which had occasioned him to jump overboard. When taken up he was put into irons, and kept in these for a considerable time. He was afterwards ill used at different times, and even so late as within three or four days of his return to port.

port. For just before the Alfred made the island of Lundy, he was struck by the captain, who cut his under lip into two. He said that it had bled so much, that the captain expressed himself as if much alarmed; and having the expectation of arriving soon at Bristol, he had promised to make him amends, if he would hold his peace. This he said he had hitherto done, but he had received no recompense. In confirmation of his own usage, he desired me to examine his lip, which I had no occasion to do, having already perceived it, for the wound was apparently almost fresh.

I asked Dixon, if there was any person in Bristol, besides himself, who could confirm to me this his own treatment, as well as that of the other unfortunate man who was now dead. He referred me to a seaman of the name of Matthew Pyke. This person, when brought to me, not only related readily the particulars of the usage in both cases, as I have now stated them, but that which he received himself. He said that his own arm had been broken by the chief mate in Black River, Jamaica, and that he had also by the captain's orders, though

contrary

contrary to the practice in merchant vessels, been severely flogged. His arm appeared to be then in pain. And I had a proof of the punishment by an inspection of his back.

I asked Matthew Pyke, if the crew in general had been treated in a cruel manner. He replied, they had, except James Bulpin. I then asked where James Bulpin was to be found. He told me where he had lodged, but feared he had gone home to his friends in Somersetshire, I think, somewhere in the neighbourhood of Bridgewater.

I thought it prudent to institute an inquiry into the characters of Thomas, Dixon, and Matthew Pyke, before I went further. The two former I found were strangers in Bristol, and I could collect nothing about them. The latter was a native of the place, had served his time as a seaman from the port, and was reputed of fair character.

My next business was to see James Bulpin. I found him just setting off for the country. He stopped, however, to converse with me. He was a young man of very respectable appearance and of mild manners. His appearance,

pearance, indeed, gave me reason to hope that I might depend upon his statements; but I was most of all influenced by the consideration, that, never having been ill-used himself, he could have no inducement to go beyond the bounds of truth on this occasion. He gave me a melancholy confirmation of all the three cases. He told me also that one Joseph Cunningham had been a severe sufferer, and that there was reason to fear that Charles Horseler, another of the crew, had been so severely beaten over the breast with a knotted end of a rope (which end was of the size of a large ball, and had been made on purpose) that he died of it. To this he added, that it was now a notorious fact, that the captain of the Alfred, when mate of a slave-ship, had been tried at Barbadoes for the murder of one of the crew, with whom he had sailed, but that he escaped by bribing the principal witness to disappear*.

* Mr. Sampson, who was surgeon's mate of the ship, in which the captain had thus served as a mate, confirmed to me afterwards this assertion, having often heard him boast in the cabin, "how he had tricked the law on that occasion."

The

The reader will see, the further I went into the history of this voyage, the more dismal it became. One miserable account, when examined, only brought up another. I saw no end to inquiry. The great question was, what was I to do? I thought the best thing would be to get the captain apprehended, and make him stand his trial either for the murder of Thomas or of Charles Horseler. I communicated with the late Mr. Burges, an eminent attorney and the deputy town-clerk, on this occasion. He had shown an attachment to me on account of the cause I had undertaken, and had given me privately assistance in it. I say privately; because, knowing the sentiments of many of the corporate body at Bristol, under whom he acted, he was fearful of coming forward in an open manner. His advice to me was, to take notes of the case for my own private conviction, but to take no public cognizance of it. He said that seamen, as soon as their wages were expended, must be off to sea again. They could not generally, as landsmen do, maintain themselves on shore. Hence I should be obliged to keep the whole crew at my own

own expense till the day of trial, which might not be for months to come. He doubted not that, in the interim, the merchants and others would inveigle many of them away by making them boatswains and other inferior officers in some of their ships; so that, when the day of trial should come, I should find my witnesses dispersed and gone. He observed moreover, that, if any of the officers of the ship had any notion of going out again under the same owners *, I should have all these against me. To which he added that, if I were to make a point of taking up the cause of those whom I found complaining of hard usage in this

* The seamen of the Alfred informed the purser of their ill usage. Matthew Pyke not only showed him his arm and his back, but acquainted him with the murder of Charles Horseler, stating that he had the instrument of his death in his possession. The purser seemed more alive to this than to any other circumstance, and wished to get it from him. Pyke, however, had given it to me. Now what will the reader think, when he is informed that the purser, after all this knowledge of the captain's cruelty, sent him out again, and that he was the same person, who was purser of the Brothers, and who had also sent out the captain of that ship a second time, as has been related, notwithstanding his barbarities in former voyages!!

trade,

trade, I must take up that of nearly all who sailed in it; for that he only knew of one captain from the port in the Slave-trade, who did not deserve long ago to be hanged. Hence I should get into a labyrinth of expense, and difficulty, and uneasiness of mind, from whence I should not easily find a clew to guide me.

This advice, though it was judicious, and founded on a knowledge of Law-proceedings, I found it very difficult to adopt. My own disposition was naturally such, that whatever I engaged in I followed with more than ordinary warmth. I could not be supposed therefore, affected and interested as I then was, to be cool and tranquil on this occasion. And yet what would my worthy friend have said, if in this first instance I had opposed him? I had a very severe struggle in my own feelings on this account. At length, though reluctantly, I obeyed. But as the passions, which agitate the human mind, when it is greatly inflamed, must have a vent somewhere, or must work off as it were, or in working together must produce some new passion or effect; so I found the rage, which had been kindling

kindling within me, subsiding into the most determined resolutions of future increased activity and perseverance. I began now to think that the day was not long enough for me to labour in. I regretted often the approach of night, which suspended my work, and I often welcomed that of the morning, which restored me to it. When I felt myself weary, I became refreshed by the thought of what I was doing; when disconsolate, I was comforted by it. I lived in hope that every day's labour would furnish me with that knowledge, which would bring this evil nearer to its end; and I worked on, under these feelings, regarding neither trouble nor danger in the pursuit.

CHAPTER XV.

Author confers with the inhabitants of Bridgewater relative to a petition to parliament in behalf of the abolition—returns to Bristol—discovers a scandalous mode of procuring seamen for the Slave-trade—and of paying them—makes a comparative view of their loss in this and in other trades—procures imports and exports—examines the construction and admeasurement of Slave-ships—of the Fly and Neptune—Difficulty of procuring evidence—Case of Gardiner of the Pilgrim—of Arnold of the Ruby—some particulars of the latter in his former voyages.

HAVING heard by accident, that the inhabitants of the town of Bridgewater had sent a petition to the House of Commons, in the year 1785, for the abolition of the Slave-trade, as has been related in a former part of the work, I determined, while my feelings were warm, to go there, and to try to find out those who had been concerned in it, and to confer with them as the tried friends of the cause. The time seemed to me

me to be approaching, when the public voice should be raised against this enormous evil. I was sure that it was only necessary for the inhabitants of this favoured island to know it, to feel a just indignation against it. Accordingly I set off. My friend George Fisher, who was before mentioned to have been of the religious society of the Quakers, gave me an introduction to the respectable family of Ball, which was of the same religious persuasion. I called upon Mr. Sealey, Anstice, Crandon, Chubb, and others. I laid open to those, whom I saw, the discoveries I had made relative to the loss and ill treatment of seamen; at which they seemed to be much moved; and it was agreed, that, if it should be thought a proper measure, (of which I would inform them when I had consulted the committee,) a second petition should be sent to Parliament from the inhabitants, praying for the abolition of the Slave-trade. With this view I left them several of my Summary Views, before mentioned, to distribute, that the inhabitants might know more particularly the nature of the evil, against which they were going to complain. On my return to Bristol, I determined to

inquire into the truth of the reports that seamen had an aversion to enter, and that they were inveigled, if not often forced, into this hateful employment. For this purpose I was introduced to a landlord of the name of Thompson, who kept a public-house called the Seven Stars. He was a very intelligent man, was accustomed to receive sailors, when discharged at the end of their voyages, and to board them till their vessels went out again, or to find them births in others. He avoided however all connection with the Slave-trade, declaring that the credit of his house would be ruined, if he were known to send those, who put themselves under his care, into it.

From him I collected the truth of all that had been stated to me on this subject. But I told him I should not be satisfied until I had beheld those scenes myself, which he had described to me; and I entreated him to take me into them, saying that I would reward him for all his time and trouble, and that I would never forget him while I lived. To this he consented; and as three or four slave-vessels at this time were preparing for their voyages, it was time that we should begin

begin our rounds. At about twelve at night we generally set out, and were employed till two and sometimes three in the morning. He led me from one of those public-houses to another, which the mates of the slave-vessels used to frequent to pick up their hands. These houses were in Marsh-street, and most of them were then kept by Irishmen. The scenes witnessed in these houses were truly distressing to me; and yet, if I wished to know practically what I had purposed, I could not avoid them. Music, dancing, rioting, drunkenness, and profane swearing, were kept up from night to night. The young mariner, if a stranger to the port, and unacquainted with the nature of the Slave-trade, was sure to be picked up. The novelty of the voyages, the superiority of the wages in this over any other trades, and the privileges of various kinds, were set before him. Gulled in this manner he was frequently enticed to the boat, which was waiting to carry him away. If these prospects did not attract him, he was plied with liquor till he became intoxicated, when a bargain was made over him between the landlord and the mate. After this his senses

were kept in such a constant state of stupefaction by the liquor, that in time the former might do with him what he pleased. Seamen also were boarded in these houses, who, when the slave-ships were going out, but at no other time, were encouraged to spend more than they had money to pay for; and to these, when they had thus exceeded, but one alternative was given, namely, a slave-vessel, or a gaol. These distressing scenes I found myself obliged frequently to witness, for I was no less than nineteen times occupied in making these hateful rounds. And I can say from my own experience, and all the information I could collect from Thompson and others, that no such practices were in use to obtain seamen for other trades.

The treatment of the seamen employed in the Slave-trade had so deeply interested me, and now the manner of procuring them, that I was determined to make myself acquainted with their whole history; for I found by report, that they were not only personally ill-treated, as I have already painfully described, but that they were robbed by artifice of those wages, which had been held

held up to them as so superior in this service. All persons were obliged to sign articles, that, in case they should die or be discharged during the voyage, the wages then due to them should be paid in the currency where the vessel carried her slaves, and that half of the wages due to them on their arrival there should be paid in the same manner, and that they were never permitted to read over the articles they had signed. By means of this iniquitous practice the wages in the Slave-trade, though nominally higher in order to induce seamen to engage in it, were actually lower than in other trades. All these usages I ascertained in such a manner, that no person could doubt the truth of them. I actually obtained possession of articles of agreement belonging to these vessels, which had been signed and executed in former voyages. I made the merchants themselves, by sending those seamen, who had claims upon them, to ask for their accounts current with their respective ships, furnish me with such documents as would have been evidence against them in any court of law. On whatever branch of the system I turned my eyes, I found it equally barbarous.

barous. The trade was, in short, one mass of iniquity from the beginning to the end.

I employed myself occasionally in the Merchants-hall, in making copies of the muster-rolls of ships sailing to different parts of the world, that I might make a comparative view of the loss of seamen in the Slave-trade, with that of those in the other trades from the same port. The result of this employment showed me the importance of it: for, when I considered how partial the inhabitants of this country were to their fellow-citizens, the seamen belonging to it, and in what estimation the members of the legislature held them, by enforcing the Navigation-Act, which they considered to be the bulwark of the nation, and by giving bounties to certain trades, that these might become so many nurseries for the marine, I thought it of great importance to be able to prove, as I was then capable of doing, that more persons would be found dead in three slave-vessels from Bristol, in a given time, than in all the other vessels put together, numerous as they were, belonging to the same port.

I procured also an account of the exports and

and imports for the year 1786, by means of which I was enabled to judge of the comparative value of this and the other trades.

In pursuing another object, which was that of going on board the slave-ships, and learning their construction and dimensions, I was greatly struck, and indeed affected, by the appearance of two little sloops, which were fitting out for Africa, the one of only twenty-five tons, which was said to be destined to carry seventy; and the other of only eleven, which was said to be destined to carry thirty slaves. I was told also that which was more affecting, namely, that these were not to act as tenders on the coast, by going up and down the rivers, and receiving three or four slaves at a time, and then carrying them to a large ship, which was to take them to the West Indies, but that it was actually intended, that they should transport their own slaves themselves; that one if not both of them were, on their arrival in the West Indies, to be sold as pleasure-vessels, and that the seamen belonging to them were to be permitted to come home by what is usually called the run.

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This account of the destination of these little vessels, though it was distressing at first, appeared to me afterwards, on cool reasoning, to be incredible. I thought that my informants wished to impose upon me, in order that I might make statements which would carry their own refutation with them, and that thus I might injure the great cause which I had undertaken. And I was much inclined to be of this opinion, when I looked again at the least of the two; for any person, who was tall, standing upon dry ground by the side of her, might have overlooked every thing upon her deck. I knew also that she had been built as a pleasure-boat for the accommodation of only six persons upon the Severn. I determined, therefore, to suspend my belief till I could take the admeasurement of each vessel. This I did; but lest, in the agitation of my mind on this occasion, I should have made any mistake, I desired my friend George Fisher to apply to the builder for his admeasurement also. With this he kindly complied. When he obtained it he brought it me. This account, which nearly corresponded with my own, was as follows:—In the vessel of twenty-

five

five tons, the length of the upper part of the hold, or roof, of the room, where the seventy slaves were to be stowed, was but little better than ten yards, or thirty-one feet. The greatest breadth of the bottom, or floor, was ten feet four inches, and the least five. Hence, a grown person must sit down all the voyage, and contract his limbs within the narrow limits of three square feet. In the vessel of eleven tons, the length of the room for the thirty slaves was twenty-two feet. The greatest breadth of the floor was eight, and the least four. The whole height from the keel to the beam was but five feet eight inches, three feet of which were occupied by ballast; cargo, and provisions, so that two feet eight inches remained only as the height between the decks. Hence, each slave would have only four square feet to sit in, and, when in this posture, his head, if he were a full-grown person, would touch the ceiling, or upper deck.

Having now received this admeasurement from the builder, which was rather more favourable than my own, I looked upon the destination of these little vessels as yet more incredible than before. Still the different

different persons, whom I occasionally saw on board them, persisted in it that they were going to Africa for slaves, and also for the numbers mentioned, which they were afterwards to carry to the West Indies themselves. I desired, however, my friends, George Fisher, Truman Harford, Harry Gandy, Walter Chandler, and others, each to make a separate inquiry for me on this subject; and they all agreed that, improbable as the account both of their destination, and of the number they were to take, might appear, they had found it to be too true. I had soon afterwards the sorrow to learn from official documents from the Custom-house, that these little vessels actually cleared out for Africa, and that now nothing could be related so barbarous of this traffic, which might not instantly be believed.

In pursuing my different objects there was one, which, to my great vexation, I found it extremely difficult to attain. This was the procuring of any assurance from those, who had been personally acquainted with the horrors of this trade, that they would appear, if called upon, as evidence against it. My friend Harry Gandy, to whom

whom I had been first introduced, had been two voyages, as I before mentioned; and he was willing, though at an advanced age, to go to London, to state publicly all he knew concerning them. But with respect to the many others in Bristol, who had been to the coast of Africa, I had not yet found one, who would come forward for this purpose. There were several old Slave-Captains living there, who had a great knowledge of the subject. I thought it not unreasonable, that I might gain one or two good evidences out of these, as they had probably long ago left the concern, and were not now interested in the continuance of it. But all my endeavours were fruitless. I sent messages to them by different persons. I met them in all ways. I stated to them, that if there was nothing objectionable in the trade, seeing it laboured under such a stigma, they had an opportunity of coming forward and of wiping away the stain. If, on the other hand, it was as bad as represented, then they had it in their power, by detailing the crimes which attached to it, of making some reparation, or atonement, for the part they had taken in it. But no representations

presentations would do. All intercourse was positively forbidden between us; and whenever they met me in the street, they shunned me as if I had been a mad dog. I could not for some time account for the strange disposition which they thus manifested towards me; but my friends helped me to unravel it, for I was assured that one or two of them, though they went no longer to Africa as captains, were in part owners of vessels trading there; and, with respect to all of them, it might be generally said, that they had been guilty of such enormities, that they would be afraid of coming forward in the way I proposed, lest any thing should come out by which they might criminate themselves. I was obliged then to give up all hope of getting any evidence from this quarter, and I saw but little prospect of getting it from those, who were then actually deriving their livelihood from the trade. And yet I was determined to persevere. For I thought that some might be found in it, who were not yet so hardened as to be incapable of being awakened on this subject. I thought that others might be found in it, who wished to leave it upon principle,

ciple, and that these would unbosom themselves to me. And I thought it not improbable that I might fall in with others, who had come unexpectedly into a state of independence, and that these might be induced, as their livelihood would be no longer affected by giving me information, to speak the truth.

I persevered for weeks together under this hope, but could find no one of all those, who had been applied to, who would have any thing to say to me. At length Walter Chandler had prevailed upon a young gentleman, of the name of Gardiner, who was going out as surgeon of the Pilgrim, to meet me. The condition was, that we were to meet at the house of the former, but that we were to enter in and go out at different times, that is, we were not to be seen together.

Gardiner, on being introduced to me, said at once, that he had often wished to see me on the subject of my errand, but that the owner of the Pilgrim had pointed me out to him as a person, whom he would wish him to avoid. He then laid open to me the different methods of obtaining slaves in Africa,

Africa, as he had learned from those on board his own vessel in his first, or former, voyage. He unfolded also the manner of their treatment in the Middle Passage, with the various distressing scenes which had occurred in it. He stated the barbarous usage of the seamen as he had witnessed it, and concluded by saying, that there never was a subject, which demanded so loudly the interference of the legislature as that of the Slave-trade.

When he had finished his narrative, and answered the different questions which I had proposed to him concerning it, I asked him in as delicate a manner as I could, How it happened, that, seeing the trade in this horrible light, he had consented to follow it again? He told me frankly, that he had received a regular medical education, but that his relations, being poor, had not been able to set him up in his profession. He had saved a little money in his last voyage. In that, which he was now to perform, he hoped to save a little more. With the profits of both voyages together, he expected he should be able to furnish a shop in the line of his profession, when he would wipe his hands of this detestable trade.

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I then asked him, Whether upon the whole he thought he had judged prudently, or whether the prospect of thus enabling himself to become independent, would counterbalance the uneasiness which might arise in future? He replied, that he had not so much to fear upon this account. The trade, while it continued, must have surgeons. But it made a great difference both to the crew and to the slaves, whether these discharged their duty towards them in a feeling manner, or not. With respect to himself, he was sure that he should pay every attention to the wants of each. This thought made his continuance in the trade for one voyage longer more reconcileable. But he added, as if not quite satisfied, "Cruel necessity!" and he fetched a deep sigh.

We took our leave, and departed, the one a few minutes after the other. The conversation of this young man was very interesting. I was much impressed both by the nature and the manner of it. I wished to secure him, if possible, as an evidence for Parliament, and thus save him from his approaching voyage: but I knew not what to do. At first, I thought it would be easy to raise

raise a subscription to set him up. But then, I was aware that this might be considered as bribery, and make his testimony worth nothing. I then thought that the committee might detain him as an evidence, and pay him, in a reasonable manner, for his sustenance, till his testimony should be called for. But I did not know how long it would be before his examination might take place. It might be a year or two. I foresaw other difficulties also; and I was obliged to relinquish what otherwise I should have deemed a prize.

On reviewing the conversation which had passed between us after my return home, I thought, considering the friendly disposition of Gardiner towards us, I had not done all I could for the cause; and, communicating my feelings to Walter Chandler, he procured me another interview. At this, I asked him, if he would become an evidence, if he lived to return. He replied, very heartily, that he would. I then asked him, if he would keep a journal of facts during his voyage, as it would enable him to speak more correctly, in case he should be called upon for his testimony. He assured me, he would,

would, and that he would make up a little book for that purpose. I asked him, lastly, When he meant to sail. He said, As soon as the ship could get all her hands. It was their intention to sail to-morrow, but that seven men, whom the mates had brought drunk out of Marsh-street the evening before, were so terrified when they found they were going to Africa, that they had seized the boat that morning, and had put themselves on shore. I took my leave of him, entreating him to follow his resolutions of kindness both to the sailors and the slaves, and wished him a speedy and a safe return.

On going one day by the Exchange, after this interview with Gardiner, I overheard a young gentleman say to another, "that it happened on the Coast, last year, and that he saw it." I wished to know who he was, and to get at him if I could. I watched him at a distance for more than half an hour, when I saw him leave his companion. I followed him till he entered a house. I then considered whether it would be proper, and in what manner, to address him when he should come out of it. But I waited three

hours, and I never saw him. I then concluded that he either lodged where I saw him enter, or that he had gone to dine with some friend. I therefore took notice of the house, and, showing it afterwards to several of my friends, desired them to make him out for me. In a day or two I had an interview with him. His name was James Arnold. He had been two voyages to the coast of Africa for slaves; one as surgeon's mate in the Alexander, in the year 1785, and the other as surgeon in the Little Pearl, in the year 1786, from which he had not then very long returned.

I asked him if he was willing to give me any account of these voyages, for that I was making an inquiry into the nature of the Slave-trade. He replied, he knew that I was. He had been cautioned about falling-in with me. He had, however, taken no pains to avoid me. It was a bad trade, and ought to be exposed.

I went over the same ground as I had gone with Gardiner relative to the first of these voyages, or that in the Alexander. It is not necessary to detail the particulars. It is impossible, however, not to mention, that the

the treatment of the seamen on board this vessel was worse than I had ever before heard of. No less than eleven of them, unable to bear their lives, had deserted at Bonny on the coast of Africa,—which is a most unusual thing,—choosing all that could be endured, though in a most inhospitable climate, and in the power of the natives, rather than to continue in their own ship. Nine others also, in addition to the loss of these, had died in the same voyage. As to the rest, he believed, without any exception, that they had been badly used.

In examining him with respect to his second voyage, or that in the Little Pearl, two circumstances came out with respect to the slaves, which I shall relate in few words.

The chief mate used to beat the men-slaves on very trifling occasions. About eleven one evening, the ship then lying off the coast, he heard a noise in their room. He jumped down among them with a lanthorn in his hand. Two of those, who had been ill-used by him, forced themselves out of their irons, and, seizing him, struck him with the bolt of them, and it was with some

difficulty that he was extricated from them by the crew.

The men-slaves, unable now to punish him, and finding they had created an alarm, began to proceed to extremities. They endeavoured to force themselves up the gratings, and to pull down a partition which had been made for a sick-birth; when they were fired upon and repressed. The next morning they were brought up one by one; when it appeared that a boy had been killed, who was afterwards thrown into the sea.

The two men, however, who had forced themselves out of irons, did not come up with the rest, but found their way into the hold, and armed themselves with knives from a cask, which had been opened for trade. One of them being called to in the African tongue by a Black trader, who was then on board, came up, but with a knife in each hand; when one of the crew, supposing him yet hostile, shot him in the right side and killed him on the spot.

The other remained in the hold for twelve hours. Scalding water mixed with fat was poured down upon him, to make him come up.

up. Though his flesh was painfully blistered by these means, he kept below. A promise was then made to him in the African tongue by the same trader, that no injury should be done him, if he would come among them. To this at length he consented. But on observing, when he was about half way up, that a sailor was armed between decks, he flew to him, and clasped him, and threw him down. The sailor fired his pistol in the scuffle, but without effect. He contrived however to fracture his skull with the butt end of it, so that the slave died on the third day.

The second circumstance took place after the arrival of the same vessel at St. Vincent's. There was a boy-slave on board, who was very ill and emaciated. The mate, who, by his cruelty, had been the author of the former mischief, did not choose to expose him to sale with the rest, lest the small sum he would fetch in that situation should lower the average price, and thus bring down* the value of the privileges of the officers

* Officers are said to be allowed the privilege of one or more slaves, according to their rank. When the cargo

officers of the ship. This boy was kept on board, and no provisions allowed him. The mate had suggested the propriety of throwing him overboard, but no one would do it. On the ninth day he expired, having never been allowed any sustenance during that time.

I asked Mr. Arnold if he was willing to give evidence of these facts in both cases. He said he had only one objection, which was, that in two or three days he was to go in the Ruby, on his third voyage: but on leaving me, he said, that he would take an affidavit before the mayor of the truth of any of those things which he had related to me, if that would do; but, from motives of safety, he should not choose to do this till within a few hours before he sailed.

In two or three days after this, he sent for me. He said the Ruby would leave King-road the next day, and that he was ready to do as he had promised. Depositions

cargo is sold, the sum total fetched is put down, and this being divided by the number of slaves sold, gives the average price of each. Such officers, then, receive this average price for one or more slaves, according to their privileges, but never the slaves themselves.

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were accordingly made out from his own words. I went with him to the residence of George Daubeny, esquire, who was then chief magistrate of the city, and they were sworn to in his presence, and witnessed as the law requires.

On taking my leave of him, I asked him how he could go a third time in such a barbarous employ. He said he had been distressed. In his voyage in the Alexander he had made nothing; for he had been so ill-used, that he had solicited his discharge in Grenada, where, being paid in currency, he had but little to receive. When he arrived in Bristol from that island, he was quite pennyless; and finding the Little Pearl going out, he was glad to get on board her as her surgeon, which he then did entirely for the sake of bread. He said, moreover, that she was but a small vessel, and that his savings had been but small in her. This occasioned him to apply for the Ruby, his present ship; but if he survived this voyage he would never go another. I then put the same question to him as to Gardiner, and he promised to keep a journal of facts, and

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to give his evidence, if called upon, on his return.

The reader will see, from this account, the difficulty I had in procuring evidence from this port. The owners of vessels employed in the trade there, forbad all intercourse with me. The old captains, who had made their fortunes in it, would not see me. The young, who were making them, could not be supposed to espouse my cause, to the detriment of their own interest. Of those whose necessities made them go into it for a livelihood, I could not get one to come forward, without doing so much for him as would have amounted to bribery. Thus, when I got one of these into my possession, I was obliged to let him go again. I was, however, greatly consoled by the consideration, that I had procured two sentinels to be stationed in the enemy's camp, who keeping a journal of different facts, would bring me some important intelligence at a future period.

