

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
THE WESLEYAN MISSIONS
ON
THE WESTERN COAST OF AFRICA:

INCLUDING
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF
ALL THE MISSIONARIES WHO HAVE DIED IN THAT IMPORTANT
FIELD OF LABOUR.

WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE EUROPEAN SETTLEMENTS,
AND OF THE SLAVE-TRADE.

ILLUSTRATED WITH A MAP AND SIX ENGRAVINGS.

BY WILLIAM FOX,

UPWARDS OF TEN YEARS MISSIONARY ON THE GAMBIA.

AN American Missionary, just before his departure for Africa, said to his friend, "I go to that land of death; but if I die, you must come and write my epitaph." It was asked, "What shall I write?" "Write," said he, "THOUGH A THOUSAND FALL, LET NOT AFRICA BE FORGOTTEN!"

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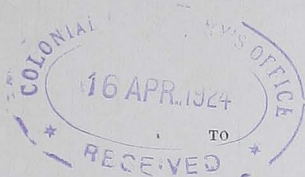
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THE COMMITTEE, TREASURERS, AND GENERAL SECRETARIES

OF THE

WESLEYAN-METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY;

UNDER WHOSE AUSPICES THE AUTHOR COMMENCED HIS ARDUOUS
LABOURS ON THE RIVER GAMBIA,

BY WHOSE COUNSELS HE WAS INSTRUCTED
AND ENCOURAGED,

WHOSE APPROBATION CHEERED HIM UNDER TRIALS AND DIFFICULTIES,

AND FROM WHOM HE HAS ALWAYS RECEIVED GRATIFYING
TOKENS OF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE;

THIS VOLUME

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

FOR many generations the name of AFRICA has produced a kind of talismanic effect upon various parts of the civilized world. It has arrested the attention and awakened the sympathies of mankind; and brought into action some of the noblest energies—mental, moral, and physical—with which human nature is endowed. The philanthropist and the philosopher, the man of science and of commerce, the statesman and the Christian, have all alike in their turn directed their attention to “that realm of wonder,” to that once bright, but long since (and still) dark, continent. No part of the globe is richer in all the three kingdoms of nature, animal, vegetable, and mineral; and yet, alas! no part of the world is more deeply degraded, demoralized, and polluted.

The very name of AFRICA, therefore, prepares us for revolting scenes of wrong, oppression, and cruelty; for deeds of danger, of desolation, and of death. The following pages will exhibit this unhappy country in some of its darkest features: with its brutal rites and ceremonies, its demon-worship, and its millions of inhabitants slain in battle, and millions more the victims to the sacrificial knife, the instrument of a sanguinary superstition, and still millions more pining away in the horrid holds of the slave-ships! But without referring to this awful loss of life, which to a great extent occurs annually, what a number of valuable lives have been sacrificed in exploring its unknown regions, in tracing the sources of its mighty rivers, in attempting to mitigate some of its untold miseries, and in scattering, by means of Christian missions, the blessings of a Saviour’s love among some of the numerous tribes skirting that long line of coast!

The present work owes its existence to a desire long felt, on the part of the writer, to see placed upon record some brief memorial of departed worth in connexion with the last class of European agents who have lost their lives in the welfare of Africa. Soon after his arrival in England in the summer of 1843, he was requested by an intelligent gentleman to publish some account of his missionary labours; but he did not then entertain the proposition. Since that period he has been frequently solicited by other esteemed friends to enter on this undertaking; but he still declined. However, having attended many missionary meetings,