CHAPTER XVI.

Author goes to Monmouth—confers relative to a petition from that place—returns to Bristol—is introduced to Alexander Falconbridge—takes one of the mates of the Africa out of that ship—visits disabled seamen from the ship Thomas—puts a chief mate into prison for the murder of William Lines—Ill-usage of seamen in various other slave-vessels—secures Cruttwell's Bath paper in favour of the abolition—lays the foundation of a committee at Bristol—and of a petition from thence also—takes his leave of that city.

By this time I began to feel the effect of my labours upon my constitution. It had been my practice to go home in the evening to my lodgings, about twelve o'clock, and then to put down the occurrences of the day. This usually kept me up till one, and sometimes till nearly two in the morning. When I went my rounds in Marsh-street, I seldom got home till two, and into bed till three. My clothes, also, were frequently wet through with the rains. The cruel accounts I was daily in the habit of hearing, both

both with respect to the slaves, and to the seamen employed in this wicked trade, from which, indeed, my mind had no respite, often broke my sleep in the night, and occasioned me to awake in an agitated state. All these circumstances concurred in affecting my health. I looked thin; my countenance became yellow. I had also rheumatic feelings. My friends, seeing this, prevailed upon me to give myself two or three days' relaxation. And as a gentleman, of whom I had some knowledge, was going into Carmarthenshire, I accompanied him as far as Monmouth.

After our parting at this place, I became restless and uneasy, and longed to get back to my work. I thought, however, that my journey ought not to be wholly useless to the cause; and hearing that Dr. Davis, a clergyman at Monmouth, was a man of considerable weight among the inhabitants, I took the liberty of writing him a letter, in which I stated who I was, and the way in which I had lately employed myself, and the great wish I had to be favoured with an interview with him; and I did not conceal that it would be very desirable, if the inhabitants

bitants of the place could have that information on the subject which would warrant them in so doing, that they should petition the legislature for the abolition of the Slave-trade. Dr. Davis returned me an answer, and received me. The questions which he put to me were judicious. He asked me, first, whether, if the slaves were emancipated, there would not be much confusion in the islands? I told him that the emancipation of them was no part of our plan. We solicited nothing but the stopping of all future importations of them into the islands. He then asked what the planters would do for labourers. I replied, they would find sufficient from an increase of the native population, if they were obliged to pay attention to the latter means. We discoursed a long time upon this last topic. I have not room to give the many other questions he proposed to me. No one was ever more judiciously questioned. In my turn, I put him into possession of all the discoveries I had made. He acknowledged the injustice of the trade. He confessed, also, that my conversation had enlightened him as to the impolicy of it; and, taking

taking some of my Summary Views to distribute, he said, he hoped that the inhabitants would, after the perusal of them, accede to my request.

On my return to Bristol, my friends had procured for me an interview with Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, who had been to the coast of Africa, as a surgeon, for four voyages; one in the Tartar, another in the Alexander, and two in the Emilia slave-vessels.

On my introduction to him, I asked him if he had any objection to give me an account of the cruelties, which were said to be connected with the Slave-trade. He answered, without any reserve, that he had not; for that he had now done with it. Never were any words more welcome to my ears than these—"Yes—I have done with the trade"—and he said also, that he was free to give me information concerning it. Was he not then one of the very persons, whom I had so long been seeking, but in vain?

To detail the accounts which he gave me at this and at subsequent interviews, relative to the different branches of this trade, would fill

no ordinary volume. Suffice it to say in general terms, as far as relates to the slaves, that he confirmed the various violent and treacherous methods of procuring them in their own country; their wretched condition, in consequence of being crowded together, in the passage; their attempts to rise in defence of their own freedom, and, when this was impracticable, to destroy themselves by the refusal of sustenance, by jumping overboard into the sea, and in other ways; the effect also of their situation upon their minds, by producing insanity and various diseases; and the cruel manner of disposing of them in the West Indies, and of separating relatives and friends.

With respect to the seamen employed in this trade, he commended captain Frazer for his kind usage to them, under whom he had so long served. The handsome way in which he spoke of the latter pleased me much, because I was willing to deduce from it his own impartiality, and because I thought I might infer from it also his regard to truth as to other parts of his narrative. Indeed I had been before acquainted with this circumstance. Thompson, of the Seven Stars,

Stars, had informed me that Frazer was the only man sailing out of that port for slaves, who had not been guilty of cruelty to his seamen: and Mr. Burges alluded to it, when he gave me advice not to proceed against the captain of the Alfred; for he then said, as I mentioned in a former chapter, "that he knew but one captain in the trade, who did not deserve long ago to be hanged." Mr. Falconbridge, however, stated, that though he had been thus fortunate in the Tartar and Emilia, he had been as unfortunate in the Alexander; for he believed there were no instances upon naval record, taken altogether, of greater barbarity, than of that which had been exercised towards the seamen in this voyage. In running over these, it struck me that I had heard of the same from some other quarter, or at least that these were so like the others, that I was surprised at their coincidence. On taking out my notes, I looked for the names of those whom I recollected to have been used in this manner; and on desiring Mr. Falconbridge to mention the names of those also to whom he alluded, they turned out to be the same. The mystery, however, was soon cleared

cleared up, when I told him from whom I had received my intelligence: for Mr. Arnold, the last-mentioned person in the last chapter, had been surgeon's mate under Mr. Falconbridge in the same vessel.

There was one circumstance of peculiar importance, but quite new to me, which I collected from the information which Mr. Falconbridge had given me. This was, that many of the seamen, who left the slave-ships in the West Indies, were in such a weak, ulcerated, and otherwise diseased state, that they perished there. Several also of those who came home with the vessels, were in the same deplorable condition. This was the case, Mr. Falconbridge said, with some who returned in the Alexander. It was the case also with many others; for he had been a pupil, for twelve months, in the Bristol Infirmary, and had had ample means of knowing the fact. The greatest number of seamen, at almost all times, who were there, were from the slave-vessels. These, too, were usually there on account of disease, whereas those from other ships were usually there on account of accidents. The health of some of the former was so far destroyed, that they were never

never wholly to be restored. This information was of great importance; for it showed that they who were reported dead upon the muster-rolls, were not all that were lost to the country by the prosecution of this wicked trade. Indeed, it was of so much importance, that in all my future interviews with others, which were for the purpose of collecting evidence, I never forgot to make it a subject of inquiry.

I can hardly say how precious I considered the facts with which Mr. Falconbridge had furnished me from his own experience, relative to the different branches of this commerce. They were so precious, that I began now to be troubled lest I should lose them. For, though he had thus privately unbosomed himself to me, it did not follow that he would come forward as a public evidence. I was not a little uneasy on this account. I was fearful lest, when I should put this question to him, his future plan of life, or some little narrow consideration of future interest, would prevent him from giving his testimony, and I delayed asking him for many days. During this time, however, I frequently visited him; and at length,

length, when I thought I was better acquainted, and probably in some little estimation, with him, I ventured to open my wishes on this subject. He answered me boldly, and at once, that he had left the trade upon principle, and that he would state all he knew concerning it, either publicly or privately, and at any time when he should be called upon to do it. This answer produced such an effect upon me, after all my former disappointments, that I felt it all over my frame. It operated like a sudden shock, which often disables the impressed person for a time. So the joy I felt rendered me quite useless, as to business, for the remainder of the day.

I began to perceive in a little time the advantage of having cultivated an acquaintance with Thompson of the Seven Stars. For nothing could now pass in Bristol, relative to the seamen employed in this trade, but it was soon brought to me. If there was any thing amiss, I had so arranged matters that I was sure to hear of it. He sent for me one day to inform me that several of the seamen, who had been sent out of Marsh-street into the Prince, which was then at

Kingroad, and on the point of sailing to Africa for slaves, had, through fear of ill-usage on the voyage, taken the boat and put themselves on shore. He informed me at the same time that the seamen of the Africa, which was lying there also and ready to sail on a like voyage, were not satisfied, for that they had been made to sign their articles of agreement, without being permitted to see them. To this he added that Mr. Sheriff, one of the mates of the latter vessel, was unhappy also on this account. Sheriff had been a mate in the West India trade, and was a respectable man in his line. He had been enticed by the captain of the Africa, under the promise of peculiar advantages, to change his voyage. Having a wife and family at Bristol, he was willing to make a sacrifice on their account. But when he himself was not permitted to read the articles, he began to suspect bad work, and that there would be nothing but misery in the approaching voyage. Thompson entreated me to extricate him, if I could. He was sure, he said, if he went to the Coast with that man, meaning the captain, that he would never return alive.

I was very unwilling to refuse any thing to Thompson. I was deeply bound to him in gratitude for the many services he had rendered me, but I scarcely saw how I could serve him on this occasion. I promised, however, to speak to him in an hour's time. I consulted my friend Truman Harford in the interim; and the result was, that he and I should proceed to Kingroad in a boat, go on board the Africa, and charge the captain in person with what he had done, and desire him to discharge Sheriff, as no agreement, where fraud or force was used in the signatures, could be deemed valid. If we were not able to extricate Sheriff by these means, we thought that at least we should know, by inquiring of those whom we should see on board, whether the measure of hindering the men from seeing their articles on signing them had been adopted. It would be useful to ascertain this, because such a measure had been long reported to be usual in this, but was said to be unknown in any other trade.

Having passed the river's mouth and rowed towards the sea, we came near the Prince first, but pursued our destination to

the Africa. Mr. Sheriff was the person who received us on board. I did not know him till I asked his name. I then told him my errand, with which he seemed to be much pleased. On asking him to tell the captain that I wished to speak with him, he replied that he was on shore. This put me to great difficulty, as I did not know then what to do. I consulted with Truman Harford, and it was our opinion, that we should inquire of the seamen, but in a very quiet manner, by going individually to each, if they had ever demanded to see the articles on signing them, and if they had been refused. We proposed this question to them. They replied, that the captain had refused them in a savage manner, making use of threats and oaths. There was not one contradictory voice on this occasion. We then asked Mr. Sheriff what we were to do. He entreated us by all means to take him on shore. He was sure that under such a man as the captain, and particularly after the circumstance of our coming on board should be made known to him, he would never come from the coast of Africa alive. Upon this, Truman Harford called me aside, and told

told me the danger of taking an officer from the ship; for that, if any accident should happen to her, the damage might all fall upon me. I then inquired of Mr. Sheriff if there was any officer on board, who could manage the ship. He pointed one out to me, and I spoke to him in the cabin. This person told me I need be under no apprehension about the vessel, but that every one would be sorry to lose Mr. Sheriff. Upon this ground, Truman Harford, who had felt more for me than for himself, became now easy. We had before concluded, that the obtaining any signature by fraud or force would render the agreement illegal. We therefore joined in opinion, that we might take away the man. His chest was accordingly put into our boat. We jumped into it with our rowers, and he followed us, surrounded by the seamen, all of whom took an affectionate leave of him, and expressed their regret at parting. Soon after this there was a general cry of "Will you take me too?" from the deck; and such a sudden movement appeared there, that we were obliged to push off directly from the side,

side, fearing that many would jump into our boat and go with us.

After having left the ship, Sheriff corroborated the desertion of the seamen from the Prince, as before related to me by Thompson. He spoke also of the savage disposition of his late captain, which he had even dared to manifest though lying in an English port. I was impressed by this account of his rough manners; and the wind having risen before and the surf now rolling heavily, I began to think what an escape I might have had; how easy it would have been for the savage captain, if he had been on board, or for any one at his instigation, to have pushed me over the ship's side. This was the first time I had ever considered the peril of the undertaking. But we arrived safe; and though on the same evening I left my name at the captain's house, as that of the person who had taken away his mate, I never heard more about it.

In pursuing my inquiries into the new topic suggested by Mr. Falconbridge, I learnt that two or three of the seamen of the ship Thomas, which had been arrived now nearly a year

a year from the Coast, were in a very crippled and deplorable state. I accordingly went to see them. One of them had been attacked by a fever, arising from circumstances connected with these voyages. The inflammation, which had proceeded from it, had reached his eyes. It could not be dispersed; and the consequence was, that he was then blind. The second was lame. He had badly ulcerated legs, and appeared to be very weak. The third was a mere spectre. I think he was the most pitiable object I ever saw. I considered him as irrecoverably gone. They all complained to me of their bad usage on board the Thomas. They said they had heard of my being in Bristol, and they hoped I would not leave it, without inquiring into the murder of William Lines.

On inquiring who William Lines was, they informed me that he had been one of the crew of the same ship, and that all on board believed that he had been killed by the chief mate; but they themselves had not been present when the blows were given him. They had not seen him till afterwards; but their shipmates had told them of his cruel treatment,

treatment, and they knew that soon afterwards he had died.

In the course of the next day, the mother of Lines, who lived in Bristol, came to me and related the case. I told her there was no evidence as to the fact, for that I had seen three seamen, who could not speak to it from their own knowledge. She said, there were four others then in Bristol who could. I desired her to fetch them. When they arrived I examined each separately, and cross-examined them in the best manner I was able. I could find no variation in their account, and I was quite convinced that the murder had taken place. The mother was then importunate that I should take up the case. I was too much affected by the narration I had heard to refuse her wholly, and yet I did not promise that I would. I begged a little time to consider of it. During this I thought of consulting my friend Burges. But I feared he would throw cold water upon it, as he had done in the case of the captain of the Alfred. I remembered well what he had then said to me, and yet I felt a strong disposition to proceed. For the trade was still going on. Every day, perhaps,

haps, some new act of barbarity was taking place. And one example, if made, might counteract the evil for a time. I seemed therefore to incline to stir in this matter, and thought, if I should get into any difficulty about it, it would be better to do it without consulting Mr. Burges, than, after having done it, to fly as it were in his face. I then sent for the woman, and told her, that she might appear with the witnesses at the Common Hall, where the magistrates usually sat on a certain day.

We all met at the time appointed, and I determined to sit as near to the mayor as I could get. The hall was unusually crowded. One or two slave-merchants, and two or three others, who were largely concerned in the West India trade, were upon the bench. For I had informed the mayor the day before of my intention, and he, it appeared, had informed them. I shall never forget the savage looks which these people gave me; which indeed were so remarkable, as to occasion the eyes of the whole court to be turned upon me. They looked as if they were going to speak to me, and the people looked as if they expected me to say some-

thing in return. They then got round the mayor, and began to whisper to him, as I supposed, on the business before it should come on. One of them, however, said aloud to the former, but fixing his eyes upon me, and wishing me to overhear him, "Scandalous reports had lately been spread, but sailors were not used worse in Guineamen than in other vessels." This brought the people's eyes upon me again. I was very much irritated, but I thought it improper to say any thing. Another, looking savagely at me, said to the mayor, "that he had known captain Vicars a long sime; that he was an honourable man*, and would not allow such usage in his ship. There were always vagabonds to hatch up things:" and he made a dead point at me, by putting himself

* We may well imagine what this person's notion of another man's honour was; for he was the purser of the Brothers and of the Alfred, who, as before mentioned, sent the captains of those ships out a second voyage, after knowing their barbarities in the former. And he was also the purser of this very ship Thomas, where the murder had been committed. I by no means, however, wish by these observations to detract from the character of captain Vicars, as he had no concern in the cruel deed.

into

into a posture which attracted the notice of those present, and by staring me in the face. I could now no longer restrain myself, and I said aloud in as modest a manner as I could, "You, sir, may know many things which I do not. But this I know, that if you do not do your duty, you are amenable to a higher court." The mayor upon this looked at me, and directly my friend Mr. Burges, who was sitting as the clerk to the magistrates, went to him and whispered something in his ear; after which all private conversation between the mayor and others ceased, and the hearing was ordered to come on.

I shall not detain the reader by giving an account of the evidence which then transpired. The four witnesses were examined, and the case was so far clear. Captain Vicars, however, was sent for. On being questioned, he did not deny that there had been bad usage, but said that the young man had died of the flux. But this assertion went for nothing when balanced against the facts which had come out; and this was so evident, that an order was made out for the apprehension of the chief mate. He was accordingly

accordingly taken up. The next day, however, there was a rehearing of the case, when he was returned to the gaol, where he was to lie till the Lords of the Admiralty should order a sessions to be held for the trial of offences committed on the high seas.

This public examination of the case of William Lines, and the way in which it ended, produced an extraordinary result; for after this time the slave-captains and mates, who used to meet me suddenly, used as suddenly to start from me, indeed to the other side of the pavement, as if I had been a wolf, or tiger, or some dangerous beast of prey. Such of them as saw me before hand, used to run up the cross streets or lanes, which were nearest to them, to get away. Seamen, too, came from various quarters to apply to me for redress. One came to me, who had been treated ill in the Alexander, when Mr. Falconbridge had been the surgeon of her. Three came to me, who had been ill-used in the voyage which followed, though she had then sailed under a new captain. Two applied to me from the Africa, who had been of her crew in the last voyage. Two from the Fly. Two from the

the Wasp. One from the Little Pearl, and three from the Pilgrim or Princess, when she was last upon the coast.

The different scenes of barbarity, which these represented to me, greatly added to the affliction of my mind. My feelings became now almost insupportable. I was agonized to think that this trade should last another day. I was in a state of agitation from morning till night. I determined I would soon leave Bristol. I saw nothing but misery in the place. I had collected now, I believed, all the evidence it would afford; and to stay in it a day longer than was necessary, would be only an interruption for so much time both of my happiness and of my health. I determined therefore to do only two or three things, which I thought to be proper, and to depart in a few days.

And first I went to Bath, where I endeavoured to secure the respectable paper belonging to that city in favour of the abolition of the Slave-trade. This I did entirely to my satisfaction, by relating to the worthy editor all the discoveries I had made, and by impressing his mind in a forcible manner

ner on the subject. And it is highly to the honour of Mr. Crutwell, that from that day he never ceased to defend our cause; that he never made a charge for insertions of any kind; but that he considered all he did upon this occasion in the light of a duty, or as his mite given in charity to a poor and oppressed people.

The next attempt was to lay the foundation of a committee in Bristol, and of a petition to Parliament from it for the abolition of the Slave-trade. I had now made many friends. A gentleman of the name of Paynter had felt himself much interested in my labours. Mr. Joseph Harford, a man of fortune, of great respectability of character, and of considerable influence, had attached himself to the cause. Dr. Fox had assisted me in it. Mr. Hughes, a clergyman of the Baptist church, was anxious and ready to serve it. Dr. Camplin, of the Establishment, with several of his friends, continued steady. Matthew Wright, James Harford, Truman Harford, and all the Quakers to a man, were strenuous, and this on the best of principles, in its support. To

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all these I spoke, and I had the pleasure of seeing that my wishes were likely in a short time to be gratified in both these cases.

It was now necessary that I should write to the committee in London. I had written to them only two letters, during my absence; for I had devoted myself so much to the great object I had undertaken, that I could think of little else. Hence some of my friends among them were obliged to write to different persons at Bristol, to inquire if I was alive. I gave up a day or two, therefore, to this purpose. I informed the committee of all my discoveries in the various branches to which my attention had been directed, and desired them in return to procure me various official documents for the port of London, which I then specified. Having done this, I conferred with Mr. Falconbridge, relative to being with me at Liverpool. I thought it right to make him no other offer than that his expenses should be paid. He acceded to my request on these disinterested terms; and I took my departure from Bristol, leaving him to follow me in a few days.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.

Author secures the Glocester paper, and lays the foundation of a petition from that city—does the same at Worcester—and at Chester—arrives at Liverpool—collects specimens of African produce—also imports and exports—and muster-rolls—and accounts of dock-duties—and iron instruments used in the Slave-trade—His introduction to Mr. Norris, and others—Author and his errand become known—People visit him out of curiosity—Frequent controversies on the subject of the Slave-trade.

On my arrival at Glocester, I waited upon my friend Dean Tucker. He was pleased to hear of the great progress I had made since he left me. On communicating to him my intention of making interest with the editors of some provincial papers, to enlighten the public mind, and with the inhabitants of some respectable places, for petitions to Parliament, relative to the abolition of the Slave-trade, he approved of it, and introduced me to Mr. Raikes, the proprietor of the respectable paper belonging to

to that city. Mr. Raikes acknowledged, without any hesitation, the pleasure he should have in serving such a noble cause; and he promised to grant me, from time to time, a corner in his paper, for such things as I might point out to him for insertion. This promise he performed afterwards, without any pecuniary consideration, and solely on the ground of benevolence. He promised also his assistance as to the other object, for the promotion of which I left him several of my Summary Views to distribute.

At Worcester I trod over the same ground, and with the same success. Timothy Bevington, of the religious society of the Quakers, was the only person to whom I had an introduction there. He accompanied me to the mayor, to the editor of the Worcester paper, and to several others, before each of whom I pleaded the cause of the oppressed Africans in the best manner I was able. I dilated both on the inhumanity and on the impolicy of the trade, which I supported by the various facts recently obtained at Bristol. I desired, however, as far as petitions were concerned, (and this desire

I expressed on all other similar occasions,) that no attempt should be made to obtain these, till such information had been circulated on the subject, that every one, when called upon, might judge, from his knowledge of it, how far he would feel it right to join in it. For this purpose I left also here several of my Summary Views for distribution.

After my arrival at Chester, I went to the bishop's residence, but I found he was not there. Knowing no other person in the place, I wrote a note to Mr. Cowdroy, whom I understood to be the editor of the Chester paper, soliciting an interview with him. I explained my wishes to him on both subjects. He seemed to be greatly rejoiced, when we met, that such a measure as that of the abolition of the Slave-trade was in contemplation. Living at so short a distance from Liverpool, and in a county from which so many persons were constantly going to Africa, he was by no means ignorant, as some were, of the nature of this cruel traffic; but yet he had no notion that I had probed it so deeply, or that I had brought to light such important circumstances

stances concerning it, as he found by my conversation. He made me a hearty offer of his services on this occasion, and this expressly without fee or reward. I accepted them most joyfully and gratefully. It was, indeed, a most important thing, to have a station so near the enemy's camp, where we could watch their motions, and meet any attack which might be made from it. And this office of a sentinel Mr. Cowdroy performed with great vigilance; and when he afterwards left Chester for Manchester, to establish a paper there, he carried with him the same friendly disposition towards our cause.

My first introduction at Liverpool was to William Rathbone, a member of the religious society of the Quakers. He was the same person, who, before the formation of our committee, had procured me copies of several of the muster-rolls of the slave-vessels belonging to that port, so that, though we were not personally known, yet we were not strangers to each other. Isaac Hadwen, a respectable member of the same society, was the person whom I saw next. I had been introduced to him, previously to

my journey, when he was at London, at the yearly meeting of the Quakers, so that no letter to him was necessary. As Mr. Roscoe had generously given the profits of The Wrongs of Africa to our committee, I made no scruple of calling upon him. His reception of me was very friendly, and he introduced me afterwards to Dr. Currie, who had written the preface to that poem. There wss also a fourth, upon whom I called, though I did not know him. His name was Edward Rushton. He had been an officer in a slave-ship, but had lost his sight, and had become an enemy to that trade. On passing through Chester, I had heard, for the first time, that he had published a poem called West-Indian Eclogues, with a view of making the public better acquainted with the evil of the Slave-trade, and of exciting their indignation against it. Of the three last it may be observed, that, having come forward thus early, as labourers, they deserve to be put down, as I have placed them in the map, among the forerunners and coadjutors in this great cause, for each published his work before any efforts were made publicly, or without knowing

ing that any were intended. Rushton, also, had the boldness, though then living in Liverpool, to affix his name to his work. These were the only persons whom I knew for some time after my arrival in that place.

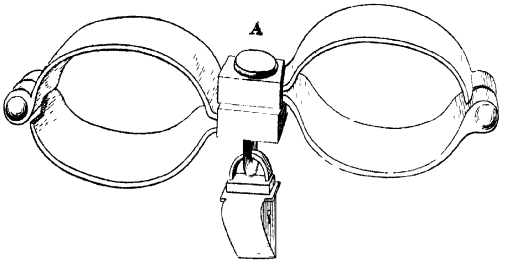
It may not, perhaps, be necessary to enter so largely into my proceedings at Liverpool as at Bristol. The following account, therefore, may suffice.

In my attempts to add to my collection of specimens of African produce, I was favoured with a sample of gum ruber astringens, of cotton from the Gambia, of indigo and musk, of long pepper, of black pepper from Whidàh, of mahogany from Calabar, and of cloths of different colours, made by the natives, which, while they gave other proofs of the quality of their own cotton, gave proofs, also, of the variety of their dyes.

I made interest at the Custom-house for various exports and imports, and for copies of the muster-rolls of several slave-vessels, besides those of vessels employed in other trades.

By looking out constantly for information on this great subject, I was led to the exami-

examination of a printed card or table of the dock-duties of Liverpool, which was published annually. The town of Liverpool had so risen in opulence and importance, from only a fishing-village, that the corporation seemed to have a pride in giving a public view of this increase. Hence they published and circulated this card. Now the card contained one, among other facts, which was almost as precious, in a political point of view, as any I had yet obtained. It stated, that in the year 1772, when I knew that a hundred vessels sailed out of Liverpool for the coast of Africa, the dock-duties amounted to 4552*l.*, and that in 1779, when I knew that, in consequence of the war, only eleven went from thence to the same coast, they amounted to 4957*l.* From these facts, put together, two conclusions were obvious. The first was, that the opulence of Liverpool, as far as the entry of vessels into its ports, and the dock-duties arising from thence, were concerned, was not indebted to the Slave-trade; for these duties were highest when it had only eleven ships in that employ. The second was, that there had been almost a practical experi-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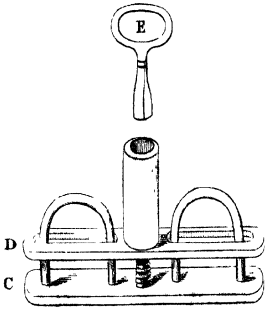
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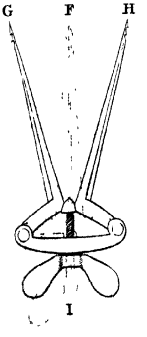
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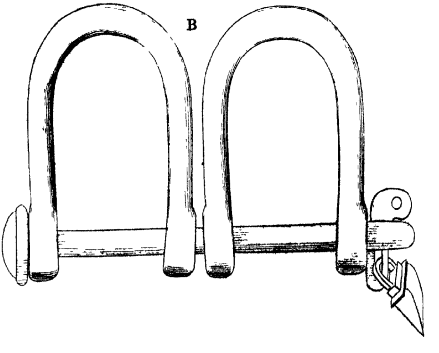
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experiment with respect to the abolition of it; for the vessels in it had been gradually reduced from one hundred to eleven, and yet the West Indians had not complained of their ruin, nor had the merchants or manufacturers suffered, nor had Liverpool been affected by the change.

There were specimens of articles in Liverpool, which I entirely overlooked at Bristol, and which I believe I should have overlooked here, also, had it not been for seeing them at a window in a shop; I mean those of different iron instruments used in this cruel traffic. I bought a pair of the iron hand-cuffs with which the men-slaves are confined. The right-hand wrist of one, and the left of another, are almost brought into contact by these, and fastened together, as the figure A in the annexed plate represents, by a little bolt with a small padlock at the end of it. I bought also a pair of shackles for the legs. These are represented by the figure B. The right ancle of one man is fastened to the left of another, as the reader will observe, by similar means. I bought these, not because it was difficult to conceive how the unhappy victims of this

this execrable trade were confined, but to show the fact that they were so. For what was the inference from it, but that they did not leave their own country willingly; that, when they were in the holds of the slave-vessels, they were not in the Elysium which had been represented; and that there was a fear, either that they would make their escape, or punish their oppressors? I bought also a thumb-screw at this shop. The thumbs are put into this instrument through the two circular holes at the top of it. By turning a key, a bar rises up by means of a screw from C to D, and the pressure upon them becomes painful. By turning it further you may make the blood start from the ends of them. By taking the key away, as at E, you leave the tortured person in agony, without any means of extricating himself, or of being extricated by others. This screw, as I was then informed, was applied by way of punishment, in case of obstinacy in the slaves, or for any other reputed offence, at the discretion of the captain. At the same place I bought another instrument which I saw. It was called a speculum oris. The dotted lines in the figure on the right hand

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of the screw, represent it when shut, the black lines when open. It is opened, as at G H, by a screw below with a knob at the end of it. This instrument is known among surgeons, having been invented to assist them in wrenching open the mouth as in the case of a locked jaw. But it had got into use in this trade. On asking the seller of the instruments, on what occasion it was used there, he replied, that the slaves were frequently so sulky, as to shut their mouths against all sustenance, and this with a determination to die; and that it was necessary their mouths should be forced open to throw in nutriment, that they who had purchased them might incur no loss by their death.

The town's talk of Liverpool was much of the same nature as that at Bristol on the subject of this trade. Horrible facts concerning it were in every body's mouth. But they were more numerous, as was likely to be the case, where eighty vessels were employed from one port, and only eighteen from the other. The people too at Liverpool seemed to be more hardened, or they related them with more coldness or less feeling. This may be accounted for, from the

greater number of those facts, as just related, the mention of which, as it was of course more frequent, occasioned them to lose their power of exciting surprise. All this I thought in my favour, as I should more easily, or with less obnoxiousness, come to the knowledge of what I wanted to obtain.

My friend William Rathbone, who had been looking out to supply me with intelligence, but who was desirous that I should not be imposed upon, and that I should get it from the fountain-head, introduced me to Mr. Norris for this purpose. Norris had been formerly a slave-captain, but had quitted the trade and settled as a merchant in a different line of business. He was a man of quick penetration, and of good talents, which he had cultivated to advantage, and he had a pleasing address both as to speech and manners. He received me with great politeness, and offered me all the information I desired. I was with him five or six times at his own house for this purpose. The substance of his communications on these occasions I shall now put down, and I beg the reader's particular attention to it, as he

he will be referred to it in other parts of this work.

With respect to the produce of Africa, Mr. Norris enumerated many articles in which a new and valuable trade might be opened, of which he gave me one, namely, the black pepper from Whidàh before mentioned. This he gave me, to use his own expressions, as one argument among many others of the impolicy of the Slave-trade, which, by turning the attention of the inhabitants to the persons of one another for sale, hindered foreigners from discovering, and themselves from cultivating, many of the valuable productions of their own soil.

On the subject of procuring slaves he gave it as his decided opinion, that many of the inhabitants of Africa were kidnapped by each other, as they were travelling on the roads, or fishing in the creeks, or cultivating their little spots. Having learnt their language, he had collected the fact from various quarters, but more particularly from the accounts of slaves, whom he had transported in his own vessels. With respect however to Whidàh, many came from thence, who were reduced to slavery in a different manner.

ner. The king of Dahomey, whose life (with the wars and customs of the Dahomans) he said he was then writing, and who was a very despotic prince, made no scruple of seizing his own subjects, and of selling them, if he was in want of any of the articles which the slave-vessels would afford him. The history of this prince's life he lent me afterwards to read, while it was yet in manuscript, in which I observed that he had recorded all the facts now mentioned. Indeed he made no hesitation to state them, either when we were by ourselves, or when others were in company with us. He repeated them at one time in the presence both of Mr. Cruden and of Mr. Coupland. The latter was then a slave-merchant at Liverpool. He seemed to be fired at the relation of these circumstances. Unable to restrain himself longer, he entered into a defence of the trade, both as to the humanity and the policy of it. But Mr. Norris took up his arguments in both these cases, and answered them in a solid manner.

With respect to the Slave-trade, as it affected the health of our seamen, Mr. Norris admitted it to be destructive. But I did not

not stand in need of this information, as I knew this part of the subject, in consequence of my familiarity with the muster-rolls, better than himself.

He admitted it also to be true, that they were too frequently ill-treated in this trade. A day or two after our conversation on this latter subject he brought me the manuscript journal of a voyage to Africa, which had been kept by a mate, with whom he was then acquainted. He brought it to me to read, as it might throw some light upon the subject on which we had talked last. In this manuscript various instances of cruel usage towards seamen were put down, from which it appeared that the mate, who wrote it, had not escaped himself.

At the last interview we had he seemed to be so satisfied of the inhumanity, injustice, and impolicy of the trade, that he made me a voluntary offer of certain clauses, which he had been thinking of, and which, he believed, if put into an act of parliament, would judiciously effect its abolition. The offer of these clauses I embraced eagerly. He dictated them, and I wrote. I wrote them

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in a small book which I had then in my pocket. They were these:

No vessel under a heavy penalty to supply foreigners with slaves.

Every vessel to pay to government a tax for a register on clearing out to supply our own islands with slaves.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from purchasing or bringing home any of the productions of Africa.

Every such vessel to be prohibited from bringing home a passenger, or any article of produce, from the West Indies.

A bounty to be given to every vessel trading in the natural productions of Africa. This bounty to be paid in part out of the tax arising from the registers of the slave-vessels.

Certain establishments to be made by government in Africa, in the Bananas, in the Isles de Los, on the banks of the Camaranca, and in other places, for the encouragement and support of the new trade to be substituted there.

Such then were the services, which Mr. Norris, at the request of William Rathbone, rendered

rendered me at Liverpool, during my stay there; and I have been very particular in detailing them, because I shall be obliged to allude to them, as I have before observed, on some important occasions in a future part of the work.

On going my rounds one day, I met accidentally with captain Chaffers. This gentleman either was or had been in the West India employ. His heart had beaten in sympathy with mine, and he had greatly favoured our cause. He had seen me at Mr. Norris's, and learned my errand there. He told me he could introduce me in a few minutes, as we were then near at hand, to captain Lace, if I chose it. Captain Lace, he said, had been long in the Slave-trade, and could give me very accurate information about it. I accepted his offer. On talking to captain Lace, relative to the productions of Africa, he told me that mahogany grew at Calabàr. He began to describe a tree of that kind, which he had seen there. This tree was from about eighteen inches to two feet in diameter, and about sixty feet high, or, as he expressed it, of the height of a tall chimney. As soon as he mentioned

Calabàr, a kind of horror came over me. His name became directly associated in my mind with the place. It almost instantly occurred to me, that he commanded the Edgar out of Liverpool, when the dreadful massacre there, as has been related, took place. Indeed I seemed to be so confident of it, that, attending more to my feelings than to my reason at this moment, I accused him with being concerned in it. This produced great confusion among us. For he looked incensed at captain Chaffers, as if he had introduced me to him for this purpose. Captain Chaffers again seemed to be all astonishment that I should have known of this circumstance, and to be vexed that I should have mentioned it in such a manner. I was also in a state of trembling myself. Captain Lace could only say it was a bad business. But he never defended himself, nor those concerned in it. And we soon parted, to the great joy of us all.

Soon after this interview I began to perceive that I was known in Liverpool, as well as the object for which I came. Mr. Coupland, the slave-merchant, with whom I had disputed at Mr. Norris's house, had given the

the alarm to those who were concerned in the trade, and captain Lace, as may be now easily imagined, had spread it. This knowledge of me and of my errand was almost immediately productive of two effects, the first of which I shall now mention.

I had a private room at the King's Arms tavern, besides my bed-room, where I used to meditate and to write. But I generally dined in public. The company at dinner had hitherto varied but little as to number, and consisted of those, both from the town and country, who had been accustomed to keep up a connection with the house. But now things were altered, and many people came to dine there daily with a view of seeing me, as if I had been some curious creature imported from foreign parts. They thought, also, they could thus have an opportunity of conversing with me. Slave-merchants and slave-captains came in among others for this purpose. I had observed this difference in the number of our company for two or three days. Dale, the master of the tavern, had observed it also, and told me in a good-natured manner, that many of these were my visitors, and that I was

likely to bring him a great deal of custom. In a little time however things became serious; for they, who came to see me, always started the abolition of the Slave-trade as the subject for conversation. Many entered into the justification of this trade with great warmth, as if to ruffle my temper, or at any rate to provoke me to talk. Others threw out, with the same view, that men were going about to abolish it, who would have done much better if they had staid at home. Others said they had heard of a person turned mad, who had conceived the thought of destroying Liverpool, and all its glory. Some gave as a toast, Success to the Trade, and then laughed immoderately, and watched me when I took my glass to see if I would drink it. I saw the way in which things were now going, and I believed it would be proper that I should come to some fixed resolutions; such as, whether I should change my lodgings, and whether I should dine in private; and if not, what line of conduct it would become me to pursue on such occasions. With respect to changing my lodgings and dining in private, I conceived, if I were to do either of these things, that I should

should be showing an unmanly fear of my visitors, which they would turn to their own advantage. I conceived too, that, if I chose to go on as before, and to enter into conversation with them on the subject of the abolition of the Slave-trade, I might be able, by having such an assemblage of persons daily, to gather all the arguments which they could collect on the other side of our question, an advantage which I should one day feel in the future management of the cause. With respect to the line, which I should pursue in the case of remaining in the place of my abode and in my former habits, I determined never to start the subject of the abolition myself—never to abandon it when started—never to defend it but in a serious and dignified manner—and never to discover any signs of irritation, whatever provocation might be given me. By this determination I abided rigidly. The King's Arms became now daily the place for discussion on this subject. Many tried to insult me, but to no purpose. In all these discussions I found the great advantage of having brought Mr. Falconbridge with me from Bristol: for he was always at the table;

and when my opponents, with a disdainful look, tried to ridicule my knowledge, among those present, by asking me if I had ever been on the coast of Africa myself, he used generally to reply, "But I have. I know all your proceedings there, and that his statements are true." These and other words put in by him, who was an athletic and resolute-looking man, were of great service to me. All disinterested persons, of whom there were four or five daily in the room, were uniformly convinced by our arguments, and took our part, and some of them very warmly. Day after day we beat our opponents out of the field, as many of the company acknowledged, to their no small mortification, in their presence. Thus, while we served the cause by discovering all that could be said against it, we served it by giving numerous individuals proper ideas concerning it, and of interesting them in our favour.

The second effect which I experienced was, that from this time I could never get any one to come forward as an evidence to serve the cause. There were, I believe, hundreds of persons in Liverpool, and in the neigh-

bourhood of it, who had been concerned in this traffic, and who had left it, all of whom could have given such testimony concerning it as would have insured its abolition. But none of them would now speak out. Of these indeed there were some, who were alive to the horrors of it, and who lamented that it should still continue. But yet even these were backward in supporting me. All that they did was just privately to see me, to tell me that I was right, and to exhort me to persevere: but as to coming forward to be examined publicly, my object was so unpopular, and would become so much more so when brought into parliament, that they would have their houses pulled down, if they should then appear as public instruments in the annihilation of the trade. With this account I was obliged to rest satisfied; nor could I deny, when I considered the spirit, which had manifested itself, and the extraordinary number of interested persons in the place, that they had some reason for their fears: and that these fears were not groundless, appeared afterwards; for Dr. Binns, a respectable physician belonging to the religious society of the Quakers, and

to

to whom Isaac Hadwen had introduced me, was near falling into a mischievous plot, which had been laid against him, because he was one of the subscribers to the Institution for the Abolition of the Slave-trade, and because he was suspected of having aided me in promoting that object.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Hostile disposition towards the author increases, on account of his known patronage of the seamen employed in the Slave-trade—manner of procuring and paying them at Liverpool—their treatment, and mortality—Account of the murder of Peter Green—trouble taken by the author to trace it—his narrow escape—goes to Lancaster—but returns to Liverpool—leaves the latter place.

It has appeared that a number of persons used to come and see me, out of curiosity, at the King's Arms tavern; and that these manifested a bad disposition towards me, which was near breaking out into open insult. Now the cause of all this was, as I have observed, the knowledge which people had obtained, relative to my errand at this place. But this hostile disposition was increased by another circumstance, which I am now to mention. I had been so shocked at the treatment of the seamen belonging to the slave-vessels at Bristol, that I determined, on my arrival at Liverpool, to institute

tute an inquiry concerning it there also. I had made considerable progress in it, so that few seamen were landed from such vessels, but I had some communication with them; and though no one else would come near me, to give me any information about the trade, these were always forward to speak to me, and to tell me their grievances, if it were only with the hope of being able to get redress. The consequence of this was, that they used to come to the King's Arms tavern to see me. Hence one, two, and three were almost daily to be found about the door; and this happened quite as frequently after the hostility just mentioned had shown itself, as before. They, therefore, who came to visit me out of curiosity, could not help seeing my sailor visitors; and on inquiring into their errand, they became more than ever incensed against me.

The first result of this increased hostility towards me was an application from some of them to the master of the tavern, that he would not harbour me. This he communicated to me in a friendly manner, but he was by no means desirous that I should leave him. On the other hand, he hoped I would

would stay long enough to accomplish my object. I thought it right, however, to take the matter into consideration; and, having canvassed it, I resolved to remain with him, for the reasons mentioned in the former chapter. But, that I might avoid doing any thing that would be injurious to his interest, as well as in some measure avoid giving unnecessary offence to others, I took lodgings in Williamson Square, where I retired to write, and occasionally to sleep, and to which place all seamen, desirous of seeing me, were referred. Hence I continued to get the same information as before, but in a less obnoxious and injurious manner.

The history of the seamen employed in the slave-vessels belonging to the port of Liverpool, I found to be similar to that of those from Bristol.

They, who went into this trade, were of two classes. The first consisted of those who were ignorant of it, and to whom, generally, improper representations of advantage had been made, for the purpose of enticing them into it. The second consisted of those, who, by means of a regular system, kept up by the mates and captains, had

had been purposely brought by their landlords into distress, from which they could only be extricated by going into this hateful employ. How many have I seen, with tears in their eyes, put into boats, and conveyed to vessels, which were then lying at the Black Rock, and which were only waiting to receive them to sail away!

The manner of paying them in the currency of the Islands was the same as at Bristol. But this practice was not concealed at Liverpool, as it was at the former place. The articles of agreement were printed, so that all, who chose to buy, might read them. At the same time it must be observed, that seamen were never paid in this manner in any other employ; and that the African wages, though nominally higher for the sake of procuring hands, were thus made to be actually lower than in other trades.

The loss by death was so similar, that it did not signify whether the calculation on a given number was made either at this or the other port. I had, however, a better opportunity at this, than I had at the other, of knowing the loss as it related to those, whose constitutions had been ruined, or

who had been rendered incapable, by disease, of continuing their occupation at sea. For the slave-vessels, which returned to Liverpool, sailed immediately into the docks, so that I saw at once their sickly and ulcerated crews. The number of vessels, too, was so much greater from this, than from any other port, that their sick made a more conspicuous figure in the infirmary. And they were seen also more frequently in the streets.

With respect to their treatment, nothing could be worse. It seemed to me to be but one barbarous system from the beginning to the end. I do not say barbarous, as if premeditated, but it became so in consequence of the savage habits gradually formed by a familiarity with miserable sights, and with a course of action inseparable from the trade. Men in their first voyages usually disliked the traffic; and, if they were happy enough then to abandon it, they usually escaped the disease of a hardened heart. But if they went a second and a third time, their disposition became gradually changed. It was impossible for them to be accustomed to carry away men and women by force, to keep them in chains, to

many slaves this ship had carried in her last voyage. He replied, he could not tell; but one of the two persons walking about could answer me, as he had sailed out and returned in her. This man came up to us, and joined in conversation. He answered my question and many others, and would have shown me the ship. But on asking him how many seamen had died on the voyage, he changed his manner, and said, with apparent hesitation, he could not tell. I asked him next, what had become of the steward Green. He said, he believed he was dead. I asked how the seamen had been used. He said, Not worse than others. I then asked whether Green had been used worse than others. He replied, he did not then recollect. I found that he was now quite upon his guard, and as I could get no satisfactory answer from him I left the ship.

On the next day, I looked over the muster-roll of this vessel. On examining it, I found that sixteen of the crew had died. I found also the name of Peter Green. I found, again, that the latter had been put down among the dead. I observed also, that the ship had left Liverpool on the fifth of June 1786,

1786, and had returned on the fifth of June 1787, and that Peter Green was put down as having died on the nineteenth of September; from all which circumstances it was evident that he must, as my Bristol information asserted, have died upon the Coast.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary coincidence of name, mortality, time, and place, I could gain no further intelligence about the affair till within about ten days before I left Liverpool; when among the seamen, who came to apply to me in Williamson Square, was George Ormond. He came to inform me of his own ill-usage; from which circumstance I found that he had sailed in the same ship with Peter Green. This led me to inquire into the transaction in question, and I received from him the following account:—

Peter Green had been shipped as steward. A black woman, of the name of Rodney, went out in the same vessel. She belonged to the owners of it, and was to be an interpretess to the slaves who should be purchased. About five in the evening, some time in the month of September, the vessel then lying in Bonny river, the captain, as was his custom, went on shore. In his absence,

sence, Rodney, the black woman, asked Green for the keys of the pantry; which he refused her, alleging that the captain had already beaten him for having given them to her on a former occasion, when she drank the wine. The woman, being passionate, struck him, and a scuffle ensued, out of which Green extricated himself as well as he could.

When the scuffle was over the woman retired to the cabin, and appeared pensive. Between eight and nine in the evening, the captain, who was attended by the captain of the Alfred, came on board. Rodney immediately ran to him, and informed him that Green had made an assault upon her. The captain, without any inquiry, beat him severely, and ordered his hands to be made fast to some bolts on the starboard side of the ship and under the half deck, and then flogged him himself, using the lashes of the cat-of-nine-tails upon his back at one time, and the double walled knot at the end of it upon his head at another; and stopping to rest at intervals, and using each hand alternately, that he might strike with the greater severity.

The pain had now become so very severe, that

that Green cried out, and entreated the captain of the Alfred, who was standing by, to pity his hard case, and to intercede for him. But the latter replied, that he would have served him in the same manner. Unable to find a friend here, he called upon the chief mate; but this only made matters worse, for the captain then ordered the latter to flog him also; which he did for some time, using however only the lashes of the instrument. Green then called in his distress upon the second mate to speak for him; but the second mate was immediately ordered to perform the same cruel office, and was made to persevere in it till the lashes were all worn into threads. But the barbarity did not close here: for the captain, on seeing the instrument now become useless, ordered another, with which he flogged him as before, beating him at times over the head with the double walled knot, and changing his hands, and cursing his own left hand for not being able to strike so severe a blow as his right.

The punishment, as inflicted by all parties, had now lasted two hours and a half, when George Ormond was ordered to cut

down one of the arms, and the boatswain the other, from the places of their confinement. This being done, Green lay motionless on the deck. He attempted to utter something. Ormond understood it to be the word water. But no water was allowed him. The captain, on the other hand, said he had not yet done with him, and ordered him to be confined with his arms across, his right hand to his left foot, and his left hand to his right foot. For this purpose the carpenter brought shackles, and George Ormond was compelled to put them on. The captain then ordered some tackle to be made fast to the limbs of the said Peter Green, in which situation he was then hoisted up, and afterwards let down into a boat, which was lying alongside the ship. Michael Cunningham was then sent to loose the tackle, and to leave him there.

In the middle watch, or between one and two next morning, George Ormond looked out of one of the port-holes, and called to Green, but received no answer. Between two and three, Paul Berry, a seaman, was sent down into the boat and found him dead. He made his report to one of the

the officers of the ship. About five in the morning, the body was brought up, and laid on the waist near the half-deck door. The captain on seeing the body, when he rose, expressed no concern, but ordered it to be knocked out of irons, and to be buried at the usual place of interment for seamen, or Bonny Point. I may now observe, that the deceased was in good health before the punishment took place, and in high spirits; for he played upon the flute only a short time before Rodney asked him for the keys, while those seamen, who were in health, danced.

On hearing this cruel relation from George Ormond, who was throughout a material witness to the scene, I had no doubt in my own mind of the truth of it. But I thought it right to tell him at once that I had seen a person, about four weeks ago, who had been the same voyage with him and Peter Green, but yet who had no recollection of these circumstances. Upon this he looked quite astonished, and began to grow angry. He maintained he had seen the whole. He had also held the candle himself during the whole punishment. He asserted that one

candle and half of another were burnt out while it lasted. He said also that, while the body lay in the waist, he had handled the abused parts, and had put three of his fingers into a hole, made by the double walled knot, in the head, from whence a quantity of blood and, he believed, brains issued. He then challenged me to bring the man before him. I desired him upon this to be cool, and to come to me the next day, and I would then talk with him again upon the subject.

In the interim I consulted the muster-roll of the vessel again. I found the name of George Ormond. He had sailed in her out of Liverpool, and had been discharged at the latter end of January in the West Indies, as he had told me. I found also the names of Michael Cunningham and of Paul Berry, whom he had mentioned. It was obvious also that Ormond's account of the captain of the Alfred being on board at the time of the punishment, tallied with that given me at Bristol by an officer of that vessel, and that his account of letting down Peter Green into the boat tallied with that, which Mr. Falconbridge,

conbridge, as I mentioned before, had heard from the king and the black traders in Bonny river.

When he came to me next day, he came in high spirits. He said he had found out the man whom I had seen. The man, however, when he talked to him about the murder of Peter Green, acknowledged every thing concerning it. Ormond intimated that this man was to sail again in the same ship under the promise of being an officer, and that he had been kept on board, and had been enticed to a second voyage, for no other purpose than that he might be prevented from divulging the matter. I then asked Ormond, whether he thought the man would acknowledge the murder in my hearing. He replied, that, if I were present, he thought he would not say much about it, as he was soon to be under the same captain, but that he would not deny it. If however I were out of sight, though I might be in hearing, he believed he would acknowledge the facts.

By the assistance of Mr. Falconbridge, I found a public-house, which had two rooms in it. Nearly at the top of the partition between

tween them was a small window, which a person might look through by standing upon a chair. I desired Ormond, one evening, to invite the man into the larger room, in which he was to have a candle, and to talk with him on the subject. I purposed to station myself in the smallest in the dark, so that by looking through the window I could both see and hear him, and yet be unperceived myself. The room, in which I was to be, was one, where the dead were frequently carried to be owned. We were all in our places at the time appointed. I directly discovered that it was the same man with whom I had conversed on board the ship in the wet docks. I heard him distinctly relate many of the particulars of the murder, and acknowledge them all. Ormond, after having talked with him some time, said, "Well, then, you believe Peter Green was actually murdered?" He replied, "If Peter Green was not murdered, no man ever was." What followed I do not know. I had heard quite enough; and the room was so disagreeable in smell, that I did not choose to stay in it longer than was absolutely necessary.

I own

I own I was now quite satisfied that the murder had taken place, and my first thought was to bring the matter before the mayor, and to take up three of the officers of the ship. But, in mentioning my intention to my friends, I was dissuaded from it. They had no doubt but that in Liverpool, as there was now a notion that the Slave-trade would become a subject of parliamentary inquiry, every effort would be made to overthrow me. They were of opinion also that such of the magistrates, as were interested in the trade, when applied to for warrants of apprehension, would contrive to give notice to the officers to escape. In addition to this they believed, that so many in the town were already incensed against me, that I should be torn to pieces, and the house where I lodged burnt down, if I were to make the attempt. I thought it right therefore to do nothing for the present; but I sent Ormond to London, to keep him out of the way of corruption, till I should make up my mind as to further proceedings on the subject.

It is impossible, if I observe the bounds I have prescribed myself, and I believe the

reader will be glad of it on account of his own feelings, that I should lay open the numerous cases, which came before me at Liverpool, relative to the ill treatment of the seamen in this wicked trade. It may be sufficient to say, that they harassed my constitution, and affected my spirits daily. They were in my thoughts on my pillow after I retired to rest, and I found them before my eyes when I awoke. Afflicting however as they were, they were of great use in the promotion of our cause. For they served, whatever else failed, as a stimulus to perpetual energy. They made me think light of former labours, and they urged me imperiously to new. And here I may observe, that among the many circumstances, which ought to excite our joy on considering the great event of the abolition of the Slave-trade, which has now happily taken place, there are few for which we ought to be more grateful, than that from this time our commerce ceases to breed such abandoned wretches; while those, who have thus been bred in it, and who may yet find employment in other trades, will in the common course of nature be taken off in a given

given time, so that our marine will at length be purified from a race of monsters, which have helped to cripple its strength, and to disgrace its character.