and having not unfrequently referred to the prejudicial effects of the climate of Western Africa on European constitutions, as one of the great drawbacks to the rapid progress of Christianity; it often occurred to him on those occasions, that a brief history of the Wesleyan missions, with a biographical sketch of those excellent men, and "also of honourable women not a few," who have fallen in that land of death, could not but be interesting to the friends of missions in general, and especially to the nearest connexions of the deceased. It is true that the death of each missionary and missionary's wife, as they have occurred, has been invariably announced in the "Missionary Notices," with some suitable and appropriate remarks; and a further record of each departed missionary has been published in the Obituary department of the "Minutes of Conference." But the writer conceived, that something in a more connected form, with further particulars, was due to that noble and self-denying band of the devoted soldiers of the cross, who have voluntarily rushed into the field, to fill up the breaches made by "the last enemy," or to aid the few standard-bearers who were still remaining, and who have cheerfully laid down their lives, and sacrificed their all, in this hallowed cause. He was, moreover, not without hope that a brief account of their successful labours, their sickness and death, though following each other (as it will be seen they did) in rapid succession, instead of acting as a check to missionary ardour, or deterring young men from venturing on this pestilential clime, would rather tend to fan the flame of missionary zeal, already kindled in many hearts, and that it would induce others to say, "Here am I; send me!" The past history of these missions warrants and encourages this expectation.

The author, having long waited for some one more competent to undertake this task, at length resolved to make the attempt himself; and, as soon as he had taken this resolution, he made known his intention to the public, and solicited, from the parents and other friends of deceased missionaries, such interesting incidents connected with their conversion to God, their call to the ministry, and other facts, as they might be able to furnish. To this application many friends in different parts of the kingdom soon responded; and the substance of those letters are embodied in the biographical sketches found in the following pages; and the author tenders his grateful acknowledgments for those valuable communications. Some of the memoirs are exceedingly brief when compared with others; but it must be remembered, that this has arisen from circum-

stances over which the writer had no control ; for in no instance has he extolled the virtues and zeal of one missionary at the expense of those of others, but has endeavoured to do justice to all, as far as he was enabled from his personal knowledge of them, and the materials with which he was furnished. For this purpose he has availed himself of all the published documents that were within his reach ; and, when these failed to satisfy him, he has written scores of letters to ascertain the correctness of some fact, or the precise date of some event, and has thus tried to elicit further information, and to insure accuracy.

But, in sitting down to his task, it was natural to say something of Africa and the Africans. This led him, almost as naturally, to speak of Slavery and the Slave-Trade ; and hence the work has swollen to more than twice the bulk he originally intended. This he regrets ; as the size of the book materially affects the price, and he was most anxious to have brought it within the reach of the generality of readers on missionary subjects. He has been cheered and encouraged, however, in his attempt to give to the public some account of Africa, and of the Wesleyan missions in the Western part of that continent, by many valued ministers and intelligent friends, who have written to him, and who have urged him “not to be too brief,” but to give ample information on the real state of African society, with its scenery and productions, and the progress of the missions. It was almost impossible to touch on West-African affairs, and not refer to that monster foe, the Slave-Trade ; that enemy to the well-being of Africa, which has hitherto laughed to scorn the Acts of the British Legislature, and the noble attempts that have been made by the various philanthropic societies of the land, who have tried in vain to crush the evil.

The author's views on this great political question will be found in the following pages ; and he conceives that Western Africa has claims on the whole of Christendom, which no other part of the world can exhibit. If his appeal to all classes of the community meets with a due response, Africa will soon arise, and “put on her beautiful garments,” and that great moral wilderness “shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

In the brief history of the missions, a considerable part of the writer's personal narrative is interwoven with the whole of that period during which he remained in Africa. This could not well be avoided. But he hopes he has not unnecessarily obtruded himself on the notice of the reader. Having thrice sailed to Western Africa direct from England, and six times

crossed the Atlantic in connexion with the missions on the River Gambia; and having sailed up and down that magnificent stream between thirty and forty times, and journeyed by land further into the interior than any European now living; and having resided there many years; he, as a matter of course, not only became intimately acquainted with the state of the missions, but gained a tolerable knowledge of the physical, moral, and social condition of the country. This knowledge he has endeavoured to impart to others; sometimes by extracts from his journal written down at the time, with the occasional use of the personal pronoun "I;" but in other cases, and as often as he could, he has delivered himself in the third person; and has thus endeavoured to hide himself while he exhibited the real state of the missions, with concomitant facts and incidents, in their proper character and true colours.