The temper of many of the interested people of Liverpool had now become still more irritable, and their hostility more apparent than before. I received anonymous letters, entreating me to leave it, or I should otherwise never leave it alive. The only effect, which this advice had upon me, was to make me more vigilant when I went out at night. I never stirred out at this time without Mr. Falconbridge. And he never accompanied me without being well armed. Of this, however, I knew nothing until we had left the place. There was certainly a time, when I had reason to believe that I had a narrow escape. I was one day on the pier-head with many others looking at some little boats below at the time of a heavy gale. Several persons, probably out of curiosity, were hastening thither. I had seen all I intended to see, and was departing, when I noticed eight or nine persons making towards me. I was then only about eight or nine yards from the precipice of the pier, but

but going from it. I expected that they would have divided to let me through them; instead of which they closed upon me and bore me back. I was borne within a yard of the precipice, when I discovered my danger; and perceiving among them the murderer of Peter Green, and two others who had insulted me at the King's Arms, it instantly struck me that they had a design to throw me over the pier-head; which they might have done at this time, and yet have pleaded that I had been killed by accident. There was not a moment to lose. Vigorous on account of the danger, I darted forward. One of them, against whom I pushed myself, fell down. Their ranks were broken. And I escaped, not without blows, amidst their imprecations and abuse.

I determined now to go to Lancaster, to make some inquiries about the Slave-trade there. I had a letter of introduction to William Jepson, one of the religious society of the Quakers, for this purpose. I found from him, that, though there were slave-merchants at Lancaster, they made their outfits at Liverpool, as a more convenient port. I learnt too from others, that the captain

captain of the last vessel, which had sailed out of Lancaster to the coast of Africa for slaves, had taken off so many of the natives treacherously, that any other vessel known to come from it would be cut off. There were only now one or two superannuated captains living in the place. Finding I could get no oral testimony, I was introduced into the Custom-house. Here I just looked over the muster-rolls of such slave-vessels as had formerly sailed from this port; and having found that the loss of seamen was precisely in the same proportion as elsewhere, I gave myself no further trouble, but left the place.

On my return to Liverpool, I was informed by Mr. Falconbridge, that a shipmate of Ormond, of the name of Patrick Murray, who had been discharged in the West Indies, had arrived there. This man, he said, had been to call upon me in my absence, to seek redress for his own bad usage; but in the course of conversation he had confirmed all the particulars as stated by Ormond, relative to the murder of Peter Green. On consulting the muster-roll of the

the ship, I found his name, and that he had been discharged in the West Indies on the second of February. I determined therefore to see him. I cross-examined him in the best manner I could. I could neither make him contradict himself, nor say any thing that militated against the testimony of Ormond. I was convinced therefore of the truth of the transaction; and, having obtained his consent, I sent him to London to stay with the latter, till he should hear further from me. I learnt also from Mr. Falconbridge, that my visitors had continued to come to the King's Arms during my absence; that they had been very liberal of their abuse of me; and that one of them did not hesitate to say (which is remarkable) that "I deserved to be thrown over the pier-head."

Finding now that I could get no further evidence; that the information which I had already obtained was considerable*; and that the committee had expressed an earnest

* In London, Bristol and Liverpool, I had already obtained the names of more than 20,000 seamen, in different voyages, knowing what had become of each.

desire,

desire, in a letter which I had received, that I would take into consideration the propriety of writing my Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade as soon possible, I determined upon leaving Liverpool. I went round accordingly and took leave of my friends. The last of these was William Rathbone, and I have to regret, that it was also the last time I ever saw him. Independently of the gratitude I owed him for assisting me in this great cause, I respected him highly as a man. He possessed a fine understanding with a solid judgment. He was a person of extraordinary simplicity of manners. Though he lived in a state of pecuniary independence, he gave an example of great temperance, as well as of great humility of mind. But however humble he appeared, he had always the courage to dare to do that which was right, however it might resist the customs or the prejudices of men. In his own line of trade, which was that of a timber-merchant on an extensive scale, he would not allow any article to be sold for the use of a slave-ship, and he always refused those, who applied to him for

for materials for such purposes. But it is evident that it was his intention, if he had lived, to bear his testimony still more publicly upon this subject; for an advertisement, stating the ground of his refusal to furnish any thing for this traffic upon Christian principles, with a memorandum for two advertisements in the Liverpool papers, was found among his papers at his decease.

CHAPTER XIX.

Author proceeds to Manchester—finds a spirit rising among the people there for the abolition of the Slave-trade—is requested to deliver a discourse on the subject of the Slave-trade—heads of it—and extracts—proceeds to Keddleston—and Birmingham—finds a similar spirit at the latter place—revisits Bristol—new and difficult situation there—Author crosses the Severn at night—unsuccessful termination of his journey—returns to London.

I NOW took my departure from Liverpool, and proceeded to Manchester, where I arrived on the Friday evening. On the Saturday morning Mr. Thomas Walker, attended by Mr. Cooper and Mr. Bayley of Hope, called upon me. They were then strangers to me. They came, they said, having heard of my arrival, to congratulate me on the spirit which was then beginning to show itself, among the people of Manchester and of other places, on the subject of the Slave-trade, and which would unquestionably manifest itself further by breaking out into petitions

petitions to parliament for its abolition. I was much surprised at this information. I had devoted myself so entirely to my object, that I had never had time to read a newspaper since I left London. I never knew therefore, till now, that the attention of the public had been drawn to the subject in such a manner. And as to petitions, though I myself had suggested the idea at Bridgewater, Bristol, Gloucester, and two or three other places, I had only done it provisionally, and this without either the knowledge or the consent of the committee. The news, however, as it astonished, so it almost overpowered me with joy. I rejoiced in it because it was a proof of the general good disposition of my countrymen; because it showed me that the cause was such as needed only to be known, to be patronised; and because the manifestation of this spirit seemed to me to be an earnest, that success would ultimately follow.

The gentlemen now mentioned took me away with them, and introduced me to Mr. Thomas Phillips. We conversed at first upon the discoveries made in my journey; but in a little time, understanding that I had

had been educated as a clergyman, they came upon me with one voice, as if it had been before agreed upon, to deliver a discourse the next day, which was Sunday, on the subject of the Slave-trade. I was always aware that it was my duty to do all that I could with propriety to serve the cause I had undertaken, and yet I found myself embarrassed at their request. Foreseeing, as I have before related, that this cause might demand my attention to it for the greatest part of my life, I had given up all thoughts of my profession. I had hitherto but seldom exercised it, and then only to oblige some friend. I doubted too, at the first view of the thing, whether the pulpit ought to be made an engine for political purposes, though I could not but consider the Slave-trade as a mass of crimes, and therefore the effort to get rid of it as a Christian duty. I had an idea too, that sacred matters should not be entered upon without due consideration, nor prosecuted in a hasty but in a decorous and solemn manner. I saw besides, that as it was then two o'clock in the afternoon, and this sermon was to be forthcoming the next day, there was not sufficient

ficient time to compose it properly. All these difficulties I suggested to my new friends without any reserve. But nothing that I could urge would satisfy them. They would not hear of a refusal, and I was obliged to give my consent, though I was not reconciled to the measure.

When I went into the church it was so full that I could scarcely get to my place; for notice had been publicly given, though I knew nothing of it, that such a discourse would be delivered. I was surprised also to find a great crowd of black people standing round the pulpit. There might be forty or fifty of them. The text that I took, as the best to be found in such a hurry, was the following: "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt."

I took an opportunity of showing from these words, that Moses, in endeavouring to promote among the Children of Israel a tender disposition towards those unfortunate strangers who had come under their dominion, reminded them of their own state when strangers in Egypt, as one of the most

most forcible arguments which could be used on such an occasion. For they could not have forgotten that the Egyptians "had made them serve with rigour; that they had made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; and that all the service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." The argument therefore of Moses was simply this; "Ye knew well, when ye were strangers in Egypt, the nature of your own feelings. Were you not made miserable by your debased situation there? But if so, you must be sensible that the stranger, who has the same heart, or the same feelings with yourselves, must experience similar suffering, if treated in a similar manner. I charge you then, knowing this, to stand clear of the crime of his oppression."

The law, then, by which Moses commanded the Children of Israel to regulate their conduct with respect to the usage of the stranger, I showed to be a law of universal and eternal obligation, and for this, among other reasons, that it was neither more nor less than the Christian law, which appeared

afterwards, that we should not do that to others, which we should be unwilling to have done unto ourselves.

Having gone into these statements at some length, I made an application of them in the following words:—

"This being the case, and this law of Moses being afterwards established into a fundamental precept of Christianity, I must apply it to facts of the present day, and I am sorry that I must apply it to—ourselves.

"And first, Are there no strangers, whom we oppress? I fear the wretched African will say, that he drinks the cup of sorrow, and that he drinks it at our hands. Torn from his native soil, and from his family and friends, he is immediately forced into a situation, of all others the most degrading, where he and his progeny are considered as cattle, as possessions, and as the possessions of a man to whom he never gave offence.

"It is a melancholy fact, but it can be abundantly proved, that great numbers of the unfortunate strangers, who are carried from Africa to our colonies, are fraudulently and forcibly taken from their native soil.

To descant but upon a single instance of the kind must be productive of pain to the ear of sensibility and freedom. Consider the sensations of the person, who is thus carried off by the ruffians, who have been lurking to intercept him. Separated from every thing which he esteems in life, without the possibility even of bidding his friends adieu, behold him overwhelmed in tears—wringing his hands in despair—looking backwards upon the spot where all his hopes and wishes lay,—while his family at home are waiting for him with anxiety and suspense—are waiting, perhaps, for sustenance—are agitated between hope and fear—till length of absence confirms the latter, and they are immediately plunged into inconceivable misery and distress.

"If this instance, then, is sufficiently melancholy of itself, and is at all an act of oppression, how complicated will our guilt appear, who are the means of snatching away thousands annually in the same manner, and who force them and their families into the same unhappy situation, without either remorse or shame!"

Having proceeded to show, in a more parti-

particular manner than I can detail here, how, by means of the Slave-trade, we oppressed the stranger, I made an inquiry into the other branch of the subject, or how far we had a knowledge of his heart.

To elucidate this point, I mentioned several specific instances, out of those which I had collected in my journey, and which I could depend upon as authentic, of honour —gratitude—fidelity—filial, fraternal, and conjugal affection—and of the finest sensibility, on the part of those, who had been brought into our colonies from Africa, in the character of slaves, and then I proceeded for a while in the following words:—

"If, then, we oppress the stranger, as I have shown, and if, by a knowledge of his heart, we find that he is a person of the same passions and feelings as ourselves, we are certainly breaking, by means of the prosecution of the Slave-trade, that fundamental principle of Christianity, which says, that we shall not do that unto another, which we wish should not be done unto ourselves, and, I fear, cutting ourselves off from all expectation of the Divine blessing. For how inconsistent is our conduct! We come into the

the temple of God; we fall prostrate before him; we pray to him, that he will have mercy upon us. But how shall he have mercy upon us, who have had no mercy upon others! We pray to him, again, that he will deliver us from evil. But how shall he deliver us from evil, who are daily invading the rights of the injured African, and heaping misery on his head!"

I attempted, lastly, to show, that, though the sin of the Slave-trade had been hitherto a sin of ignorance, and might therefore have so far been winked at, yet as the crimes and miseries belonging to it became known, it would attach even to those who had no concern in it, if they suffered it to continue either without notice or reproach, or if they did not exert themselves in a reasonable manner for its suppression. I noticed particularly, the case of Tyre and Sidon, which were the Bristol and the Liverpool of those times. A direct judgment had been pronounced by the prophet Joel against these cities, and, what is remarkable, for the prosecution of this same barbarous traffic. Thus, "And what have ye to do with me O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Palestine?

Palestine? Ye have cast lots for my people. Ye have sold a girl for wine. The children of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their own border. Behold! I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will recompense your wickedness on your own heads." Such was the language of the prophet; and Tyre and Sidon fell, as he had pointed out, when the inhabitants were either cut off, or carried into slavery.

Having thrown out these ideas to the notice of the audience, I concluded in the following words:—

"If, then, we wish to avert the heavy national judgment which is hanging over our heads (for must we not believe that our crimes towards the innocent Africans lie recorded against us in heaven) let us endeavour to assert their cause. Let us nobly withstand the torrent of the evil, however inveterately it may be fixed among the customs of the times; not, however, using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness against those, who perhaps without due consideration, have the misfortune to be concerned

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in it, but upon proper motives, and in a proper spirit, as the servants of God; so that if the sun should be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, and the very heaven should fall upon us, we may fall in the general convulsion without dismay, conscious that we have done our duty in endeavouring to succour the distressed, and that the stain of the blood of Africa is not upon us."

From Manchester I proceeded to Keddleston in Derbyshire, to spend a day with Lord Scarsdale, and to show him my little collection of African productions, and to inform him of my progress since I last saw him. Here a letter was forwarded to me from the reverend John Toogood, of Keington Magna in Dorsetshire, though I was then unknown to him. He informed me that he had addressed several letters to the inhabitants of his own county, through their provincial paper, on the subject of the Slave-trade, which letters had produced a considerable effect. It appeared, however, that, when he began them, he did not know of the formation of our committee, or that he had a single coadjutor in the cause.

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From Keddleston I turned off to Birmingham, being desirous of visiting Bristol in my way to London, to see if any thing new had occurred since I was there. I was introduced by letter, at Birmingham, to Sampson and Charles Lloyd, the brothers of John Lloyd, belonging to our committee, and members of the religious society of the Quakers. I was highly gratified in finding that these, in conjunction with Mr. Russell, had been attempting to awaken the attention of the inhabitants to this great subject, and that in consequence of their laudable efforts, a spirit was beginning to show itself there, as at Manchester, in favour of the abolition of the Slave-trade. The kind manner in which these received me, and the deep interest which they appeared to take in our cause, led me to an esteem for them, which, by means of subsequent visits, grew into a solid friendship.

At length I arrived at Bristol at about ten o'clock on Friday morning. But what was my surprise, when almost the first thing I heard from my friend Harry Gandy was, that a letter had been dispatched to me to Liverpool, nearly a week ago, requesting me

immediately to repair to this place; for that in consequence of notice from the Lords of the Admiralty, advertised in the public papers, the trial of the chief mate, whom I had occasioned to be taken up at Bristol, for the murder of William Lines, was coming on at the Old Bailey, and that not an evidence was to be found. This intelligence almost paralysed me. I cannot describe my feelings on receiving it. I reproached myself with my own obstinacy for having resisted the advice of Mr. Burges, as has been before explained. All his words now came fresh into my mind. I was terrified, too, with the apprehension that my own reputation was now at stake. I foresaw all the calumnies which would be spread, if the evidences were not forthcoming on this occasion. I anticipated, also, the injury which the cause itself might sustain, if, at our outset, as it were, I should not be able to substantiate what I had publicly advanced; and yet the mayor of Bristol had heard and determined the case,—he had not only examined, but re-examined, the evidences,—he had not only committed, but re-committed, the accused: this was the

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only consolation I had. I was sensible, however, amidst all these workings of my mind, that not a moment was to be lost, and I began, therefore, to set on foot an inquiry as to the absent persons.

On waiting upon the mother of William Lines, I learnt from her, that two out of four of the witnesses had been bribed by the slave-merchants, and sent to sea, that they might not be forthcoming at the time of the trial; that the two others had been tempted also, but that they had been enabled to resist the temptation; that, desirous of giving their testimony in this cause, they had gone into some coal-mine between Neath and Swansea, where they might support themselves till they should be called for; and that she had addressed a letter to them, at the request of Mr. Gandy, above a week ago, in which she had desired them to come to Bristol immediately, but that she had received no answer from them. She then concluded, either that her letter had miscarried, or that they had left the place.

I determined to lose no time, after the receipt of this intelligence; and I prevailed upon a young man, whom my friend Harry Gandy

Gandy had recommended to me, to set off directly, and to go in search of them. He was to travel all night, and to bring them, or, if weary himself with his journey, to send them up, without ever sleeping on the road. It was now between twelve and one in the afternoon. I saw him depart. In the interim I went to Thompson's, and other places, to inquire if any other of the seamen, belonging to the Thomas, were to be found; but, though I hunted diligently till four o'clock, I could learn nothing satisfactory. I then went to dinner, but I grew uneasy. I was fearful that my messenger might be at a loss, or that he might want assistance on some occasion or other. I now judged that it would have been more prudent if two persons had been sent, who might have conferred with each other, and who might have divided, when they had reached Neath, and gone to different mines, to inquire for the witnesses. These thoughts disturbed me. Those, also, which had occurred when I first heard of the vexatious way in which things were situated, renewed themselves painfully to my mind. My own obstinacy in resisting the advice of Mr. Burges,

Burges, and the fear of injury to my own reputation, and to that of the cause I had undertaken, were again before my eyes. I became still more uneasy; and I had no way of relieving my feelings, but by resolving to follow the young man, and to give him all the aid in my power.

It was now near six o'clock. The night was cold and rainy, and almost dark. I got down, however, safe to the passage-house, and desired to be conveyed across the Severn. The people in the house tried to dissuade me from my design. They said no one would accompany me, for it was quite a tempest. I replied, that I would pay those handsomely who would go with me. A person present asked me if I would give him three guineas for a boat, I replied I would. He could not for shame retract. He went out, and in about half an hour brought a person with him. We were obliged to have a lanthorn as far as the boat. We got on board, and went off. But such a passage I had never before witnessed. The wind was furious. The waves ran high. I could see nothing but white foam. The boat, also, was tossed up and down

down in such a manner that it was with great difficulty I could keep my seat. The rain, too, poured down in such torrents, that we were all of us presently wet through. We had been, I apprehend, more than an hour in this situation, when the boatmen began to complain of cold and weariness. I saw, also, that they began to be uneasy, for they did not know where they were. They had no way of forming any judgment about their course, but by knowing the point from whence the wind blew, and by keeping the boat in a relative position towards it. I encouraged them as well as I could, though I was beginning to be uneasy myself, and also sick. In about a quarter of an hour they began to complain again. They said they could pull no longer. They acknowledged, however, that they were getting nearer to the shore, though on what part of it, they could not tell. I could do nothing but bid them hope. They then began to reproach themselves for having come out with me. I told them I had not forced them, but that it was a matter of their own choice. In the midst of this conversation I informed them that I thought

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I saw either a star or a light straight forward. They both looked at it, and pronounced it to be a light, and added with great joy that it must be a light in the Passage-house: and so we found it; for in about ten minutes afterwards we landed, and, on reaching the house, learnt that a servant maid had been accidentally talking to some other person on the stair-case, near a window, with a candle in her hand, and that the light had appeared to us from that circumstance.

It was now near eleven o'clock. My messenger, it appeared, had arrived safe at about five in the evening, and had proceeded on his route. I was very cold on my arrival, and sick also. There seemed to be a chilliness all over me, both within and without. Indeed I had not a dry thread about me. I took some hot brandy and water, and went to bed; but desired, as soon as my clothes were thoroughly dried, to be called up, that I might go forward. This happened at about two in the morning, when I got up. I took my breakfast by the fire side. I then desired the post-boy, if he should meet any persons on the road, to stop, and inform me,

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as I did not know whether the witnesses might not be coming up by themselves, and whether they might not have passed my messenger without knowing his errand. Having taken these precautions, I departed. I travelled on, but we met no one. I traced, however, my messenger through Newport, Cardiff, and Cowbridge. I was assured, also, that he had not passed me on his return; nor had any of those passed me, whom he was seeking. At length, when I was within about two miles of Neath, I met him. He had both the witnesses under his care. This was a matter of great joy to me. I determined to return with them. It was now nearly two in the afternoon. I accordingly went back, but we did not reach the Passage-house again till nearly two the next morning.

During our journey, neither the wind nor the rain had much abated. It was quite dark on our arrival. We found only one person, and he had been sitting up in expectation of us. It was in vain that I asked him for a boat to put us across the water. He said all the boatmen were in bed; and, if they were up, he was sure that none of

them would venture out. It was thought a mercy by all of them, that we were not lost last night. Difficulties were also started about horses to take us another way. Unable therefore to proceed, we took refreshment and went to bed.

We arrived at Bristol between nine and ten the next morning; but I was so ill, that I could go no further; I had been cold and shivering ever since my first passage across the Severn, and I had now a violent sore throat, and a fever with it. All I could do was to see the witnesses off for London, and to assign them to the care of an attorney, who should conduct them to the trial. For this purpose I gave them a letter to a friend of the name of Langdale. I saw them depart. The mother of William Lines accompanied them. By a letter received on Tuesday, I learnt that they had not arrived in town till Monday morning at three o'clock; that at about nine or ten they found out the office of Mr. Langdale; that, on inquiring for him, they heard he was in the country, but that he would be home at noon; that, finding he had not then arrived, they acquainted his clerk with the nature of their business,

business, and opened my letter to show him the contents of it; that the clerk went with them to consult some other person on the subject, when he conveyed them to the Old Bailey; but that, on inquiring at the proper place about the introduction of the witnesses, he learnt that the chief mate had been brought to the bar in the morning, and, no person then appearing against him, that he had been discharged by proclamation. Such was the end of all my anxiety and labour in this affair. I was very ill when I received the letter; but I saw the necessity of bearing up against the disappointment, and I endeavoured to discharge the subject from my mind with the following wish, that the narrow escape which the chief mate had experienced, and which was entirely owing to the accidental circumstances now explained, might have the effect, under Providence, of producing in him a deep contrition for his offence, and of awakening him to a serious attention to his future life *.

* He had undoubtedly a narrow escape, for Mr. Langdale's clerk had learnt that he had no evidence to produce in his favour. The slave-merchants, it seems, had counted most upon bribing those, who were to come against him, to disappear.

I was obliged to remain in Bristol a few days longer in consequence of my illness; but as soon as I was able I reached London, when I attended a sitting of the committee after an absence of more than five months. At this committee it was strongly recommended to me to publish a second edition of my Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, and to insert such of the facts in it, in their proper places, out of those collected in my late travels, as I might judge to be productive of an interesting effect. There appeared also an earnest desire in the committee, that, directly after this, I should begin my Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade.

In compliance with their wishes, I determined upon both these works. But I resolved to retire into the country, that, by being subject to less interruption there, I might the sooner finish them. It was proper, however, that I should settle many things in London, before I took my departure from it; and, among these, that I should find out George Ormond and Patric Murray, whom I had sent from Liverpool on account of the information they had given

given me relative to the murder of Peter Green. I saw no better way than to take them before Sir Sampson Wright, who was then at the head of the police of the metropolis. He examined, and cross-examined them several times, and apart from each other. He then desired their evidence to be drawn up in the form of depositions, copies of which he gave to me. He had no doubt that the murder would be proved. The circumstances of the deceased being in good health at nine o'clock in the evening, and of his severe sufferings till eleven, and of the nature of the wounds discovered to have been made on his person, and of his death by one in the morning, could never, he said, be done away, by any evidence, who should state that he had been subject to other disorders, which might have occasioned his decease. He found himself therefore compelled to apply to the magistrates of Liverpool, for the apprehension of three of the principal officers of the ship. But the answer was, that the ship had sailed, and that they, whose names had been specified, were then, none of them, to be found in Liverpool.

It was now for me to consider, whether I would keep the two witnesses, Ormond and Murray, for a year, or perhaps longer, at my own expense, and run the hazard of the death of the officers in the interim, and of other calculable events. I had felt so deeply for the usage of the seamen in this cruel traffic, which indeed had embittered all my journey, that I had no less than nine prosecutions at law upon my hands on their account, and nineteen witnesses detained at my own cost. The committee in London could give me no assistance in these cases. They were the managers of the public purse for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and any expenses of this kind were neither within the limits of their object, nor within the pale of their duty. From the individuals belonging to it, I picked up a few guineas by way of private subscription, and this was all. But a vast load still remained upon me, and such as had occasioned uneasiness to my mind. I thought it therefore imprudent to detain the evidences for this purpose for so long a time, and I sent them back to Liverpool. I commenced, however, a prosecution against the captain at common law for

for his barbarous usage of them, and desired that it might be pushed on as vigorously as possible; and the result was, that his attorney was so alarmed, particularly after knowing what had been done by Sir Sampson Wright, that he entered into a compromise to pay all the expenses of the suit hitherto incurred, and to give Ormond and Murray a sum of money as damages for the injury which they themselves had sustained. This compromise was acceded to. The men received the money, and signed the release, (of which I insisted upon a copy,) and went to sea again in another trade, thanking me for my interference in their behalf. But by this copy, which I have now in my possession, it appears that care was taken by the captain's attorney to render their future evidence in the case of Peter Green, almost impracticable; for it was there wickedly stated, "that George Ormond and Patric Murray did then and there bind themselves in certain penalties, that they would neither encourage nor support any action at law against the said captain, by or at the suit or prosecution of any other of the seamen now or late on board the said ship, and that they

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released the said captain also from all manner of actions, suits, and cause and causes of action, informations, prosecutions, and other proceedings, which they then had, or ever had, or could or might have by reason of the said assaults upon their own persons, or *other wrongs or injuries done by the said captain heretofore and to the date of this release**."

* None of the nine actions before mentioned ever came to a trial, but they were all compromised by paying sums to the injured parties.

CHAPTER XX.

Labours of the committee during the author's journey—Quakers the first to notice its institution—General Baptists the next—Correspondence opened with American societies for Abolition—First individual who addressed the committee was Mr. William Smith—Thanks voted to Ramsay—Committee prepares lists of persons to whom to send its publications—Barclay, Taylor, and Wedgwood elected members of the committee—Letters from Brissot, and others—Granville Sharp elected chairman—Seal ordered to be engraved—Letters from different correspondents as they offered their services to the committee.

THE committee, during my absence, had attended regularly at their posts. They had been both vigilant and industrious. They were, in short, the persons, who had been the means of raising the public spirit, which I had observed first at Manchester, and afterwards as I journeyed on. It will be proper, therefore, that I should now say something of their labours, and of the fruits of them. And if, in doing this, I should be

more minute for a few pages than some would wish, I must apologize for myself by saying that there are others, who would be sorry to lose the knowledge of the particular manner in which the foundation was laid, and the superstructure advanced, of a work, which will make so brilliant an appearance in our history as that of the abolition of the Slave-trade.

The committee having dispersed five hundred circular letters, giving an account of their institution, in London and its neighbourhood, the Quakers were the first to notice it. This they did in their yearly epistle, of which the following is an extract:—"We have also thankfully to believe there is a growing attention in many, not of our religious Society, to the subject of Negro-slavery; and that the minds of the people are more and more enlarged to consider it as an aggregate of every species of evil, and to see the utter inconsistency of upholding it by the authority of any nation whatever, especially of such as punish, with loss of life, crimes whose magnitude bears scarce any proportion to this complicated iniquity."

The General Baptists were the next; for

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on the twenty-second of June, Stephen Lowdell and Dan Taylor attended as a deputation from the annual meeting of that religious body, to inform the committee, that those, whom they represented, approved their proceedings, and that they would countenance the object of their institution.

The first individual, who addressed the committee, was Mr. William Smith, the present member for Norwich. In his letter he expressed the pleasure he had received in finding persons associated in the support of a cause, in which he himself had taken a deep interest. He gave them advice as to their future plans. He promised them all the cooperation in his power: and he exhorted them not to despair, even if their first attempt should be unsuccessful; "for consolation," says he, "will not be wanting. You may rest satisfied that the attempt will be productive of some good; that the fervent wishes of the righteous will be on your side, and that the blessing of those who are ready to perish will fall upon you." And as Mr. Smith was the first person to address the committee as an individual after

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its formation, so, next to Mr. Wilberforce and the members of it, he gave the most time and attention to the promotion of the cause.

On the fifth of July, the committee opened a correspondence, by means of William Dillwyn, with the societies of Philadelphia and New York, of whose institution an account has been given. At this sitting a due sense was signified of the services of Mr. Ramsay, and a desire of his friendly communications when convenient.

The two next meetings were principally occupied in making out lists of the names of persons in the country, to whom the committee should send their publications for distribution. For this purpose every member was to bring in an account of those whom he knew personally, and whom he believed not only to be willing, but qualified on account of their judgment and the weight of their character, to take an useful part in the work, which was to be assigned to them. It is a remarkable circumstance, that, when the lists were arranged, the committee, few as they were, found they had friends in no

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less then thirty-nine counties *, in each of which there were several, so that a knowledge of their institution could now be soon diffusively spread.

The committee, having now fixed upon their correspondents, ordered five hundred of the circular letters, which have been before mentioned, and five thousand of the Summary Views, an account of which has been given also, to be printed.

On account of the increase of business, which was expected in consequence of the circulation of the preceding publications, Robert Barclay, John Vickris Taylor, and Josiah Wedgwood esquire, were added to the committee; and it was then resolved, that any three members might call a meeting when necessary.

On the twenty-seventh of August, the new correspondents began to make their appearance. This sitting was distinguished

* The Quakers by means of their discipline have a greater personal knowledge of each other, than the members of any other religious society. But two-thirds of the committee were Quakers, and hence the circumstance is explained. Hence also nine-tenths of our first coadjutors were Quakers.

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by the receipt of letters from two celebrated persons. The first was from Brissot, dated Paris, August the eighteenth, who, it may be recollected, was an active member of the National Convention of France, and who suffered in the persecution of Robespiere. The second was from Mr. John Wesley, whose useful labours as a minister of the gospel are so well known to our countrymen.

Brissot, in this letter, congratulated the members of the committee, on having come together for so laudable an object. He offered his own assistance towards the promotion of it. He desired also that his valuable friend Claviere (who suffered also under Robespiere) might be joined to him, and that both might be acknowledged by the committee as associates in what he called this heavenly work. He purposed to translate and circulate through France, such publications as they might send him from time to time, and to appoint bankers in Paris, who might receive subscriptions and remit them to London for the good of their common cause. In the mean time, if his own countrymen should be found to take an interest

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in this great cause, it was not improbable that a committee might be formed in Paris, to endeavour to secure the attainment of the same object from the government in France.

The thanks of the committee were voted to Brissot for this disinterested offer of his services, and he was elected an honorary and corresponding member. In reply, however, to his letter it was stated, that, as the committee had no doubt of procuring from the generosity of their own nation sufficient funds for effecting the object of their institution, they declined the acceptance of any pecuniary aid from the people of France, but recommended him to attempt the formation of a committee in his own country, and to inform them of his progress, and to make to them such other communications as he might deem necessary upon the subject from time to time.

Mr. Wesley, whose letter was read next, informed the committee of the great satisfaction which he also had experienced, when he heard of their formation. He conceived that their design, while it would destroy the Slave-trade, would also strike at the root of the

the shocking abomination of slavery also. He desired to forewarn them that they must expect difficulties and great opposition from those who were interested in the system; that these were a powerful body; and that they would raise all their forces, when they perceived their craft to be in danger. They would employ hireling writers, who would have neither justice nor mercy. But the committee were not to be dismayed by such treatment, nor even if some of those, who professed good-will towards them, should turn against them. As for himself, he would do all he could to promote the object of their institution. He would reprint a new and large edition of his Thought on Slavery, and circulate it among his friends in England and Ireland, to whom he would add a few words in favour of their design. And then he concluded in these words: "I commend you to Him, who is able to carry you through all opposition, and support you under all discouragements."

On the fourth, eleventh, and eighteenth of September, the committee were employed variously. Among other things they voted their thanks to Mr. Leigh, a clergyman of the

the established church, for the offer of his services for the county of Norfolk. They ordered also one thousand of the circular letters to be additionally printed.

At one of these meetings a resolution was made, that Granville Sharp, esquire, be appointed chairman. This appointment, though now first formally made in the minute book, was always understood to have taken place; but the modesty of Mr. Sharp was such, that, though repeatedly pressed, he would never consent to take the chair, and he generally refrained from coming into the room till after he knew it to be taken. Nor could he be prevailed upon, even after this resolution, to alter his conduct: for though he continued to sign the papers, which were handed to him by virtue of holding this office, he never was once seated as the chairman during the twenty years in which he attended at these meetings. I thought it not improper to mention this trait in his character. Conscious that he engaged in the cause of his fellow-creatures solely upon the sense of his duty as a Christian, he seems to have supposed either that he had done nothing extraordinary to merit

such a distinction, or to have been fearful lest the acceptance of it should bring a stain upon the motive, on which alone he undertook it.

On the second and sixteenth of October two sittings took place; at the latter of which a sub-committee, which had been appointed for the purpose, brought in a design for a seal. An African was seen, (as in the figure *,) in chains in a supplicating posture, kneeling with one knee upon the

ground, and with both his hands lifted up to Heaven, and round the seal was observed the following motto, as if he was uttering the words himself—" Am I not a Man and a Brother?" The design having been approved of, a seal was ordered to be engraved

* The figure is rather larger than that in the seal.

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from it. I may mention here, that this seal, simple as the design was, was made to contribute largely, as will be shown in its proper place, towards turning the attention of our countrymen to the case of the injured Africans, and of procuring a warm interest in their favour.

On the thirtieth of October several letters were read; one of these was from Brissot and Claviere conjointly. In this they acknowledged the satisfaction they had received on being considered as associates in the humane work of the abolition of the Slave-trade, and correspondents in France for the promotion of it. They declared it to be their intention to attempt the establishment of a commitee there on the same principles as that in England: but, in consequence of the different constitutions of the two governments, they gave the committee reason to suppose that their proceedings must be different, as well as slower than those in England, for the same object.

A second letter was read from Mr. John Wesley. He said that he had now read the publications, which the committee had sent him, and that he took, if possible, a still

deeper interest in their cause. He exhorted them to more than ordinary diligence and perseverance; to be prepared for opposition; to be cautious about the manner of procuring information and evidence, that no stain might fall upon their character; and to take care that the question should be argued as well upon the consideration of interest as of humanity and justice, the former of which he feared would have more weight than the latter; and he recommended them and their glorious concern, as before, to the protection of Him who was able to support them.

Letters were read from Dr. Price, approving the institution of the committee; from Charles Lloyd of Birmingham, stating the interest which the inhabitants of that town were taking in it; and from William Russell, esquire, of the same place, stating the same circumstance, and that he would cooperate with the former in calling a public meeting, and in doing whatever else was necessary for the promotion of so good a cause. A letter was read also from Manchester, signed conjointly by George Barton, Thomas Cooper, John Ferriar, Thomas Walker, Thomas

Thomas Phillips, Thomas Butterworth Bayley, and George Lloyd, esquires, promising their assistance for that place. Two others were read from John Kerrich, esquire, of Harleston, and from Joshua Grigby, esquire, of Drinkston, each tendering their services, one for the county of Norfolk, and the other for the county of Suffolk. The latter concluded by saying, "With respect to myself, in no possible instance of my public conduct can I receive so much sincere satisfaction, as I shall by the vote I will most assuredly give in parliament, in support of this most worthy effort to suppress a traffic, which is contrary to all the feelings of humanity, and the laws of our religion."

A letter was read also at this sitting from major Cartwright, of Marnham, in which he offered his own services, in conjunction with those of the reverend John Charlesworth, of Ossington, for the county of Nottingham.

"I congratulate you," says he in this letter, "on the happy prospect of some considerable step at least being taken towards the abolition of a traffic, which is not only impious in itself, but of all others tends most to vitiate the human mind.

"Although

"Although procrastination is generally pernicious in cases depending upon the feelings of the heart, I should almost fear that, without very uncommon exertions, you will scarcely be prepared early in the next sessions for bringing the business into parliament with the greatest advantage. But be that as it may, let the best use be made of the intermediate time; and then, if there be a superintending Providence, which governs every thing in the moral world, there is every reason to hope for a blessing on this particular work."

The last letter was from Robert Boucher Nickolls, dean of Middleham in Yorkshire. In this he stated that he was a native of the West Indies, and had travelled on the continent of America. He then offered some important information to the committee, as his mite towards the abolition of the Slave-trade, and as an encouragement to them to persevere. He attempted to prove that the natural increase of the Negros already in the West Indian Islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them without any fresh supplies from Africa, and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment.

ment. i th this view he instanced the two estates of Mr. Mac Mahon and of Dr. Mapp in the island of Barbadoes. The first required continual supplies of new slaves, in consequence of the severe and cruel usage adopted upon it. The latter overflowed with labourers in consequence of a system of kindness, so that it almost peopled another estate. Having related these instances, he cited others in North America, where, though the climate was less favourable to the constitution of the Africans, but their treatment better, they increased also. He combated, from his own personal knowledge, the argument that self-interest was always sufficient to ensure good usage, and maintained that there was only one way of securing it, which was the entire abolition of the Slave-trade. He showed in what manner the latter measure would operate to the desired end. He then dilated on the injustice and inconsistency of this trade, and supported the policy of the abolition of it, both to the planter, the merchant, and the nation.

This letter of the Dean of Middleham, which

which was a little Essay of itself, was deemed of so much importance by the committee, but particularly as it was the result of local knowledge, that they not only passed a resolution of thanks to him for it, but desired his permission to print it.

The committee sat again on the thirteenth and twenty-second of November. At the first of these sittings, a letter was read from Henry Grimston, esquire, of Whitwell Hall, near York, offering his services for the promotion of the cause in his own county. At the second, the Dean of Middleham's answer was received. He acquiesced in the request of the committee; when five thousand of his letters were ordered immediately to be printed.

On the twenty-second a letter was read from Mr. James Mackenzie, of the town of Cambridge, desiring to forward the object of the institution there. Two letters were read also, one from the late Mr. Jones, tutor of Trinity College, and the other from Mr. William Frend, fellow of Jesus College. It appeared from these that the gentlemen of the University of Cambridge were beginning

to

to take a lively interest in the abolition of the Slave-trade, among whom Dr. Watson, the bishop of Llandaff, was particularly conspicuous. At this committee two thousand new Summary Views were ordered to be printed, and the circular letter to be prefixed to each.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXI.

Labours of the committee continued to February 1788—Committee elect new members—vote thanks to Falconbridge and others—receive letters from Grove and others—circulate numerous publications—make a report—send circular letters to corporate bodies—release Negros unjustly detained—find new correspondents in Archdeacon Paley—the Marquis de la Fayette—Bishop of Cloyne—Bishop of Peterborough—and in many others.

THE labours of the committee, during my absence, were as I have now explained them; but as I was obliged, almost immediately on joining them, to retire into the country to begin my new work, I must give an account of their further services till I joined them again, or till the middle of February 1788.

During sittings which were held from the middle of December 1787 to the eighteenth of January 1788, the business of the committee had so increased, that it was found proper to make an addition to their number.

number. Accordingly James Martin and William Morton Pitt, esquires, members of parliament, and Robert Hunter, and Joseph Smith, esquires, were chosen members of it.

The knowledge also of the institution of the society had spread to such an extent, and the eagerness among individuals to see the publications of the committee had been so great, that the press was kept almost constantly going during the time now mentioned. No fewer than three thousand lists of the subscribers, with a circular letter prefixed to them, explaining the object of the institution, were ordered to be printed within this period, to which are to be added fifteen hundred of Benezet's Account of Guinea, three thousand of the Dean of Middleham's Letters, five thousand Summary Views, and two thousand of a new edition of the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, which I had enlarged before the last of these sittings from materials collected in my late tour.

The thanks of the committee were voted during this period to Mr. Alexander Falconbridge, for the assistance he had given me in

in my inquiries into the nature of the Slave-trade.

As Mr. Falconbridge had but lately returned from Africa, and as facts and circumstances, which had taken place but a little time ago, were less liable to objections (inasmuch as they proved the present state of things) than those which had happened in earlier times, he was prevailed upon to write an account of what he had seen during the four voyages he had made to that continent; and accordingly, within the period which has been mentioned, he began his work.

The committee, during these sittings, kept up a correspondence with those gentlemen who were mentioned in the last chapter to have addressed them. But, besides these, they found other voluntary correspondents in the following persons, Capel Lofft, esquire, of Troston, and the reverend R. Brome of Ipswich, both in the county of Suffolk. These made an earnest tender of their services for those parts of the county in which they resided. Similar offers were made by Mr. Hammond of Stanton, near St. Ives, in the county of Huntingdon, by Thomas Parker,

Parker, esquire, of Beverley, and by William Grove, esquire, of Litchfield, for their respective towns and neighbourhoods.

A letter was received also within this period from the society established at Philadelphia, accompanied with documents in proof of the good effects of the manumission of slaves, and with specimens of writing and drawing by the same. In this letter the society congratulated the committee in London on its formation, and professed its readiness to cooperate in any way in which it could be made useful.

During these sittings, a letter was also read from Dr. Bathurst, now bishop of Norwich, dated Oxford, December the seventeenth, in which he offered his services in the promotion of the cause.

Another was read, which stated that Dr. Horne, president of Magdalen College in the same university, and afterwards bishop of the same see as the former, highly favoured it.

Another was read from Mr. Lambert, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, in which he signified to the committee the great desire he had to promote the object of their

their institution. He had drawn up a number of queries relative to the state of the unhappy slaves in the islands, which he had transmitted to a friend, who had resided in them, to answer. These answers he purposed to forward to the committee on their arrival.

Another was read from Dr. Hinchliffe, bishop of Peterborough, in which he testified his hearty approbation of the institution, and of the design of it, and his determination to support the object of it in parliament. He gave in at the same time a plan, which he called Thoughts on the Means of Abolishing the Slave-trade in Great Britain and in our West Indian Islands, for the consideration of the committee.

At the last of these sittings, the committee thought it right to make a report to the public relative to the state and progress of their cause; but as this was composed from materials, which the reader has now in his possession, it may not be necessary to produce it.

On the twenty-second and twenty-ninth of January, and on the fifth and twelfth of February, 1788, sittings were also held. During

During these, the business still increasing, John Maitland, esquire, was elected a member of the committee.

As the correspondents of the committee were now numerous, and as these solicited publications for the use of those who applied to them, as well as of those to whom they wished to give a knowledge of the subject, the press was kept in constant employ during this period also. Five thousand two hundred and fifty additional Reports were ordered to be printed, and also three thousand of Falconbridge's Account of the Slave-trade, the manuscript of which was now finished. At this time, Mr. Newton, rector of St. Mary Woolnoth in London, who had been in his youth to the coast of Africa, but who had now become a serious and useful divine, felt it his duty to write his Thoughts on the African Slave-trade. The committee, having obtained permission, printed three thousand copies of these also.

During these sittings, the chairman was requested to have frequent communication with Dr. Porteus, bishop of London, as he had expressed his desire of becoming useful to the institution.

A circular

A circular letter also, with the report before mentioned, was ordered to be sent to the mayors of several corporate towns.

A case also occurred, which it may not be improper to notice. The treasurer reported that he had been informed by the chairman, that the captain of the Albion merchant ship, trading to the Bay of Honduras, had picked up at sea from a Spanish ship, which had been wrecked, two black men, one named Henry Martin Burrowes, a free native of Antigua, who had served in the royal navy, and the other named Antonio Berrat, a Spanish Negro; that the said captain detained these men on board his ship, then lying in the river Thames, against their will; and that he would not give them up. Upon this report, it was resolved that the cause of these unfortunate captives should be espoused by the committee. Mr. Sharp accordingly caused a writ of habeas-corpus to be served upon them; soon after which he had the satisfaction of reporting, that they had been delivered from the place of their confinement.

During these sittings the following letters were read also:

One

One from Richard How, of Apsley, offering his services to the committee.

Another from the reverend Christopher Wyvill, of Burton Hall in Yorkshire, to the same effect.

Another from Archdeacon Plymley, (now Corbett,) in which he expressed the deep interest he took in this cause of humanity and freedom, and the desire he had of making himself useful as far as he could towards the support of it; and he wished to know, as the clergy of the diocese of Litchfield and Coventry were anxious to espouse it also, whether a petition to parliament from them, as a part of the established church, would not be desirable at the present season.

Another from Archdeacon Paley, containing his sentiments on a plan for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and the manumission of slaves in our islands, and offering his future services, and wishing success to the undertaking.

Another from Dr. Sharp, prebendary of Durham, inquiring into the probable amount of the subscriptions which might be wanted, and for what purposes, with a view of serving the cause.

Another from Dr. Woodward, bishop of Cloyne, in which he approved of the institution of the committee. He conceived the Slave-trade to be no less disgraceful to the legislature and injurious to the true commercial interests of the country, than it was productive of unmerited misery to the unhappy objects of it, and repugnant both to the principles and the spirit of the Christian religion. He wished to be placed among the asserters of the liberty of his fellow-creatures, and he was therefore desirous of subscribing largely, as well as of doing all he could, both in England and Ireland, for the promotion of such a charitable work.

A communication was made, soon after the reading of the last letter, through the medium of the Chevalier de Ternant, from the celebrated Marquis de la Fayette of France. The marquis signified the singular pleasure he had received on hearing of the formation of a committee in England for the abolition of the Slave-trade, and the earnest desire he had to promote the object of it. With this view, he informed the committee that he should attempt the formation of a similar society in France. This he con-

ceived to be one of the most effectual measures he could devise for securing the object in question; for he was of opinion, that if the two great nations of France and England were to unite in this humane and Christian work, the other European nations might be induced to follow the example.

The committee, on receiving the two latter communications, resolved, that the chairman should return their thanks to the Bishop of Cloyne, and the Marquis de la Fayette, and the Chevalier de Ternant, and that he should inform them, that they were enrolled among the honorary and corresponding members of the Society.

The other letters read during these sittings were to convey information to the committee, that people in various parts of the kingdom had then felt themselves so deeply interested in behalf of the injured Africans, that they had determined either on public meetings, or had come to resolutions, or had it in contemplation to petition parliament, for the abolition of the Slave-trade. Information was signified to this effect by Thomas Walker, esquire, for Manchester; by John Hoyland, William Hoyles, esquire,

and the reverend James Wilkinson, for Sheffield; by William Tuke, and William Burgh esquire, for York; by the reverend Mr. Foster, for Colchester; by Joseph Harford and Edmund Griffith, esquires, for Bristol; by William Bishop, esquire, the mayor, for Maidstone; by the reverend R. Brome and the reverend J. Wright, for Ipswich; by James Clark, esquire, the mayor, for Coventry; by Mr. Jones, of Trinity College, for the University of Cambridge; by Dr. Schomberg, of Magdalen College, for the University of Oxford; by Henry Bullen, esquire, for Bury St. Edmunds; by Archdeacon Travis, for Chester; by Mr. Hammond, for the county of Huntingdon; by John Flint, esquire, (now Corbett,) for the town of Shrewsbury and county of Salop; by the reverend Robert Lucas, for the town and also for the county of Northampton; by Mr. Winchester, for the county of Stafford; by the reverend William Leigh, for the county of Norfolk; by David Barclay, for the county of Hertford; and by Thomas Babington, esquire, for the county of Leicester.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXII.

Further progress to the middle of May—Petitions begin to be sent to parliament—The king orders the privy council to inquire into the Slave-trade—Author called up to town—his interviews with Mr. Pitt—and with Mr. (now Lord) Grenville—Liverpool delegates examined first—these prejudice the council—this prejudice at length counteracted—Labours of the committee in the interim—Public anxious for the introduction of the question into parliament—Message of Mr. Pitt to the committee concerning it—Day fixed for the motion—Substance of the debate which followed—discussion of the general question deferred till the next sessions.

By this time the nature of the Slave-trade had, in consequence of the labours of the committee and of their several correspondents, become generally known throughout the kingdom. It had excited a general attention, and there was among people a general feeling in behalf of the wrongs of Africa. This feeling had also, as may be collected from what has been already mentioned,

tioned, broken out into language: for not only had the traffic become the general subject of conversation, but public meetings had taken place, in which it had been discussed, and of which the result was, that an application to parliament had been resolved upon in many places concerning it. By the middle of February not fewer than thirty-five petitions had been delivered to the commons, and it was known that others were on their way to the same house.

This ferment in the public mind, which had shown itself in the public prints even before the petitions had been resolved upon, had excited the attention of government. To coincide with the wishes of the people on this subject, appeared to those in authority to be a desirable thing. To abolish the trade, replete as it was with misery, was desirable also: but it was so connected with the interest of individuals, and so interwoven with the commerce and revenue of the country, that an hasty abolition of it without a previous inquiry appeared to them to be likely to be productive of as much misery as good. The king, therefore, by an order of council, dated February the eleventh,

eleventh, 1788, directed that a committee of privy council should sit as a board of trade, "to take into their consideration the present state of the African trade, particularly as far as related to the practice and manner of purchasing or obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, and the importation and sale thereof, either in the British colonies and settlements, or in the foreign colonies and settlements in America or the West-Indies; and also as far as related to the effects and consequences of the trade both in Africa and in the said colonies and settlements, and to the general commerce of this kingdom; and that they should report to him in council the result of their inquiries, with such observations as they might have to offer thereupon."

Of this order of council Mr. Wilberforce, who had attended to this great subject, as far as his health would permit, since I left him, had received notice; but he was then too ill himself to take any measures concerning it. He therefore wrote to me, and begged of me to repair to London immediately in order to get such evidence ready, as we might think it eligible to introduce when

when the council sat. At that time, as appears from the former chapter, I had finished the additions to my Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, and I had now proceeded about half way in that of the Impolicy of it. This summons, however, I obeyed, and returned to town on the fourteenth of February, from which day to the twenty-fourth of May I shall now give the history of our proceedings.

My first business in London was to hold a conversation with Mr. Pitt previously to the meeting of the council, and to try to interest him, as the first minister of state, in our favour. For this purpose Mr. Wilberforce had opened the way for me, and an interview took place. We were in free conversation together for a considerable time, during which we went through most of the branches of the subject. Mr. Pitt appeared to me to have but little knowledge of it. He had also his doubts, which he expressed openly, on many points. He was at a loss to conceive how private interest should not always restrain the master of the slave from abusing him. This matter I explained to him as well as I could; and if he

was

was not entirely satisfied with my interpretation of it, he was at least induced to believe that cruel practices were more probable than he had imagined. A second circumstance, of the truth of which he doubted, was the mortality and usage of seamen in this trade; and a third was the statement, by which so much had been made of the riches of Africa, and of the genius and abilities of her people; for he seemed at a loss to comprehend, if these things were so, how it had happened that they should not have been more generally noticed before. I promised to satisfy him upon these points, and an interview was fixed for this purpose the next day.

At the time appointed I went with my books, papers, and African productions. Mr. Pitt examined the former himself. He turned over leaf after leaf, in which the copies of the muster-rolls were contained, with great patience; and when he had looked over above a hundred pages accurately, and found the name of every seaman inserted, his former abode or service, the time of his entry, and what had become of him, either by death, discharge or desertion, he expressed his sur-

prise at the great pains which had been taken in this branch of the inquiry, and confessed, with some emotion, that his doubts were wholly removed with respect to the destructive nature of this employ; and he said, moreover, that the facts contained in these documents, if they had been but fairly copied, could never be disproved. He was equally astonished at the various woods and other productions of Africa, but most of all at the manufactures of the natives in cotton, leather, gold, and iron, which were laid before him. These he handled and examined over and over again. Many sublime thoughts seemed to rush in upon him at once at the sight of these, some of which he expressed with observations becoming a great and a dignified mind. He thanked me for the light I had given him on many of the branches of this great question. And I went away under a certain conviction that I had left him much impressed in our favour.