It would have afforded the writer sincere pleasure to have made more frequent allusion to the labours of kindred institutions which are found in active operation on the Western Coast of Africa; particularly those of the Church Missionary Society, that for nearly half a century has had missionaries at Sierra-Leone, and of late years on different parts of the Coast. This, however, was found to be impracticable; and he has, therefore, according to announcement, confined himself to the labours of the Wesleyan missionaries: for, though other missionaries were sent to Sierra-Leone some few years before any regular Wesleyan missionary landed there, yet a small society of Wesleyan Methodists was formed in that colony almost immediately after its establishment.

For two of the illustrations contained in the work the writer is indebted to a kind friend, Mr. Samuel Smith of Nottingham, who has greatly improved the rough draughts which were sent to him. All the views have been reduced to the proper size, and drawn on stone, by that eminent artist, Mr. Walton; who, with his usual skill, has furnished tasteful representations of the scenes which he was engaged to delineate.

He also embraces this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging his obligations to his numerous subscribers, who have by their warm patronage encouraged him in this undertaking.

His intention was, to have introduced copious remarks on the principal obstructions which the heralds of the Cross, the harbingers of civilization, have to encounter in Western Africa, while attempting to extend the triumphs of Christ, and to "make manifest the sweet savour of His knowledge in every place." These obstacles may be appropriately designated as

physical, moral, and diabolical,—in reference to the *prejudicial effects of the climate on the constitution of European residents*, to the *immoral and degraded condition of the natives*, and to that egregious evil, *the Slave-Trade*. These and other collateral topics he purposes to discuss in a pamphlet, which will be published simultaneously with the present volume.

To his missionary brethren both at home and abroad, many of whom have most cheerfully, and some of them without solicitation, contributed much valuable information, the writer returns his best thanks; and he will feel obliged to them, and any other friends, for such additions and improvements as may suggest themselves on perusal.

The work has been written amidst numerous other engagements, with frequent and serious interruptions arising from various causes, and without aiming at any thing more than the plain statement of unadorned facts. It is now before the reader; and if the perusal of the volume shall lead the churches of Christ, with the nation at large, to send the Gospel to Africa on a scale commensurate to her wants and woes, the author will consider that his chief object is answered.

WILLIAM FOX.

PENDLETON,
MANCHESTER,
December 30th, 1850.

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MAP OF
WESTERN AFRICA



BRIEF HISTORY

OF

THE WESTERN COAST OF AFRICA,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

AFRICA AND THE AFRICANS.

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IN size, Africa holds the third rank in the five great divisions of the globe; but is the lowest in political and moral importance and improvement. Its geographical position is now too well known to require its boundaries being particularly specified.

It is a peninsula of prodigious extent, and is joined to Asia by a narrow neck of land, the Isthmus of Suez. In its extreme length from north to south, that is, from Cape Bianco in Tunis, to Cape L'Agulhas, (a little eastward of the Cape of Good Hope,) it is upwards of 4,300 geographical miles; and in its broadest part, from Cape Verd on the west, to Cape Guardafui on the east, it is nearly 4,200: thus exhibiting a difference between its longitudinal breadth and its length, of about thirty-five leagues; and comprising an area of not less than thirteen millions of square miles, unbroken by any considerable estuary or arm of the sea; and, as the northern portion of this continent is fully twice the size of the southern portion, notwithstanding its nearly insular form, its extent of sea-coast, though not less than ten thousand miles, is much less, in proportion to its area, than in other quarters of the globe.

The greater part of Africa lies within the torrid zone, under the immediate power and dominion of the sun, which renders the heat almost insupportable in many places; for most of its inhabitants see that great luminary in its annual progress, from tropic to tropic, pass twice over their heads, and thus experience a repetition of its intense and perpendicular rays.

Its interior remained till lately a large blank on the map of the world, and even now it is comparatively unknown; but, through the curiosity of men of science and research, and the enterprise of modern travellers, a considerable extent of this vast continent has been explored. Yet the privations incident, in a barbarous country like the greatest part of Africa, to the progress of discovery, and especially the withering effects of the climate on European constitutions, have too often terminated the days of the adventurer, and left the traveller's tale untold.

The population of Africa has been estimated at from fifty to one hundred and fifty millions; but, as we have no certain data from which to compute any thing like a correct estimate of its inhabitants, it is difficult to arrive at a proper conclusion. Yet I have no hesitation in saying, if the numerous tribes and thickly-inhabited parts of the western coast may be taken as a criterion of the whole, that the latter number (150,000,000) is a much nearer approximation to the standard than the former; and I believe it is by no means too high a figure.

Assuming this point, then, that Africa contains one hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants, how many painful reflections does this arouse in the breast of every Christian, when he recollects the fact, that this immense population is now buried (for

the most part of it at least) in the depths of ignorance and vice, superstition and idolatry,—superstition and idolatry in some of its most cruel, debasing, and revolting forms! Why so many millions of my fellow-men should never have heard of the name of Jesus, I cannot tell. It is a mysterious subject; and I should be quite disposed to leave the matter, in regard to the past, as one of those facts in the administration of Divine Providence which we are not in a situation, at present, fully to understand, were it not that the poor African, by one party, has been denied the dignity of man, and therefore to attempt his elevation, we are told, is an hopeless task; and, by others, the mysterious problem is attempted to be solved by a reference to Divine Revelation, and in the present dark and demoralized condition of that continent they see, or think they see, the fulfilment of prophecy and the execution of a curse pronounced upon Africa by the Almighty near four thousand years ago; thus absolutely throwing the reproach upon Him who “created man in his own image.” (Gen. i. 27.) As though it were not enough to deprive the Negro of the honours of a human intellect, but he must be represented as under a Divine anathema, struck out of the human family, excluded from the covenant of grace, and even the compassion of his Maker! As to the first of these charges, it is now, thank God, somewhat too late in the day to find many adherents to a system of philosophy, which proclaims a large proportion of our species as incapable of improvement, merely from the contour of the countenance, the colour of the skin, or the formation of the head. And yet there are not wanting advocates, even now, of this description, who not only attribute to the Negro race a mental inferiority to the nations of Europe, but who contend they must ever remain in that degraded condition. The advocates of this theory, in support of their assertion, argue thus:—They tell us that “the gradations of animated nature are gentle and almost imperceptible;” and, not content that the ape and baboon should fill up the chasm which exists between the quadruped and man, an intermediate link is invented, and the African, or some of the African tribes, at least, are placed just in one ascending link between the orang-outang and the human species, and as such we are told that they were destined by nature to serve the lords of the creation, that is, those of a fairer complexion, as domestic animals in common with their oxen and horses, and are therefore reckoned among their “goods and chattels,” as so much valuable property, and nothing more.

One would wish to ask the advocates of this theory, “In

what chapter of nature's law is it declared, that one quarter of the globe shall breed slaves for the rest? Where shall we find a charter conferring authority on the one, and ascertaining the submission of the other? Are no conditions annexed, no rights reserved, which, when violated, the subjected race can plead before their common Lord? Such a state cannot be imagined as existing under the government of God: it is blasphemy against his benevolence even to suppose it. The inanimate and brute creation was fitted for, and subjected to, man's dominion; but man himself was left independent of every personal claim in his fellows. And nothing but an implied voluntary surrender of his independency to society, for the benefits of law, can control or lessen his claim. But North-American or West-Indian Slavery implies no surrender, supposes no submission, but to necessity and force.