My next visit was to Mr. (now Lord) Grenville. I called upon him at the request of Mr. Wilberforce, who had previously written to him from Bath, as he had promised to attend the meetings of the privy council

council during the examinations which were to take place. I found in the course of our conversation that Mr. Grenville had not then more knowledge of the subject than Mr. Pitt; but I found him differently circumstanced in other respects, for I perceived in him a warm feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, and that he had no doubt of the possibility of all the barbarities which had been alleged against this traffic. I showed him all my papers and some of my natural productions, which he examined. I was with him the next day, and once again afterwards, so that the subject was considered in all its parts. The effect of this interview with him was of course different from that upon the minister. In the former case I had removed doubts, and given birth to an interest in favour of our cause. But I had here only increased an interest which had already been excited. I had only enlarged the mass of feeling, or added zeal to zeal, or confirmed resolutions and reasonings. Disposed in this manner originally himself, and strengthened by the documents with which I had furnished him, Mr. Grenville

ville contracted an enmity to the Slave-trade, which was never afterwards diminished*.

A report having gone abroad, that the committee of privy council would only examine those who were interested in the continuance of the trade, I found it necessary to call upon Mr. Pitt again, and to inform him of it, when I received an assurance that every person, whom I chose to send to the council in behalf of the committee, should be heard. This gave rise to a conversation relative to those witnesses whom we had to produce on the side of the abolition. And here I was obliged to disclose our weakness in this respect. I owned with sorrow that, though I had obtained specimens and official documents in abundance to prove many important points, yet I had found it difficult to prevail upon persons to be publicly examined on this subject. The only

* I have not mentioned the difference between these two eminent persons, with a view of drawing any invidious comparisons, but because, as these statements are true, such persons as have a high opinion of the late Mr. Pitt's judgment, may see that this great man did not espouse the cause hastily, or merely as a matter of feeling, but upon the conviction of his own mind.

persons,

persons, we could then count upon, were Mr. Ramsay, Mr. H. Gandy, Mr. Falconbridge, Mr. Newton, and the Dean of Middleham. There was one, however, who would be a host of himself, if we could but gain him. I then mentioned Mr. Norris. I told Mr. Pitt the nature* and value of the testimony which he had given me at Liverpool, and the great zeal he had discovered to serve the cause. I doubted, however, if he would come to London for this purpose, even if I wrote to him; for he was intimate with almost all the owners of slave-vessels in Liverpool, and living among these he would not like to incur their resentment, by taking a prominent part against them. I therefore entreated Mr. Pitt to send him a summons of council to attend, hoping that Mr. Norris would then be pleased to come up, as he would be enabled to reply to his friends, that his appearance had not been voluntary. Mr. Pitt, however, informed me, that a summons from a committee of privy council sitting as a board of trade was not binding upon the subject, and there-

* See his evidence Chap. xvii.

fore

fore that I had no other means left but of writing to him, and he desired me to do this by the first post.

This letter I accordingly wrote, and sent it to my friend William Rathbone, who was to deliver it in person, and to use his own influence at the same time; but I received for answer, that Mr. Norris was then in London. Upon this I tried to find him out, to entreat him to consent to an examination before the council. At length I found his address; but before I could see him, I was told by the Bishop of London, that he had come up as a Liverpool delegate in support of the Slave-trade. Astonished at this information, I made the bishop acquainted with the case, and asked him how it became me to act; for I was fearful lest, by exposing Mr. Norris, I should violate the rights of hospitality on the one hand, and by not exposing him, that I should not do my duty to the cause I had undertaken on the other. His advice was, that I should see him, and ask him to explain the reasons of his conduct. I called upon him for this purpose, but he was out. He sent me, however, a letter soon afterwards, which was full of flattery,

flattery, and in which, after having paid high compliments to the general force of my arguments, and the general justice and humanity of my sentiments on this great question, which had made a deep impression upon his mind, he had found occasion to differ from me, since we had last parted, on particular points, and that he had therefore less reluctantly yielded to the call of becoming a delegate,—though notwithstanding he would gladly have declined the office if he could have done it with propriety.

At length the council began their examinations. Mr. Norris, Lieutenant Matthews, of the navy, who had just left a slave-employ in Africa, and Mr. James Penny, formerly a slave-captain, and then interested as a merchant in the trade, (which three were the delegates from Liverpool) took possession of the ground first. Mr. Miles, Mr. Weuves, and others, followed them on the same side. The evidence which they gave, as previously concerted between themselves, may be shortly represented thus: They denied that kidnapping either did or could take place in Africa, or that wars were made there, for the purpose of procuring slaves. Having done away

away these wicked practices from their system, they maintained positions which were less exceptionable, or that the natives of Africa generally became slaves in consequence of having been made prisoners in just wars, or in consequence of their various crimes. They then gave a melancholy picture of the despotism and barbarity of some of the African princes, among whom the custom of sacrificing their own subjects prevailed. But, of all others, that which was afforded by Mr. Norris on this ground was the most frightful. The king of Dahomey, he said, sported with the lives of his people in the most wanton manner. He had seen at the gates of his palace, two piles of heads like those of shot in an arsenal. Within the palace the heads of persons newly put to death were strewed at the distance of a few yards in the passage which led to his apartment. This custom of human sacrifice by the king of Dahomey was not on one occasion only, but on many; such as on the reception of messengers from neighbouring states, or of white merchants, or on days of ceremonial. But the great carnage was once a year, when the poll tax was paid by his subjects.

jects. A thousand persons at least were sacrificed annually on these different occasions. The great men, too, of the country cut off a few heads on festival-days. From all these particulars the humanity of the Slave-trade was inferred, because it took away the inhabitants of Africa into lands where no such barbarities were known. But the humanity of it was insisted upon by positive circumstances also, namely, that a great number of the slaves were prisoners of war, and that in former times all such were put to death, whereas now they were saved; so that there was a great accession of happiness to Africa since the introduction of the Trade.

These statements, and those of others on the same side of the question, had a great effect, as may easily be conceived, upon the feelings of those of the council who were present. Some of them began immediately to be prejudiced against us. There were others who even thought that it was almost unnecessary to proceed in the inquiry, for that the Trade was actually a blessing. They had little doubt that all our assertions concerning it would be found false. The

Bishop of London himself was so impressed by these unexpected accounts, that he asked me if Falconbridge, whose pamphlet had been previously sent by the committee to every member of the council, was worthy of belief, and if he would substantiate publicly what he had thus written. But these impressions unfortunately were not confined to those who had been present at the examinations. These could not help communicating them to others. Hence in all the higher circles (some of which I sometimes used to frequent) I had the mortification to hear of nothing but the Liverpool evidence, and of our own credulity, and of the impositions which had been practised upon us: of these reports the planters and merchants did not fail to avail themselves. They boasted that they would soon do away all the idle tales which had been invented against them. They desired the public only to suspend their judgment till the privy council report should be out, when they would see the folly and wickedness of all our allegations. A little more evidence, and all would be over. On the twenty-second of March, though the committee of council

council had not then held its sittings more than a month, and these only twice or thrice a week, the following paragraph was seen in a morning paper:—"The report of the committee of privy council will be ready in a few days. After due examination it appears that the major part of the complaints against this Trade are ill-founded. Some regulations, however, are expected to take place, which may serve in a certain degree to appease the cause of humanity."

But while they who were interested had produced this outcry against us, in consequence of what had fallen from their own witnesses in the course of their examinations, they had increased it considerably by the industrious circulation of a most artful pamphlet among persons of rank and fortune at the West end of the metropolis, which was called, Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-trade. This they had procured to be written by R. Harris, who was then clerk in a slave-house in Liverpool, but had been formerly a clergyman and a Jesuit. As they had maintained in the first instance, as has been already shown,

the humanity of the traffic, so, by means of this pamphlet they asserted its consistency with revealed religion. That such a book should have made converts in such an age is surprising; and yet many, who ought to have known better, were carried away by it; and we had now absolutely to contend, and almost to degrade ourselves by doing so, against the double argument of the humanity and the holiness of the trade.

By these means, but particularly by the former, the current of opinion in particular circles ran against us for the first month, and so strong, that it was impossible for us to stem it at once: but as some of the council recovered from their panic, and their good sense became less biassed by their feelings, and they were in a state to hear reason, their prejudices began to subside. It began now to be understood among them, that almost all the witnesses were concerned in the continuance of the Trade. It began to be known also, (for Mr. Pitt and the Bishop of London took care that it should be circulated,) that Mr. Norris had but a short time before furnished me at Liverpool with information,

formation, all of which he had concealed* from the council, but all of which made for the abolition of it. Mr. Devaynes also, a respectable member of parliament, who had been in Africa, and who had been appealed to by Mr. Norris, when examined before the privy council, in behalf of his extraordinary facts, was unable, when summoned, to confirm them to the desired extent. From this evidence the council collected, that human sacrifices were not made on the arrival of White traders, as had been asserted; that there was no poll-tax in Dahomey at all; and that Mr. Norris must have been mistaken on these points, for he must have been there at the time of the ceremony of watering the graves, when about sixty persons suffered. This latter custom moreover appeared to have been a religious superstition of the country, such as at Otaheite, or in Britain in the time of the Druids, and to have had nothing to do with the

* This was also the case with another witness, Mr. Weuves. He had given me accounts, before any stir was made about the Slave-trade, relative to it, all of which he kept back when he was examined there.

Slave-

Slave-trade*. With respect to prisoners of war, Mr. Devaynes allowed that the old, the lame, and the wounded, were often put to death on the spot; but this was to save the trouble of bringing them away. The young and the healthy were driven off for sale; but if they were not sold when offered, they were not killed, but reserved for another market, or became house-slaves to the conquerors. Mr. Devaynes also maintained, contrary to the allegations of the others, that a great number of persons were kidnapped in order to be sold to the ships, and that the government, where this happened, was not strong enough to prevent it. But besides these draw-backs from the weight of the testimony which had been given, it began to be perceived by some of the lords of the council, that the cruel superstitions which had been described, obtained only in one or two countries in Africa, and these of insignificant extent; whereas

* Being a religious custom, it would still have gone on, though the Slave-trade had been abolished: nor could the merchants at any time have bought off a single victim.

at

at the time, when their minds were carried away as it were by their feelings, they had supposed them to attach to the whole of that vast continent. They perceived also, that there were circumstances related in the evidence by the delegates themselves, by means of which, if they were true, the inhumanity of the trade might be established, and this to their own disgrace. They had all confessed that such slaves as the White traders refused to buy were put to death; and yet that these traders, knowing that this would be the case, had the barbarity uniformly to reject those whom it did not suit them to purchase. Mr. Matthews had rejected one of this description himself, whom he saw afterwards destroyed. Mr. Penny had known the refuse thrown down Melimba rock. Mr. Norris himself, when certain prisoners of war were offered to him for sale, declined buying them because they appeared unhealthy; and though the king then told him that he would put them to death, he could not be prevailed upon to take them, but left them to their hard fate; and he had the boldness to state afterwards, that it was his belief that many of them actually suffered.

These

These considerations had the effect of diminishing the prejudices of some of the council on this great question: and when this was perceived to be the case, it was the opinion of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Grenville, and the Bishop of London, that we should send three or four of our own evidences for examination, who might help to restore matters to an equilibrium. Accordingly Mr. Falconbridge, and some others, all of whom were to speak to the African part of the subject, were introduced. These produced a certain weight in the opposite scale. But soon after these had been examined, Dr. Andrew Spaarman, professor of physic, and inspector of the museum of the royal academy at Stockholm, and his companion, C. B. Wadstrom, chief director of the assay-office there, arrived in England. These gentlemen had been lately sent to Africa by the late king of Sweden, to make discoveries in botany, mineralogy, and other departments of science. For this purpose the Swedish ambassador at Paris had procured them permission from the French government to visit the countries bordering on the Senegal, and had ensured them protection there. They had

had been conveyed to the place of their destination, where they had remained from August 1787 to the end of January 1788; but meeting with obstacles which they had not foreseen, they had left it, and had returned to Havre de Grace, from whence they had just arrived in London, in their way home. It so happened, that by means of George Harrison, one of our committee, I fell in unexpectedly with these gentlemen. I had not long been with them before I perceived the great treasure I had found. They gave me many beautiful specimens of African produce. They showed me their journals, which they had regularly kept from day to day. In these I had the pleasure of seeing a number of circumstances minuted down, all relating to the Slave-trade, and even drawings on the same subject. I obtained a more accurate and satisfactory knowledge of the manners and customs of the Africans from these, than from all the persons put together whom I had yet seen. I was anxious, therefore, to take them before the committee of council, to which they were pleased to consent; and as Dr. Spaarman was to leave London in a few days,

days, I procured him an introduction first. His evidence went to show, that the natives of Africa lived in a fruitful and luxuriant country, which supplied all their wants, and that they would be a happy people if it were not for the existence of the Slave-trade. He instanced wars which he knew to have been made by the Moors upon the Negros (for they were entered upon wholly at the instigation of the White traders) for the purpose of getting slaves, and he had the pain of seeing the unhappy captives brought in on such occasions, and some of them in a wounded state. Among them were many women and children, and the women were in great affliction. He saw also the king of Barbesin send out his parties on expeditions of a similar kind, and he saw them return with slaves. The king had been made intoxicated on purpose, by the French agents, or he would never have consented to the measure. He stated also, that in consequence of the temptations held out by slave-vessels coming upon the coast, the natives seized one another in the night, when they found opportunity; and even invited others to their houses, whom they treacherously detained, and

and sold at these times; so that every enormity was practised in Africa, in consequence of the existence of the Trade. These specific instances made a proper impression upon the lords of the council in their turn: for Dr. Spaarman was a man of high character; he possessed the confidence of his sovereign; he had no interest whatever in giving his evidence on this subject, either on one or the other side; his means of information too had been large; he had also recorded the facts which had come before him, and he had his journal, written in the French language, to produce. The tide therefore, which had run so strongly against us, began now to turn a little in our favour.

While these examinations were going on, petitions continued to be sent to the house of commons, from various parts of the kingdom. No less than one hundred and three were presented in this session. The city of London, though she was drawn the other way by the cries of commercial interest, made a sacrifice to humanity and justice. The two Universities applauded her conduct by their own example. Large manufacturing towns and whole counties expressed their

their sentiments and wishes in a similar manner. The Established Church in separate dioceses, and the Quakers and other Dissenters, as separate religious bodies, joined in one voice upon this occasion.

The committee in the interim were not unmindful of the great work they had undertaken, and they continued to forward it in its different departments. They kept up a communication by letter with most of the worthy persons who have been mentioned to have written to them, but particularly with Brissot and Claviere, from whom they had the satisfaction of learning, that a society had at length been established at Paris for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade in France. The learned Marquis de Condorcet had become the president of it. The virtuous Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and the Marquis de la Fayette, had sanctioned it by enrolling their names as the two first members. Petion, who was placed afterwards among the mayors of Paris, followed. Women also were not thought unworthy of being honorary and assistant members of this humane institution; and among these

were

were found the amiable Marchioness of la Fayette, Madame de Poivre, widow of the late intendant of the Isle of France, and Madame Necker, wife of the first minister of state.

The new correspondents, who voluntarily offered their services to the committee during the first part of the period now under consideration, were, S. Whitcomb, esq., of Gloucester; the reverend D. Watson, of Middleton Tyas, Yorkshire; John Murlin, esq, of High Wycomb; Charles Collins, esq., of Swansea; Henry Tudor, esq., of Sheffield; the reverend John Hare, of Lincoln; Samuel Tooker, esq., of Moorgate, near Rotherham; the reverend G. Walker, and Francis Wakefield, esq., of Nottingham; the reverend Mr. Hepworth, of Burton-upon-Trent; the reverend H. Dannett, of St. John's, Liverpool; the reverend Dr. Oglander, of New College, Oxford; the reverend H. Coulthurst, of Sidney College, Cambridge; R. Selfe, esq., of Cirencester; Morris Birkbeck, of Hanford, Dorsetshire; William Jepson, of Lancaster; B. Kaye, of Leeds; John Patison, esq., of Paisley; J. E. Dolben,

Dolben, esq., of Northamptonshire; the reverend Mr. Smith, of Wendover; John Wilkinson, esquire, of Woodford; Samuel Milford, esquire, of Exeter; Peter Lunel, esquire, treasurer of the committee at Bristol; James Pemberton, of Philadelphia; and the President of the Society at New York.

The letters from new correspondents during the latter part of this period were the following:

One from Alexander Alison, esquire, of Edinburgh, in which he expressed it to be his duty to attempt to awaken the inhabitants of Scotland to a knowledge of the monstrous evil of the Slave-trade, and to form a committee there to act in union with that of London, in carrying the great object of their institution into effect.

Another from Elhanan Winchester, offering the committee one hundred of his sermons, which he had preached against the Slave-trade, in Fairfax county in Virginia, so early as in the year 1774.

Another from Dr. Frossard, of Lyons, in which he offered his services for the South of France, and desired different publications

to

to be sent him, that he might be better qualified to take a part in the promotion of the cause.

Another from professor Bruns, of Helmstadt in Germany, in which he desired to know the particulars relative to the institution of the committee, as many thousands upon the continent were then beginning to feel for the sufferings of the oppressed African race.

Another from the reverend James Manning, of Exeter, in which he stated himself to be authorised by the dissenting ministers of Devon and Cornwall, to express their high approbation of the conduct of the committee, and to offer their services in the promotion of this great work of humanity and religion.

Another from William Senhouse, esquire, of the island of Barbadoes. In this he gave the particulars of two estates, one of them his own and the other belonging to a nobleman, upon each of which the slaves, in consequence of humane treatment, had increased by natural population only. Another effect of this humane treatment had been, that

that these slaves were among the most orderly and tractable in that island. From these and other instances he argued, that if the planters would, all of them, take proper care of their slaves, their humanity would be repaid in a few years by a valuable increase in their property, and they would never want supplies from a traffic, which had been so justly condemned.

Two others, the one from Travers Hartley, and the other from Alexander Jaffray, esquires, both of Dublin, were read. These gentlemen sent certain resolutions, which had been agreed upon by the chamber of commerce and by the guild of merchants there relative to the abolition of the Slave-trade. They rejoiced in the name of those, whom they represented, that Ireland had been unspotted by a traffic, which they held in such deep abhorrence, and promised, if it should be abolished in England, to take the most active measures to prevent it from finding an asylum in the ports of that kingdom.

The letters of William Senhouse, and of Travers Hartley, and of Alexandet Jaffray, esquires,

esquires, were ordered to be presented to the committee of privy council, and copies of them to be left there.

The business of the committee having almost daily increased within this period, Dr. Baker, and Bennet Langton esquire, who were the two first to assist me in my early labours, and who have been mentioned among the forerunners and coadjutors of the cause, were elected members of it. Dr. Kippis also was added to the list.

The honorary and corresponding members elected within the same period, were the Dean of Middleham, T. W. Coke esquire, member of parliament, of Holkham in Norfolk, and the reverend William Leigh, who has been before mentioned, of Little Plumstead in the same county. The latter had published several valuable letters in the public papers under the signature of Africanus. These had excited great notice, and done much good. The worthy author had now collected them into a publication, and had offered the profits of it to the committee. Hence this mark of their respect was conferred upon him.

The committee ordered a new edition of

three thousand of the Dean of Middleham's Letters to be printed. Having approved of a manuscript written by James Field Stanfield, a mariner, containing observations upon a voyage which he had lately made to the coast of Africa for slaves, they ordered three thousand of these to be printed also. By this time the subject having been much talked of, and many doubts and difficulties having been thrown in the way of the abolition by persons interested in the continuance of the trade, Mr. Ramsay, who has been often so honourably mentioned, put down upon paper all the objections which were then handed about, and also those answers to each, which he was qualified from his superior knowledge of the subject to suggest. This he did, that the members of the legislature might see the more intricate parts of the question unravelled, and that they might not be imposed upon by the spurious arguments which were then in circulation concerning it. Observing also the poisonous effect which The Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-trade had produced upon the minds of many, he wrote an answer on scriptural grounds to that

pamphlet. These works were sent to the press, and three thousand copies of each of them were ordered to be struck off.

The committee, in their arrangement of the distribution of their books, ordered Newton's Thoughts, and Ramsay's Objections and Answers, to be sent to each member of both houses of parliament.

They appointed also three sub-committees for different purposes: one to draw up such facts and arguments respecting the Slave-trade, with a view of being translated into other languages, as should give foreigners a suitable knowledge of the subject; another to prepare an answer to certain false reports which had been spread relative to the object of their institution, and to procure an insertion of it in the daily papers; and a third to draw up rules for the government of the Society.

By the latter end of the month of March, there was an anxious expectation in the public, notwithstanding the privy council had taken up the subject, that some notice should be taken in the lower house of parliament of the numerous petitions which had been presented there. There was the

same expectation in many of the members of it themselves. Lord Penrhyn, one of the representatives for Liverpool, and a planter also, had anticipated this notice, by moving for such papers relative to ships employed, goods exported, produce imported, and duties upon the same, as would show the vast value of the trade, which it was in contemplation to abolish. But at this time Mr. Wilberforce was ill, and unable to gratify the expectations which had been thus apparent. The committee, therefore, who partook of the anxiety of the public, knew not what to do. They saw that two-thirds of the session had already passed. They saw no hope of Mr. Wilberforce's recovery for some time. Rumours too were afloat, that other members, of whose plans they knew nothing, and who might even make emancipation their object, would introduce the business into the house. Thus situated, they waited as patiently as they could till the eighth of April*, when they resolved to

* Brissot attended in person at this committee in his way to America, which it was then an object with him to visit.

write

write to Mr. Wilberforce, to explain to him their fears and wishes, and to submit it to his consideration, whether, if he were unable himself, he would appoint some one, in whom he could confide, to make some motion in parliament on the subject.

But the public expectation became now daily more visible. The inhabitants of Manchester, many of whom had signed the petition for that place, became impatient, and they appointed Thomas Walker and Thomas Cooper, esquires, as their delegates, to proceed to London to communicate with the committee on this subject, to assist them in their deliberations upon it, and to give their attendance while it was under discussion by the legislature.

At the time of the arrival of the delegates, who were received as such by the committee, a letter came from Bath, in which it was stated that Mr. Wilberforce's health was in such a precarious state, that his physicians dared not allow him to read any letter, which related to the subject of the Slave-trade.

The committee were now again at a loss how to act, when they were relieved from this

this doubtful situation by a message from Mr. Pitt, who desired a conference with their chairman. Mr. Sharp accordingly went, and on his return made the following report: "He had a full opportunity," he said, "of explaining to Mr. Pitt that the desire of the committee went to the entire abolition of the Slave-trade. Mr. Pitt assured him that his heart was with the committee as to this object, and that he considered himself pledged to Mr Wilberforce, that the cause should not sustain any injury from his indisposition; but at the same time observed, that the subject was of great political importance, and it was requisite to proceed in it with temper and prudence. He did not apprehend, as the examinations before the privy council would yet take up some time, that the subject could be fully investigated in the present session of parliament; but said he would consider whether the forms of the house would admit of any measures, that would be obligatory on them to take it up early in the ensuing session."

In about a week after this conference, Mr. Morton Pitt was deputed by the minister to write to the committee, to say that he

he had found precedents for such a motion as he conceived to be proper, and that he would submit it to the House of Commons in a few days.

At the next meeting, which was on the sixth of May, and at which major Cartwright and the Manchester delegates assisted, Mr. Morton Pitt attended as a member of the committee, and said that the minister had fixed his motion for the ninth. It was then resolved, that deputations should be sent to some of the leading members of parliament, to request their support of the approaching motion. I was included in one of these, and in that which was to wait upon Mr Fox. We were received by him in a friendly manner. On putting the question to him, which related to the object of our mission, Mr. Fox paused for a little while, as if in the act of deliberation; when he assured us unequivocally, and in language which could not be misunderstood, that he would support the object of the committee to its fullest extent, being convinced that there was no remedy for the evil, but in the total abolition of the trade.

At length, the ninth, or the day fixed upon,

upon, arrived, when this important subject was to be mentioned in the House of Commons for the first time*, with a view to the public discussion of it. It is impossible for me to give within the narrow limits of this work all that was then said upon it; and yet as the debate, which ensued, was the first which took place upon it, I should feel inexcusable if I were not to take some notice of it.

Mr. Pitt rose. He said he intended to move a resolution relative to a subject, which was of more importance than any which had ever been agitated in that house. This honour he should not have had, but for a circumstance, which he could not but deeply regret, the severe indisposition of his friend Mr. Wilberforce, in whose hands every measure, which belonged to justice, humanity, and the national interest, was peculiarly well placed. The subject in question was no less than that of the Slave-trade. It was obvious

* David Hartley made a motion some years before in the same house, as has been shown in a former part of this work, but this was only to establish a proposition, That the Slave-trade was contrary to the Laws of God and the Rights of Man.

from

from the great number of petitions, which had been presented concerning it, how much it had engaged the public attention, and consequently how much it deserved the serious notice of that house, and how much it became their duty to take some measure concerning it. But whatever was done on such a subject, every one would agree, ought to be done with the maturest deliberation. Two opinions had prevailed without doors, as appeared from the language of the different petitions. It had been pretty generally thought that the African Slave-trade ought to be abolished. There were others, however, who thought that it only stood in need of regulations. But all had agreed that it ought not to remain as it stood at present. But that measure, which it might be the most proper to take, could only be discovered by a cool, patient, and diligent examination of the subject in all its circumstances, relations, and consequences. This had induced him to form an opinion, that the present was not the proper time for discussing it; for the session was now far advanced, and there was also a want of proper materials for the full information of the house. It would, he thought,

thought, be better discussed, when it might produce some useful debate, and when that inquiry, which had been instituted by His Majesty's ministers, (he meant the examination by a committee of privy council,) should be brought to such a state of maturity, as to make it fit that the result of it should be laid before the house. That inquiry, he trusted, would facilitate their investigation, and enable them the better to proceed to a decision, which should be equally founded on principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy. As there was not a probability of reaching so desirable an end in the present state of the business, he meant to move a resolution to pledge the house to the discussion of the question early in the next session. If by that time his honourable friend should be recovered, which he hoped would be the case, then he (Mr. Wilberforce) would take the lead in it; but should it unfortunately happen otherwise, then he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) pledged himself to bring forward some proposition concerning it. The house, however, would observe, that he had studiously avoided giving any opinion of his own on this great subject.

subject. He thought it wiser to defer this till the time of the discussion should arrive. He concluded with moving, after having read the names of the places from whence the different petitions had come, "That this house will, early in the next session of parliament, proceed to take into consideration the circumstances of the Slave-trade complained of in the said petitions, and what may be fit to be done thereupon."

Mr. Fox began by observing, that he had long taken an interest in this great subject, which he had also minutely examined, and that it was his intention to have brought something forward himself in parliament respecting it: but when he heard that Mr. Wilberforce had resolved to take it up, he was unaffectedly rejoiced, not only knowing the purity of his principles and character, but because, from a variety of considerations as to the situations in which different men stood in the house, there was something that made him honestly think it was better that the business should be in the hands of that gentleman, than in his own. Having premised this, he said that, as so many petitions, and these signed by such numbers

numbers of persons of the most respectable character, had been presented, he was sorry that it had been found impossible that the subject of them could be taken up this year, and more particularly as he was not able to see, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done, that there were circumstances, which might happen by the next year, which would make it more advisable and advantageous to take it up then, than it would have been to enter upon it in the present session. For certainly there could be no information laid before the house, through the medium of the Lords of the Council, which could not more advantageously have been obtained by themselves, had they instituted a similar inquiry. It was their duty to advise the King, and not to ask his advice. This the constitution had laid down as one of its most essential principles; and though in the present instance he saw no cause for blame, because he was persuaded His Majesty's ministers had not acted with any ill intention, it was still a principle never to be departed from, because it never could be departed from without establishing a precedent which might lead to very serious abuses. He la-

mented that the Privy Council, who had received no petitions from the people on the subject, should have instituted an inquiry, and that the House of Commons, the table of which had been loaded with petitions from various parts of the kingdom, should not have instituted any inquiry at all. He hoped these petitions would have a fair discussion in that house, independently of any information that could be given to it by His Majesty's ministers. He urged again the superior advantages of an inquiry into such a subject, carried on within those walls, over any inquiry carried on by the Lords of the Council. In inquiries carried on in that house, they had the benefit of every circumstance of publicity; which was a most material benefit indeed, and that which of all others made the manner of conducting the parliamentary proceedings of Great Britain the envy and the admiration of the world. An inquiry there was better than an inquiry in any other place, however respectable the persons before and by whom it was carried on. There, all that could be said for the abolition or against it might be said. In that house, every relative fact would

would have been produced, no information would have been withheld, no circumstance would have been omitted, which was necessary for elucidation; nothing would have been kept back. He was sorry therefore that the consideration of the question, but more particularly where so much human suffering was concerned, should be put off to another session, when it was obvious that no advantage could be gained by the delay.

He then adverted to the secrecy, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had observed relative to his own opinion on this important subject. Why did he refuse to give it? Had Mr. Wilberforce been present, the house would have had a great advantage in this respect, because doubtless he would have stated in what view he saw the subject, and in a general way described the nature of the project he meant to propose. But now they were kept in the dark as to the nature of any plan, till the next session. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had indeed said, that it had been a very general opinion that the African Slave-trade should be abolished. He had said again, that others had not

not gone so far, but had given it as their opinion, that it required to be revised and regulated. But why did he not give his own sentiments boldly to the world on this great question? As for himself, he (Mr. Fox) had no scruple to declare at the outset, that the Slave-trade ought not to be regulated, but destroyed. To this opinion his mind was made up; and he was persuaded that, the more the subject was considered, the more his opinion would gain ground; and it would be admitted, that to consider it in any other manner, or on any other principles than those of humanity and justice, would be idle and absurd. If there were any such men, and he did not know but that there were those, who, led away by local and interested considerations, thought the Slave-trade might still continue under certain modifications, these were the dupes of error, and mistook what they thought their interest, for what he would undertake to convince them was their loss. Let such men only hear the case further, and they would find the result to be, that a cold-hearted policy was folly, when it opposed the great principles of humanity and justice.

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He concluded by saying that he would not oppose the resolution, if other members thought it best to postpone the consideration of the subject; but he should have been better pleased, if it had been discussed sooner; and he certainly reserved to himself the right of voting for any question upon it that should be brought forward by any other member in the course of the present session.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that nothing he had heard had satisfied him of the propriety of departing from the rule he had laid down for himself, of not offering, but of studiously avoiding to offer, any opinion upon the subject till the time should arrive when it could be fully argued. He thought that no discussion, which could take place that session, could lead to any useful measure, and therefore he had wished not to argue it till the whole of it could be argued. A day would come, when every member would have an opportunity of stating his opinion; and he wished it might be discussed with a proper spirit on all sides, on fair and liberal principles, and without any shackles from local and interested considerations.

With

With regard to the inquiries instituted before the committee of privy council, he was sure, as soon as it became obvious that the subject must undergo a discussion, it was the duty of His Majesty's ministers to set those inquiries on foot, which should best enable them to judge in what manner they could meet or offer any proposition respecting the Slave-trade. And although such previous examinations by no means went to deprive that house of its undoubted right to institute those inquiries, or to preclude them, they would be found greatly to facilitate them. But, exclusive of this consideration, it would have been utterly impossible to have come to any discussion of the subject, that could have been brought to a conclusion in the course of the present session. Did the inquiry then before the privy council prove a loss of time? So far from it, that, upon the whole, time had been gained by it. He had moved the resolution, therefore, to pledge the house to bring on the discussion early in the next session, when they would have a full opportunity of considering every part of the subject: first, Whether the whole of the trade ought

be abolished; and, if so, how and when. If it should be thought that the trade should only be put under certain regulations, what those regulations ought to be, and when they should take place. These were questions which must be considered; and therefore he had made his resolution as wide as possible, that there might be room for all necessary considerations to be taken in. He repeated his declaration, that he would reserve his sentiments till the day of discussion should arrive; and again declared, that he earnestly wished to avoid an anticipation of the debate upon the subject. But if such debate was likely to take place, he would withdraw his motion, and offer it another day.

A few words then passed between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox in reply to each other; after which Lord Penrhyn rose. He said there were two classes of men, the African merchants, and the planters, both whose characters had been grossly calumniated. These wished that an inquiry might be instituted, and this immediately, conscious that the more their conduct was examined the less they would be found to merit the opprobrium with which they had been loaded.

loaded. The charges against the Slave-trade were either true or false. If they were true, it ought to be abolished; but if upon inquiry they were found to be without foundation, justice ought to be done to the reputation of those who were concerned in it. He then said a few words, by which he signified, that, after all, it might not be an improper measure to make regulations in the trade.

Mr. Burke said, the noble lord, who was a man of honour himself, had reasoned from his own conduct, and, being conscious of his own integrity, was naturally led to imagine that other men were equally just and honourable. Undoubtedly the merchants and planters had a right to call for an investigation of their conduct, and their doing so did them great credit. The Slave-trade also ought equally to be inquired into. Neither did he deny that it was right His Majesty's ministers should inquire into its merits for themselves. They had done their duty; but that house, who had the petitions of the people on their table, had neglected it, by having so long deferred an inquiry of their own. If that house wished to preserve their functions,

their understandings, their honour, and their dignity, he advised them to beware of committees of privy council. If they suffered their business to be done by such means, they were abdicating their trust and character, and making way for an entire abolition of their functions, which they were parting with one after another. Thus

"Star after star goes out, and all is night."

If they neglected the petitions of their constituents, they must fall, and the privy council be instituted in their stead. What would be the consequence? His Majesty's ministers, instead of consulting them, and giving them the opportunity of exercising their functions of deliberation and legislation, would modify the measures of government elsewhere, and bring down the edicts of the privy council to them to register. Mr. Burke said, he was one of those who wished for the abolition of the Slave-trade. He thought it ought to be abolished, on principles of humanity and justice. If, however, opposition of interests should render its total abolition impossible, it ought to be regulated, and that immediately. They need

need not send to the West Indies to know the opinions of the planters on the subject. They were to consider first of all, and abstractedly from all political, personal, and local considerations, that the Slave-trade was directly contrary to the principles of humanity and justice, and to the spirit of the British constitution; and that the state of slavery, which followed it, however mitigated, was a state so improper, so degrading, and so ruinous to the feelings and capacities of human nature, that it ought not to be suffered to exist. He deprecated delay in this business, as well for the sake of the planters as of the slaves.

Mr. Gascoyne, the other member for Liverpool, said he had no objection that the discussion should stand over to the next session of parliament, provided it could not come on in the present, because he was persuaded it would ultimately be found that his constituents, who were more immediately concerned in the trade, and who had been so shamefully calumniated, were men of respectable character. He hoped the privy council would print their Report when they had brought their inquiries to a conclusion, and

and that they would lay it before the house and the public, in order to enable all concerned to form a judgment of what was proper to be done relative to the subject, next session. With respect, however, to the total abolition of the Slave-trade, he must confess that such a measure was both unnecessary, visionary, and impracticable; but he wished some alterations or modifications to be adopted. He hoped that, when the house came to go into the general question, they would not forget the trade, commerce, and navigation, of the country.

Mr. Rolle said, he had received instructions from his constituents to inquire if the grievances, which had been alleged to result from the Slave-trade, were well founded, and, if it should appear that they were, to assist in applying a remedy. He was glad the discussion had been put off till next session, as it would give all of them an opportunity of considering the subject with more mature deliberation.

Mr. Martin desired to say a few words only. He put the case, that, supposing the slaves were treated ever so humanely, when they were carried to the West Indies, what compensation

compensation could be made them for being torn from their nearest relations, and from every thing that was dear to them in life? He hoped no political advantage, no national expediency, would be allowed to weigh in the scale against the eternal rules of moral rectitude. As for himself, he had no hesitation to declare, in this early stage of the business, that he should think himself a wicked wretch if he did not do every thing in his power to put a stop to the Slave-trade.

Sir William Dolben said, that he did not then wish to enter into the discussion of the general question of the abolition of the Slave-trade, which the Chancellor of the Exchequer was so desirous of postponing; but he wished to say a few words on what he conceived to be a most crying evil, and which might be immediately remedied, without infringing upon the limits of that question. He did not allude to the sufferings of the poor Africans in their own country, nor afterwards in the West India islands, but to that intermediate state of tenfold misery which they underwent in their transportation. When put on board the ships, the poor unhappy wretches were chained to each

each other, hand and foot, and stowed so close, that they were not allowed above a foot and a half for each individual in breadth. Thus crammed together like herrings in a barrel, they contracted putrid and fatal disorders; so that they who came to inspect them in a morning had occasionally to pick dead slaves out of their rows, and to unchain their carcases from the bodies of their wretched fellow-sufferers, to whom they had been fastened. Nor was it merely to the slaves that the baneful effects of the contagion thus created were confined. This contagion affected the ships' crews, and numbers of the seamen employed in the horrid traffic perished. This evil, he said, called aloud for a remedy, and that remedy ought to be applied soon; otherwise no less than ten thousand lives might be lost between this and the next session. He wished therefore this grievance to be taken into consideration, independently of the general question; and that some regulations, such as restraining the captains from taking above a certain number of slaves on board, according to the size of their vessels, and obliging them to let in fresh air, and provide better

better accommodation for the slaves during their passage, should be adopted.

Mr. Young wished the consideration of the whole subject to stand over to the next session.

Sir James Johnstone, though a planter, professed himself a friend to the abolition of the Slave-trade. He said it was highly necessary that the house should do something respecting it; but whatever was to be done should be done soon, as delay might be productive of bad consequences in the islands.

Mr. L. Smith stood up a zealous advocate for the abolition of the Slave-trade. He said that even Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Gascoyne, the members for Liverpool, had admitted the evil of it to a certain extent; for regulations or modifications, in which they seemed to acquiesce, were unnecessary where abuses did not really exist.

Mr. Grigby thought it his duty to declare, that no privy council report, or other mode of examination, could influence him. A traffic in the persons of men was so odious, that it ought everywhere, as soon as ever it was discovered, to be abolished.

Mr.

Mr. Bastard was anxious that the house should proceed to the discussion of the subject in the present session. The whole country, he said, had petitioned; and was it any satisfaction to the country to be told, that the committee of privy council were inquiring? Who knew any thing of what was doing by the committee of privy council, or what progress they were making? The inquiry ought to have been instituted in that house, and in the face of the public, that every body concerned might know what was going on. The numerous petitions of the people ought immediately to be attended to. He reprobated delay on this occasion; and as the honourable baronet, Sir William Dolben, had stated facts which were shocking to humanity, he hoped he would move that a committee might be appointed to inquire into their existence, that a remedy might be applied, if possible, before the sailing of the next ships for Africa.

Mr. Whitbread professed himself a strenuous advocate for the total and immediate abolition of the Slave-trade. It was contrary to nature, and to every principle of justice, humanity, and religion.

Mr.

Mr. Pelham stated, that he had very maturely considered the subject of the Slave-trade; and had he not known that the business was in the hands of an honourable member, (whose absence from the house, and the cause of it, no man lamented more sincerely than he did,) he should have ventured to propose something concerning it himself. If it should be thought that the Trade ought not to be entirely done away, the sooner it was regulated the better. He had a plan for this purpose, which appeared to him to be likely to produce some salutary effects. He wished to know if any such thing would be permitted to be proposed in the course of the present session.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said he should be happy, if he thought the circumstances of the house were such as to enable them to proceed to an immediate discussion of the question; but as that did not appear, from the reasons he had before stated, to be the case, he could only assure the honourable gentleman, that the same motives which had induced him to propose an inquiry into the subject early in the next session of parliament, would make him desirous of receiving

ceiving any other light which could be thrown upon it.

The question having been then put, the resolution was agreed to unanimously. Thus ended the first debate that ever took place in the commons, on this important subject. This debate, though many of the persons concerned in it abstained cautiously from entering into the merits of the general question, became interesting, in consequence of circumstances attending it. Several rose up at once to give relief, as it were, to their feelings by utterance; but by so doing they were prevented, many of them, from being heard. They who were heard spoke with peculiar energy, as if warmed in an extraordinary manner by the subject. There was an apparent enthusiasm in behalf of the injured Africans. It was supposed by some, that there was a moment, in which, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had moved for an immediate abolition of the Trade, he would have carried it that night; and both he and others, who professed an attachment to the cause, were censured for not having taken a due advantage of the disposition which was so apparent. But independently of the inconsistency

consistency of doing this on the part of the ministry, while the privy council were in the midst of their inquiries, and of the improbability that the other branches of the legislature would have concurred in so hasty a measure; What good would have accrued to the cause, if the abolition had been then carried? Those concerned in the cruel system would never have rested quietly under the stigma under which they then laboured. They would have urged, that they had been condemned unheard. The merchants would have said, that they had had no notice of such an event, that they might prepare a way for their vessels in other trades. The planters would have said, that they had had no time allowed them to provide such supplies from Africa as might enable them to keep up their respective stocks. They would, both of them, have called aloud for immediate indemnification. They would have decried the policy of the measure of the abolition;—and where had it been proved? They would have demanded a reverse of it; and might they not, in cooler moments, have succeeded? Whereas, by entering into a patient discussion of the merits of the question

question; by bringing evidence upon it; by reasoning upon that evidence night after night, and year after year, and thus by disputing the ground inch as it were by inch, the Abolition of the Slave-trade stands upon a rock, upon which itnever can be shaken. Many of those who were concerned in the cruel system have now given up their prejudices, because they became convinced in the contest. A stigma too has been fixed upon it, which can never be erased: and in a large record, in which the cruelty and injustice of it have been recognised in indelible characters, its impolicy also has been eternally enrolled.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Continuation to the middle of July—Anxiety of Sir William Dolben to lessen the horrors of the Middle Passage till the great question should be discussed—brings in a bill for that purpose—debate upon it—Evidence examined against it—its inconsistency and falsehoods—further debate upon it—Bill passed, and carried to the Lords—vexatious delays and opposition there—carried backwards and forwards to both houses—at length finally passed—Proceedings of the committee in the interim—effects of them.—End of the first volume.

It was supposed, after the debate, of which the substance has been just given, that there would have been no further discussion of the subject till the next year: but Sir William Dolben became more and more affected by those considerations which he had offered to the house on the ninth of May. The trade, he found, was still to go on. The horrors of the transportation, or Middle Passage, as it was called, which he conceived to be the worst in the long catalogue of evils belonging

ing to the system, would of course accompany it. The partial discussion of these, he believed, would be no infringement of the late resolution of the house. He was desirous, therefore, of doing something in the course of the present session, by which the miseries of the trade might be diminished as much as possible, while it lasted, or till the legislature could take up the whole of the question. This desire he mentioned to several of his friends; and as these approved of his design, he made it known on the twenty-first of May in the House of Commons.

He began by observing, that he would take up but little of their time. He rose to move for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of those unhappy persons, the natives of Africa, from the hardships to which they were usually exposed in their passage from the coast of Africa to the Colonies. He did not mean, by any regulations he might introduce for this purpose, to countenance or sanction the Slave-trade, which, however modified, would be always wicked and unjustifiable. Nor did he mean, by introducing these, to go into the general question

which the house had prohibited. The bill which he had in contemplation, went only to limit the number of persons to be put on board to the tonnage of the vessel which was to carry them, in order to prevent them from being crowded too closely together; to secure to them good and sufficient provisions; and to take cognizance of other matters, which related to their health and accommodation; and this only till parliament could enter into the general merits of the question. This humane interference he thought no member would object to. Indeed, those for Liverpool had both of them admitted, on the ninth of May, that regulations were desirable; and he had since conversed with them, and was happy to learn that they would not oppose him on this occasion.

Mr. Whitbread highly approved of the object of the worthy Baronet, which was to diminish the sufferings of an unoffending people. Whatever could be done to relieve them in their hard situation, till parliament could take up the whole of their case, ought to be done by men living in a civilized country, and professing the Christian religion:

he therefore begged leave to second the motion, which had been made.

General Norton was sorry that he had not risen up sooner. He wished to have seconded this humane motion himself. It had his most cordial approbation.

Mr. Burgess complimented the worthy Baronet on the honour he had done himself on this occasion, and congratulated the house on the good, which they were likely to do by acceding, as he was sure they would, to his proposition.

Mr. Joliffe rose, and said that the motion in question should have his strenuous support.

Mr. Gascoyne stated, that having understood from the honourable Baronet that he meant only to remedy the evils, which were stated to exist in transporting the inhabitants of Africa to the West Indies, he had told him that he would not object to the introduction of such a bill. Should it however interfere with the general question, the discussion of which had been prohibited, he would then oppose it. He must also reserve another case for his opposition; and this would be, if the evils of which it took cognizance

zance should appear not to have been well founded. He had written to his constituents to be made acquainted with this circumstance, and he must be guided by them on the subject.

Mr. Martin was surprised how any person could give an opposition to such a bill. Whatever were the merits of the great question, all would allow that, if human beings were to be transported across the ocean, they should be carried over it with as little suffering as possible to themselves.

Mr. Hamilton deprecated the subdivision of this great and important question, which the house had reserved for another session. Every endeavour to meddle with one part of it, before the whole of it could be taken into consideration, looked rather as if it came from an enemy than from a friend. He was fearful that such a bill as this would sanction a traffic, which should never be viewed but in a hostile light, or as repugnant to the feelings of our nature, and to the voice of our religion.

Lord Frederic Campbell was convinced that the postponing of all consideration of the subject till the next session was a wise

measure. He was sure that neither the house nor the public were in a temper sufficiently cool to discuss it properly. There was a general warmth of feeling, or an enthusiasm about it, which ran away with the understandings of men, and disqualified them from judging soberly concerning it. He wished, therefore, that the present motion might be deferred.

Mr. William Smith said, that if the motion of the honourable Baronet had trespassed upon the great question reserved for consideration, he would have opposed it himself; but he conceived the subject, which it comprehended, might with propriety be separately considered; and if it were likely that a hundred, but much more a thousand, lives would be saved by this bill, it was the duty of that house to adopt it without delay.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, though he meant still to conceal his opinion as to the general merits of the question, could not be silent here. He was of opinion that he could very consistently give this motion his support. There was a possibility (and a bare possibility was a sufficient ground with him) that in consequence of the resolution

lately come to by the house, and the temper then manifested in it, those persons who were concerned in the Slave-trade might put the natives of Africa in a worse situation, during their transportation to the colonies, even than they were in before, by cramming additional numbers on board their vessels, in order to convey as many as possible to the West Indies before parliament ultimately decided on the subject. The possibility, therefore, that such a consequence might grow out of their late resolution during the intervening months between the end of the present and the commencement of the next session, was a good and sufficient parliamentary ground for them to provide immediate means to prevent the existence of such an evil. He considered this as an act of indispensable duty, and on that ground the bill should have his support.

Soon after this the question was put, and leave was given for the introduction of the bill.

An account of these proceedings of the house having been sent to the merchants of Liverpool, they held a meeting, and came to resolutions on the subject. They determined

mined to oppose the bill in every stage in which it should be brought forward, and, what was extraordinary, even the principle of it. Accordingly, between the twenty-first of May and the second of June, on which latter day the bill, having been previously read a second time, was to be committed, petitions from interested persons had been brought against it, and consent had been obtained, that both counsel and evidence should be heard.

The order of the day having been read on the second of June for the house to resolve itself into a committee of the whole house, a discussion took place relative to the manner in which the business was to be conducted. This being over, the counsel began their observations; and, as soon as they had finished, evidence was called to the bar in behalf of the petitions which had been delivered.

From the second of June to the seventeenth the house continued to hear the evidence at intervals, but the members for Liverpool took every opportunity of occasioning delay. They had recourse twice to counting out the house; and at another time,

though complaint had been made of their attempts to procrastinate, they opposed the resuming of their own evidence with the same view,—and this merely for the frivolous reason, that, though there was then a suitable opportunity, notice had not been previously given. But in this proceeding, other members feeling indignant at their conduct, they were overruled.

The witnesses brought by the Liverpool merchants against this humane bill were the same as they had before sent for examination to the privy council, namely, Mr. Norris, Lieutenant Matthews, and others. On the other side of the question it was not deemed expedient to bring any. It was soon perceived that it would be possible to refute the former out of their own mouths, and to do this seemed more eligible than to proceed in the other way. Mr. Pitt, however, took care to send Captain Parrey, of the royal navy, to Liverpool, that he might take the tonnage and internal dimensions of several slave-vessels, which were then there, supposing that these, when known, would enable the house to detect any misrepresentations.

tations, which the delegates from that town might be disposed to make upon this subject.

It was the object of the witnesses, when examined, to prove two things: first, that regulations were unnecessary, because the present mode of the transportation was sufficiently convenient for the objects of it, and was well adapted to preserve their comfort and their health. They had sufficient room, sufficient air, and sufficient provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing. As to the mortality, or the loss of them by death in the course of their passage, it was trifling. In short, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies "was one of the happiest periods of a Negro's life."

Secondly, that if the merchants were hindered from taking less than two full-sized, or three smaller Africans, to a ton, then the restriction would operate not as the regulation but as the utter ruin of the trade. Hence the present bill, under the specious mask of a temporary interference, sought nothing less than its abolition.

These assertions having been severally made,

made, by the former of which it was insinuated that the African, unhappy in his own country, found in the middle passage, under the care of the merchants, little less than an Elysian retreat, it was now proper to institute a severe inquiry into the truth of them. Mr. Pitt, Sir Charles Middleton, Mr. William Smith, and Mr. Beaufoy, took a conspicuous part on this occasion, but particularly the two latter, to whom much praise was due for the constant attention they bestowed upon this subject. Question after question was put by these to the witnesses; and from their own mouths they dragged out, by means of a cross-examination as severe as could be well instituted, the following melancholy account:

Every slave, whatever his size might be, was found to have only five feet and six inches in length, and sixteen inches in breadth, to lie in. The floor was covered with bodies stowed or packed according to this allowance. But between the floor and the deck or ceiling were often platforms or broad shelves in the mid-way, which were covered with bodies also. The height from the

the floor to the cieling, within which space the bodies on the floor and those on the platforms lay, seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases it did not exceed four feet.

The men were chained two and two together by their hands and feet, and were chained also by means of ring-bolts, which were fastened to the deck. They were confined in this manner at least all the time they remained upon the Coast, which was from six weeks to six months as it might happen.

Their allowance consisted of one pint of water a day to each person, and they were fed twice a day with yams and horse-beans.

After meals they jumped up in their irons for exercise. This was so necessary for their health, that they were whipped if they refused to do it. And this jumping had been termed dancing.

They were usually fifteen and sixteen hours below deck out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought up for two or three days together. If the ship was full, their situation was then distressing.

stressing. They sometimes drew their breath with anxious and laborious efforts, and some died of suffocation.

With respect to their health in these voyages, the mortality, where the African constitution was the strongest, or on the windward coast, was only about five in a hundred. In thirty-five voyages, an account of which was produced, about six in a hundred was the average number lost. But this loss was still greater at Calabar and Bonny, which were the greatest markets for slaves. This loss, too, did not include those who died, either while the vessels were lying upon the Coast, or after their arrival in the West Indies, of the disorders which they had contracted upon the voyage. Three and four in a hundred had been known to die in this latter case.

But besides these facts, which were forced out of the witnesses by means of the cross-examination which took place, they were detected in various falsehoods.

They had asserted that the ships in this trade were peculiarly constructed, or differently from others, in order that they might carry a great number of persons with convenience;

venience; whereas Captain Parrey asserted that out of the twenty-six, which he had seen, ten only had been built expressly for this employ.

They had stated the average height between decks at about five feet and four inches. But Captain Parrey showed, that out of the nine he measured, the height in four of the smallest was only four feet eight inches, and the average height in all of them was but five feet two.

They had asserted that vessels under two hundred tons had no platforms. But by his account the four just mentioned were of this tonnage, and yet all of them had platforms either wholly or in part.

On other points they were found both to contradict themselves and one another. They had asserted, as before mentioned, that if they were restricted to less than two full-grown slaves to a ton, the trade would be ruined. But in examining into the particulars of nineteen vessels, which they produced themselves, five of them only had cargoes equal to the proportion which they stated to be necessary to the existence of the trade. The other fourteen carried a less number of

slaves

slaves (and they might have taken more on board if they had pleased): so that the average number in the nineteen was but one man and four-fifths to a ton, or ten in a hundred below their lowest standard*. One again said, that no inconvenience arose in consequence of the narrow space allowed to each individual in these voyages. Another said, that smaller vessels were more healthy than larger, because, among other reasons, they had a less proportion of slaves as to number on board.