"Had the Author of nature intended Negroes for slavery, he would have endowed them with many qualities which they now want. Their food would have needed no preparation, their bodies no covering; they would have been born without any sentiment for liberty; and, possessing a patience not to be provoked, would have been incapable of resentment or opposition,—that high treason against the divine right of European dominion! A horse or a cow, when abused, beaten, or stoned, will try to get out of the reach of the lash, and make no scruple of attempting the nearest enclosure to get at pasture. But we have not heard of their withdrawing themselves from the service of a hard master, nor of avenging with his blood the cruelty of his treatment."* But it is otherwise with a slave; he is human, and can disobey, and not only so,—he can resist; and many an oppressed African has spurned his master's authority, broken the tyrant's chain, and, in defence of his liberty, has murdered his oppressor, or has died in the struggle.

But, notwithstanding this, modern writers have been found who have adopted the atheistical doctrine of Hume, respecting "different species of men," and have not hesitated to place the African in the lowest scale of intellectual being, and even below the dignity of man. One of them (Mr. Long) has gone so far as to "extol the docility of the orang-outang, in order by comparison to depreciate that of the Negro;" and with unblushing effrontery says, "I do not think that *an orang-outang husband would be any disgrace to an Hottentot female!*" And yet this

* RAMSAY'S "Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves," pp. 233, 234. (1784.)

same writer acknowledges the fact, that the white men generally of the West-India Islands do not scruple to "cohabit with Negresses and Mulattoes, free or slaves," that "not one *in twenty* can be persuaded that there is either sin or shame in cohabiting with his slave."* What must we think, then, of the pretended inferiority of the Negroes, and of the "*moral sensations*" of those who think that an "orang-outang husband would be no disgrace to an Hottentot female," when some of those who believe in this theory, or link in the chain which connects the *homo sapiens* with the brute; a species of orang-outang, differing from their brethren of the woods only in possessing the faculty of speech,—when these said fair-complexioned philosophers themselves associate with them, and habitually cohabit with the female part of this species of what they deem to be the brute creation?

But it is not my intention to enter at large upon a refutation of this wholesale piece of slander, against the woolly-haired, and "black but comely," inhabitants of the continent of Africa. Dr. Prichard, in his able "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," has done this; and it is to be hoped that the advocates of the doctrine will, for the future, be small in number "and miserably less." That all men have one common parent, appears evident from the Mosaic account of the creation in the first chapter of Genesis; and the following quotation from the New Testament is explicit upon this point: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; *and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth*, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." (Acts xvii. 24—26.)

That we all possess the same common nature and origin, is evident from the preceding declaration of holy writ; to which we may add a number of other arguments corroborative of that fact. Let two suffice. And the first is to be seen in the uniform resemblance in the physical organization of the various "nations of men that dwell on all the face of the earth." For, in whatever region we find man, his body is exactly constructed like our own, and possesses the same senses, is sustained by the same process, proceeds through the same stages, is subject

* See "Memoirs of Granville Sharp," vol. ii. Appendix iv. pp. 14, 15.

to the same diseases, and terminates in the same dissolution.* Further evidence is found in the fact, that, wherever we find man, though as to his body he is erect, "fearfully and wonderfully made," yet he is, as to his soul, the inner man, mentally and morally fallen, degraded, and depraved like ourselves; a proof this that men every where, in all places and in all ages, are the descendants of Adam and Eve, who fell in the Garden of Eden, and whose posterity, it is declared, are "born in sin and shapen in iniquity."

But to this common origin of the human race infidelity has raised many objections. These are chiefly founded in DIFFERENCE OF COLOUR, DIFFERENCE OF CONFIGURATION, and REMOTENESS OF SITUATION. That there is some difficulty in harmonizing these with the fact, that all have descended from one common ancestry, is readily conceded. But if every thing must be rejected which is attended with difficulty, we must sink into atheism and universal unbelief; every thing in religion and philosophy must alike be renounced. The objections, however, are more specious than solid.

I. COLOUR, for instance, depends partly on diet, partly on situation, partly on habit, but chiefly on climate. "Hence persons living in the same latitudes, when the localities of these latitudes resemble each other, will generally be found of the same complexion."† The Africans generally are of a dark colour; the greater part of them, indeed, dwelling as they do within the torrid zone, are black; and hence we start with the proposition that *climate* is the "chief cause" of this difference of colour in the human race.