They were found also guilty of a wilful concealment of such facts, as they knew, if communicated, would have invalidated their own testimony. I was instrumental in detecting them on one of these occasions myself. When Mr. Dalzell was examined, he was not wholly unknown to me. My Liverpool muster-rolls told me that he had lost fifteen seamen out of forty in his last voyage. This was a sufficient ground to go

* The falsehood of their statements in this respect was proved again afterwards by facts. For, after the regulation had taken place, they lost fewer slaves and made greater profits.

upon;

upon; for generally, where the mortality of the seamen has been great, it may be laid down that the mortality of the slaves has been considerable also. I waited patiently till his evidence was nearly closed, but he had then made no unfavourable statements to the house. I desired, therefore, that a question might be put to him, and in such a manner, that he might know that they, who put it, had got a clew to his secrets. He became immediately embarrassed. His voice faltered. He confessed with trembling, that he had lost a third of his sailors in his last voyage. Pressed hard immediately by other questions, he then acknowledged that he had lost one hundred and twenty or a third of his slaves also. But would he say that these were all he had lost in that voyage? No: twelve others had perished by an accident, for they were drowned. But were no others lost besides the one hundred and twenty and the twelve? None, he said, upon the voyage, but between twenty and thirty before he left the Coast. Thus this champion of the merchants, this advocate for the health and happiness of the slaves in the middle

middle passage, lost nearly a hundred and sixty of the unhappy persons committed to his superior care, in a single voyage!

The evidence, on which I have now commented, having been delivered, the counsel summed up on the seventeenth of June, when the committee proceeded to fill up the blanks in the bill. Mr. Pitt moved that the operation of it be retrospective, and that it commence from the tenth instant. This was violently opposed by Lord Penrhyn, Mr. Gascoyne, and Mr. Brickdale, but was at length acceded to.

Sir William Dolben then proposed to apportion five men to every three tons in every ship under one hundred and fifty tons burthen, which had the space of five feet between the decks, and three men to two tons in every vessel beyond one hundred and fifty tons burthen, which had equal accommodation in point of height between the decks. This occasioned a very warm dispute, which was not settled for some time, and which gave rise to some beautiful and interesting speeches on the subject.

Mr. William Smith pointed out in the clearest manner many of the contradictions, which

which I have just stated in commenting upon the evidence. Indeed he had been a principal means of detecting them. He proved how little worthy of belief the witnesses had shown themselves, and how necessary they had made the present bill by their own confession. The worthy Baronet, indeed, had been too indulgent to the merchants, in the proportion he had fixed of the number of persons to be carried to the tonnage of their vessels. He then took a feeling view of what would be the wretched state of the poor Africans on board, even if the bill passed as it now stood; and conjured the house, if they would not allow them more room, at least not to infringe upon that, which had been proposed.

Lord Belgrave (now Grosvenor) animadverted with great ability upon the cruelties of the trade, which he said had been fully proved at the bar. He took notice of the extraordinary opposition which had been made to the bill then before them, and which he believed every gentleman, who had a proper feeling of humanity, would condemn. If the present mode of carrying on the trade received the countenance of that house, the

poor

poor unfortunate African would have occasion doubly to curse his fate. He would not only curse the womb that brought him forth, but the British nation also, whose diabolical avarice had made his cup of misery still more bitter. He hoped that the members for Liverpool would urge no further opposition to the bill, but that they would join with the house in an effort to enlarge the empire of humanity; and that, while they were stretching out the strong arm of justice to punish the degraders of British honour and humanity in the East, they would with equal spirit exert their powers to dispense the blessings of their protection to those unhappy Africans, who were to serve them in the West.

Mr. Beaufoy entered minutely into an examination of the information, which had been given by the witnesses, and which afforded unanswerable arguments for the passing of the bill. He showed the narrow space, which they themselves had been made to allow for the package of a human body, and the ingenious measures they were obliged to resort to for stowing this living cargo within the limits of the ship. He ad-

verted next to the case of Mr. Dalzell; and showed how one dismal fact after another, each making against their own testimony, was extorted from him. He then went to the trifling mortality said to be experienced in these voyages, upon which subject he spoke in the following words: "Though the witnesses are some of them interested in the trade, and all of them parties against the bill, their confession is, that of the Negros of the windward coast, who are men of the strongest constitution which Africa affords, no less on an average than five in each hundred perish in the voyage,—a voyage, it must be remembered, but of six weeks. In a twelvemonth, then, what must be the proportion of the dead? No less than forty-three in a hundred, which is seventeen times the usual rate of mortality; for all the estimates of life suppose no more than a fortieth of the people, or two and a half in the hundred, to die within the space of a year. Such then is the comparison. In the ordinary course of nature the number of persons, (including those in age and infancy, the weakest periods of existence,) who perish in the space of a twelvemonth, is at the rate of but two and a half

a half in a hundred; but in an African voyage, notwithstanding the old are excluded and few infants admitted, so that those who are shipped are in the firmest period of life, the list of deaths presents an annual mortality of forty-three in a hundred. It presents this mortality even in vessels from the windward coast of Africa; but in those which sail to Bonny, Benin, and the Calebars, from whence the greatest proportion of the slaves are brought, this mortality is increased by a variety of causes, (of which the greater length of the voyage is one,) and is said to be twice as large, which supposes that in every hundred the deaths annually amount to no less than eighty-six. Yet even the former comparatively low mortality, of which the counsel speaks with so much satisfaction, as a proof of the kind and compassionate treatment of the slaves, even this indolent and lethargic destruction gives to the march of death seventeen times its usual speed. It is a destruction, which, if general but for ten years, would depopulate the world, blast the purposes of its creation, and extinguish the human race."

After having gone with great ability

through the other branches of the subject, he concluded in the following manner: "Thus I have considered the various objections which have been stated to the bill, and am ashamed to reflect that it could be necessary to speak so long in defence of such a cause: for what, after all, is asked by the proposed regulations? On the part of the Africans, the whole of their purport is, that they, whom you allow to be robbed of all things but life, may not unnecessarily and wantonly be deprived of life also. To the honour, to the wisdom, to the feelings of the house I now make my appeal, perfectly confident that you will not tolerate, as senators, a traffic, which, as men, you shudder to contemplate, and that you will not take upon yourselves the responsibility of this waste of existence. To the memory of former parliaments the horrors of this traffic will be an eternal reproach; yet former parliaments have not known, as you on the clearest evidence now know, the dreadful nature of this trade. Should you reject this bill, no exertions of yours to rescue from oppression the suffering inhabitants of your Eastern empire; no records of the pro-

sperous

sperous state to which, after a long and unsuccessful war, you have restored your native land; no proofs, however splendid, that, under your guidance, Great Britain has recovered her rank, and is again the arbitress of nations, will save your names from the stigma of everlasting dishonour. The broad mantle of this one infamy will cover with substantial blackness the radiance of your glory, and change to feelings of abhorrence the present admiration of the world——But pardon the supposition of so impossible an event. I believe that justice and mercy may be considered as the attributes of your character, and that you will not tarnish their lustre on this occasion."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose next; and after having made some important observations on the evidence (which took up much time), he declared himself most unequivocally in favour of the motion made by the honourable baronet. He was convinced that the regulation proposed would not tend to the Abolition of the trade; but if it even went so far, he had no hesitation openly and boldly to declare, that if it could not be carried on in a manner different from that

that stated by the members for Liverpool, he would retract what he had said on a former day against going into the general question; and, waiving every other discussion than what had that day taken place, he would give his vote for the utter annihilation of it at once. It was a trade, which it was shocking to humanity to hear detailed. If it were to be carried on as proposed by the petitioners, it would, besides its own intrinsic baseness, be contrary to every humane and Christian principle, and to every sentiment that ought to inspire the breast of man, and would reflect the greatest dishonour on the British senate and the British nation. He therefore hoped that the house, being now in possession of such information as never hitherto had been brought before them, would in some measure endeavour to extricate themselves from that guilt, and from that remorse, which every one of them ought to feel for having suffered such monstrous cruelties to be practised upon an helpless and unoffending part of the human race.

Mr. Martin complimented Mr. Pitt in terms of the warmest panegyric on his noble

ble sentiments, declaring that they reflected the greatest honour upon him both as an Englishman and as a man.

Soon after this the house divided upon the motion of Sir William Dolben. Fifty-six appeared to be in favour of it, and only five against it. The latter consisted of the two members for Liverpool and three other interested persons. This was the first division which ever took place on this important subject. The other blanks were then filled up, and the bill was passed without further delay.

The next day, or on the eighteenth of June, it was carried up to the House of Lords. The slave-merchants of London, Liverpool, and Bristol, immediately presented petitions against it, as they had done in the lower house. They prayed that counsel might open their case; and though they had been driven from the commons, on account of their evidence, with disgrace, they had the effrontery to ask that they might call witnesses here also.

Counsel and evidence having been respectively heard, the bill was ordered to be committed the next day. The Lords attend-

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ed according to summons. But on a motion by Dr. Warren, the bishop of Bangor, who stated that the Lord Chancellor Thurlow was much indisposed, and that he wished to be present when the question was discussed, the committee was postponed.

It was generally thought that the reason for this postponement, and particularly as it was recommended by a prelate, was, that the Chancellor might have an opportunity of forwarding this humane bill. But it was found to be quite otherwise. It appeared that the motive was, that he might give to it, by his official appearance as the chief servant of the crown in that house, all the opposition in his power. For when the day arrived, which had been appointed for the discussion, and when the Lords Bathurst and Hawkesbury (now Liverpool) had expressed their opinions, which were different, relative to the time when the bill should take place, he rose up, and pronounced a bitter and vehement oration against it. He said, among other things, that it was full of inconsistency and nonsense from the beginning to the end. The French had lately offered large premiums for the encouragement of this trade.

trade. They were a politic people, and the presumption was, that we were doing politically wrong by abandoning it. The bill ought not to have been brought forward in this session. The introduction of it was a direct violation of the faith of the other house. It was unjust, when an assurance had been given that the question should not be agitated till next year, that this sudden fit of philanthropy, which was but a few days old, should be allowed to disturb the public mind, and to become the occasion of bringing men to the metropolis with tears in their eyes and horror in their countenances, to deprecate the ruin of their property, which they had embarked on the faith of parliament.

The extraordinary part, which the Lord Chancellor Thurlow took upon this occasion, was ascribed at the time by many, who moved in the higher circles, to a shyness or misunderstanding, which had taken place between him and Mr. Pitt on other matters; when, believing this bill to have been a favourite measure with the latter, he determined to oppose it. But, whatever were his motives (and let us hope that he could never

never have been actuated by so malignant a spirit as that of sacrificing the happiness of forty thousand persons for the next year to spite the gratification of an individual), his opposition had a mischievous effect, on account of the high situation in which he stood. For he not only influenced some of the Lords themselves, but, by taking the cause of the slave-merchants so conspicuously under his wing, he gave them boldness to look up again under the stigma of their iniquitous calling, and courage even to resume vigorous operations after their disgraceful defeat. Hence arose those obstacles, which will be found to have been thrown in the way of the passing of the bill from this period.

Among the Lords, who are to be particularly noticed as having taken the same side as the Lord Chancellor in this debate, were the Duke of Chandos and the Earl of Sandwich. The former foresaw nothing but insurrections of the slaves in our islands, and the massacre of their masters there, in consequence of the agitation of this question. The latter expected nothing less than the ruin of our marine. He begged the house

house to consider how, by doing that which might bring about the Abolition of this traffic, they might lessen the number of British sailors; how, by throwing it into the hands of France, they might increase those of a rival nation; and how, in consequence, the flag of the latter might ride triumphant on the ocean. The Slave-trade was undoubtedly a nursery for our seamen. All objections against it in this respect were ill-founded. It was as healthy as the Newfoundland and many other trades.

The debate having closed, during which nothing more was done than filling up the blanks with the time when the bill was to begin to operate, the committee was adjourned. But the bill after this dragged on so heavily, that it would be tedious to detail the proceedings upon it from day to day. I shall, therefore, satisfy myself with the following observations concerning them. The committee sat not less than five different times, which consumed the space of eight days, before a final decision took place. During this time, so much was it an object to throw in obstacles which might occupy the little remaining time of the session, that

other petitions were presented against the bill, and leave was asked, on new pretences contained in these, that counsel might be heard again. Letters also were read from Jamaica, about the mutinous disposition of the slaves there, in consequence of the stir which had been made about the Abolition, and also from merchants in France, by which large offers were made to the British merchants to furnish them with slaves. Several regulations also were proposed in this interval, some of which were negatived by majorities of only one or two voices. Of the regulations, which were carried, the most remarkable were those proposed by Lord Hawkesbury (now Liverpool); namely, that no insurance should be made on the slaves except against accidents by fire and water; that persons should not be appointed as officers of vessels transporting them, who had not been a certain number of such voyages before; that a regular surgeon only should be capable of being employed in them; and that both the captain and surgeon should have bounties, if in the course of the transportation they had lost only two in a hundred slaves. The Duke of Chandos again,

again, and Lord Sydney, were the most conspicuous among the opposers of this humane bill; and the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis Townshend, the Earl of Carlisle, the Bishop of London, and Earl Stanhope, among the most strenuous supporters of it. At length it passed, by a majority of nineteen to eleven votes.

On the fourth of July, when the bill had been returned to the Commons, it was moved that the amendments made in it by the Lords should be read; but as it had become a money-bill in consequence of the bounties to be granted, and as new regulations were to be incorporated in it, it was thought proper that it should be wholly done away. Accordingly Sir William Dolben moved, that the further consideration of it should be put off till that day three months. This having been agreed upon, he then moved for leave to bring in a new bill. This was accordingly introduced, and an additional clause was inserted in it, relative to bounties, by Mr. Pitt. But on the second reading, that no obstacle might be omitted which could legally be thrown in the way of its progress, petitions were presented against it both

both by the Liverpool merchants and the agent for the island of Jamaica, under the pretence that it was a new bill. Their petitions, however, were rejected, and it was committed, and passed through its regular stages and sent up to the Lords.

On its arrival there on the fifth of July, petitions from London and Liverpool still followed it. The prayer of these was against the general tendency of it, but it was solicited also that counsel might be heard in a particular case. The solicitation was complied with; after which the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed.

On the seventh, when it was taken next into consideration, two other petitions were presented against it. But here so many objections were made to the clauses of it as they then stood, and such new matter suggested, that the Duke of Richmond, who was a strenuous supporter of it, thought it best to move that the committee, then sitting, should be deferred till that day sevennight, in order to give time for another more perfect to originate in the lower house.

This motion having been acceded to, Sir William Dolben introduced a new one for the

the third time into the Commons. This included the suggestions which had been made in the Lords. It included also a regulation, on the motion of Mr. Sheridan, that no surgeon should be employed as such in the slave-vessels, except he had a testimonial that he had passed a proper examination at Surgeons'-Hall. The amendments were all then agreed to, and the bill was passed through its several stages.

On the tenth of July, being now fully amended, it came for a third time before the Lords; but it was no sooner brought forward than it met with the same opposition as it had experienced before. Two new petitions appeared against it, one from a certain class of persons in Liverpool, and another from Miles Peter Andrews, esquire, stating that, if it passed into a law, it would injure the sale of his gunpowder, and that he had rendered great services to the government during the last war by his provision of that article. But here the Lord Chancellor Thurlow reserved himself for an effort, which, by occasioning only a day's delay, would in that particular period of the session have totally prevented the passing of

of the bill. He suggested certain amendments for consideration and discussion, which, if they had been agreed upon, must have been carried again to the lower house and sanctioned there before the bill could have been complete. But it appeared afterwards, that there would have been no time for the latter proceeding. Earl Stanhope, therefore, pressed this circumstance peculiarly upon the Lords who were present. He observed, that the King was to dismiss the parliament next day, and therefore they must adopt the bill as it stood, or reject it altogether. There was no alternative, and no time was to be lost. Accordingly he moved for an immediate division on the first of the amendments proposed by Lord Thurlow. This having taken place, it was negatived. The other amendments shared the same fate; and thus, at length, passed through the upper house, as through an ordeal as it were of fire, the first bill that ever put fetters upon that barbarous and destructive monster, The Slave-trade.

The next day, or on Friday, July the eleventh, the King gave his assent to it, and, as Lord Stanhope had previously asserted

in the House of Lords, concluded the session.

While the legislature was occupied in the consideration of this bill, the Lords of the Council continued their examinations, that they might collect as much light as possible previously to the general agitation of the question in the next session of parliament. Among others I underwent an examination. I gave my testimony first relative to many of the natural productions of Africa, of which I produced the specimens. These were such as I had collected in the course of my journey to Bristol and Liverpool, and elsewhere. I explained, secondly, the loss and usage of seamen in the Slave-trade. To substantiate certain points, which belonged to this branch of the subject, I left several depositions and articles of agreement for the examination of the council. With respect to others, as it would take a long time to give all the data upon which calculations had been made and the manner of making them, I was desired to draw up a statement of particulars, and to send it to the council at a future time. I left also depositions with them

relative to certain instances of the mode of procuring and treating slaves.

The committee also for effecting the abolition of the Slave-trade continued their attention, during this period, towards the promotion of the different objects, which came within the range of the institution.

They added the reverend Dr. Coombe, in consequence of the great increase of their business, to the list of their members.

They voted thanks to Mr. Hughes, vicar of Ware in Hertfordshire, for his excellent Answer to Harris's Scriptural Researches on the Licitness of the Slave-trade, and they enrolled him among their honorary and corresponding members. Also thanks to William Roscoe, esquire, for his Answer to the same. Mr. Roscoe had not affixed his name to this pamphlet any more than to his poem of The Wrongs of Africa. But he made himself known to the committee as the author of both. Also thanks to William Smith and Henry Beaufoy, esquires, for having so successfully exposed the evidence offered by the slave-merchants against the bill of Sir William Dolben, and for having drawn

out

out of it so many facts, all making for their great object, the abolition of the Slave-trade.

As the great question was to be discussed in the approaching sessions, it was moved in the committee to consider of the propriety of sending persons to Africa and the West Indies, who should obtain information relative to the different branches of the system as they existed in each of these countries, in order that they might be able to give their testimony, from their own experience, before one or both of the houses of parliament, as it might be judged proper. This proposition was discussed at two or three several meetings. It was however finally rejected, and principally on the following grounds: First, It was obvious, that persons sent out upon such an errand would be exposed to such dangers from various causes, that it was not improbable that both they and their testimony might be lost. Secondly, Such persons would be obliged to have recourse to falsehoods, that is, to conceal or misrepresent the objects of their destination, that they might get their intelligence with safety; which falsehoods the

committee could not countenance. To which it was added, that few persons would go to these places, except they were handsomely rewarded for their trouble; but this reward would lessen the value of their evidence, as it would afford a handle to the planters and slave-merchants to say that they had been bribed.

Another circumstance, which came before the committee, was the following: Many arguments were afloat at this time relative to the great impolicy of abolishing the Slave-trade, the principal of which was, that, if the English abandoned it, other foreign nations would take it up; and thus, while they gave up certain national profits themselves, the great cause of humanity would not be benefited, nor would any moral good be done by the measure. Now there was a presumption that, by means of the society instituted in Paris, the French nation might be awakened to this great subject, and that the French government might in consequence, as well as upon other considerations, be induced to favour the general feeling upon this occasion. But there was no reason to conclude, either that any other

maritime people, who had been engaged in the Slave-trade, would relinquish it, or that any other, who had not yet been engaged in it, would not begin it when our countrymen should give it up. The consideration of these circumstances occupied the attention of the committee; and as Dr. Spaarman, who was said to have been examined by the privy council, was returning home, it was thought advisable to consider whether it would not be proper for the committee to select certain of their own books on the subject of the Slave-trade, and send them by him, accompanied by a letter, to the King of Sweden, in which they should entreat his consideration of this powerful argument which now stood in the way of the cause of humanity, with a view that, as one of the princes of Europe, he might contribute to obviate it, by preventing his own subjects, in case of the dereliction of this commerce by ourselves, from embarking in it. The matter having been fully considered, it was resolved that the proposed measure would be proper, and it was accordingly adopted. By a letter received afterwards from Dr. Spaarman, it appeared that both the letter and the books had been delivered, and received

ceived graciously; and that he was authorised to say, that, unfortunately, in consequence of those hereditary possessions which had devolved upon his majesty, he was obliged to confess that he was the sovereign of an island, which had been principally peopled by African slaves, but that he had been frequently mindful of their hard case. With respect to the Slave-trade, he never heard of an instance, in which the merchants of his own native realm had embarked in it; and as they had hitherto preserved their character pure in this respect, he would do all he could, that it should not be sullied in the eyes of the generous English nation, by taking up, in the case which had been pointed out to him, such an odious concern.

By this time I had finished my Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-trade, which I composed from materials collected chiefly during my journey to Bristol, Liverpool, and Lancaster. These materials I had admitted with great caution and circumspection; indeed I admitted none, for which I could not bring official and other authentic documents, or living evidences if necessary, whose testimony could not reasonably be

denied; and, when I gave them to the world, I did it under the impression that I ought to give them as scrupulously, as if I were to be called upon to substantiate them upon oath. It was of peculiar moment that this book should make its appearance at this time. First, Because it would give the Lords of the Council, who were then sitting, an opportunity of seeing many important facts, and of inquiring into their authenticity; and it might suggest to them also some new points, or such as had not fallen within the limits of the arrangement they had agreed upon for their examinations on this subject; and Secondly, Because, as the members of the House of Commons were to take the question into consideration early in the next sessions, it would give them also new light and information upon it before this period. Accordingly the committee ordered two thousand copies of it to be struck off, for these and other objects; and though the contents of it were most diligently sifted by the different opponents of the cause, they never even made an attempt to answer it. It continued, on the other hand, during the inquiry of the legislature, to afford the basis or grounds upon which to examine evidences

dences on the political part of the subject; and evidences thus examined continued in their turn to establish it.

Among the other books ordered to be printed by the committee within the period now under our consideration, were a new edition of two thousand of the Dean of Middleham's Letter, and another of three thousand of Falconbridge's Account of the Slave-trade.

The committee continued to keep up, during the same period, a communication with many of their old correspondents, whose names have been already mentioned. But they received also letters from others, who had not hitherto addressed them; namely, from Ellington Wright of Erith, Dr. Franklin of Philadelphia, Eustace Kentish esquire, high sheriff for the county of Huntingdon, Governor Bouchier, the reverend Charles Symmons of Haverfordwest; and from John York and William Downes esquires, high sheriffs for the counties of York and Hereford.

A letter also was read in this interval from Mr. Evans, a dissenting clergyman, of Bristol, stating that the elders of several Baptist churches, forming the western Baptist association,

ciation, who had met at Portsmouth Common, had resolved to recommend it to the ministers and members of the same, to unite with the committee in the promotion of the great object of their institution.

Another from Mr. Andrew Irvin, of the Island of Grenada, in which he confirmed the wretched situation of many of the slaves there, and in which he gave the outlines of a plan for bettering their condition, as well as that of those in the other islands.

Another from I. L. Wynne, esquire, of Jamaica. In this he gave an afflicting account of the suffering and unprotected state of the slaves there, which it was high time to rectify. He congratulated the committee on their institution, which he thought would tend to promote so desirable an end; but desired them not to stop short of the total abolition of the Slave-trade, as no other measure would prove effectual against the evils of which he complained. This trade, he said, was utterly unnecessary, as his own plantation, on which his slaves had increased rapidly by population, and others which he knew to be similarly circumstanced, would abundantly testify. He concluded by promising to give the committee such information

tion from time to time as might be useful on this important subject.

The session of parliament having closed, the committee thought it right to make a report to the public, in which they gave an account of the great progress of their cause since the last, of the state in which they then were, and of the unjustifiable conduct of their opponents, who industriously misrepresented their views, but particularly by attributing to them the design of abolishing slavery; and they concluded by exhorting their friends not to relax their endeavours, on account of favourable appearances, but to persevere, as if nothing had been done, under the pleasing hope of an honourable triumph.

And now having given the substance of the labours of the committee from its formation to the present time, I cannot conclude this volume without giving to the worthy members of it that tribute of affectionate and grateful praise, which is due to them for their exertions in having forwarded the great cause which was intrusted to their care. And this I can do with more propriety, because, having been so frequently absent from them when they were engaged in

in the pursuit of this their duty, I cannot be liable to the suspicion, that in bestowing commendation upon them I am bestowing it upon myself. From about the end of May 1787 to the middle of July 1788 they had held no less than fifty-one committees. These generally occupied them from about six in the evening till about eleven at night. In the intervals between the committees they were often occupied, having each of them some object committed to his charge. It is remarkable, too, that though they were all except one engaged in business or trade, and though they had the same calls as other men for innocent recreation, and the same interruptions of their health, there were individuals, who were not absent more than five or six times within this period. In the course of the thirteen months, during which they had exercised this public trust, they had printed, and afterwards distributed, not at random, but judiciously, and through respectable channels, (besides twenty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-six reports, accounts of debates in parliament, and other small papers,) no less than fifty-one thousand four hundred and thirty-two pamphlets, or books.

Nor

Nor was the effect produced within this short period otherwise than commensurate with the efforts used. In May 1787, the only public notice taken of this great cause was by this committee of twelve individuals, of whom all were little known to the world except Mr. Granville Sharp. But in July 1788, it had attracted the notice of several distinguished individuals in France and Germany, and in our own country it had come within the notice of the government, and a branch of it had undergone a parliamentary discussion and restraint. It had arrested also the attention of the nation, and it had produced a kind of holy flame, or enthusiasm, and this to a degree and to an extent never before witnessed. Of the purity of this flame no better proof can be offered, than that even bishops deigned to address an obscure committee, consisting principally of Quakers, and that churchmen and dissenters forgot their difference of religious opinions, and joined their hands, all over the kingdom, in its support.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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