It has been properly remarked by an intelligent writer, that "the diversity of complexion which we observe in our own country scarce excites our attention, and appears perfectly consistent with the causes assigned to it,—a greater or less exposure to the action of the sun and air. Even when we compare the skins of the different nations of Europe together, climate is considered as a sufficient cause for the variety of tints which we remark; but when the skin of the European is contrasted with that of the Negro, the dissimilitude appears so great, that recourse is had to the unscriptural, and, I may add,

* The monstrous things reported by the ancients, that some of the nations of the interior of Africa were dumb, others without tongues, one people with no mouth, and others without heads, having their eyes and mouths in their breasts, &c., have long since been proved to be mere fables.

† REV. JACOB STANLEY, SEN.

unphilosophical, idea of different races of men having been originally created. Yet these two extremes of colour are approximated by such a variety of intermediate tints, and so exquisitely blended, that we pass from one to the other by almost imperceptible gradations.”* Dr. Robertson, in his “History of America,” observes on this subject: “In what part or membrane of the body that humour resides which tinges the complexion of the Negro with a deep black, it is the business of anatomists to inquire and describe. The powerful operation of heat appears manifestly to be the cause which produces this striking variety in the human race. All Europe, a great part of Asia, and the temperate countries of Africa, are inhabited by men of a white complexion. All the torrid zone of Africa, some of the warmer regions adjacent to it, and several countries in Asia, are filled with people of a deep black colour. If we survey the nations of our continent, making our progress from cold and temperate countries towards those parts which are exposed to the influence of vehement and unremitting heat, we shall find, that the extreme whiteness of their skin soon begins to diminish; that its colour deepens gradually as we advance; and, after passing through all the successive gradations of shade, terminates in a uniform unvarying black.”† This we know to be really the case, as one moment’s “survey” will prove. “In all warm climates we see the skin has a tendency to a darker colour. The French, for instance, are browner than the Swedes, Danes, English, and Germans. The inhabitants of the southern parts of Spain are darker than the French; and the Portuguese, in complexion, differ but a few shades from the Mulatto. And as we approach the equator, the skin assumes, in general, a darker hue, until it ‘terminates in a uniform unvarying black.’ It is worthy of remark, that Negro children are nearly as fair as Europeans at birth, and that they continue so for several days; thus proving that the weather and sun act principally in giving them a darker hue. The palms of the hands, however, and soles of the feet, continue through life nearly as white as those of Europeans; a circumstance not sufficiently attended to by painters.

“But perhaps the most striking example we have of the influence of climate, is to be found among that persecuted race of people, the Jews. Dispersed over the chief parts of the civilized

* DR. WINTERBOTTOM’S “Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra-Leone.”

† DR. ROBERTSON’S Works, vol. ii. p. 96.

globe, but prevented by religious motives from mixing with the rest of mankind, they still retain their characteristic features, though they have assumed the complexion of every country they inhabit. Thus they are fair in Britain and Germany, brown in France and in Turkey, swarthy in Portugal and in Spain, olive in Syria and in Chaldea, tawny or copper-coloured in Arabia and Egypt, and nearly black in Abyssinia.”* And yet they are all Jews, of one common ancestry, nation, and language, though “scatter’d o’er all the earth they lie.”

“If, therefore,” as has been well observed, “the human race be divided into species merely from the colour, it must necessarily follow, that, if the Negroes form a specific class because they are black, those of an olive and tawny complexion must form another class, because they are not white; and, from the same cause, the Spaniards and Swedes would form two distinct species of men; and then, on the same principle, how many distinct species should we have among the seed of Abraham?”

In a recent Number of the *Edinburgh Review* I find an able article on the subject of “Ethnology, or the Science of Races,” in which this precise line of argument is adopted. After speaking of the varieties of colour in some branches of the Syro-Arabian stock, the writer observes:—

It would be easy to multiply proofs to the same effect; but we shall satisfy ourselves with adverting to the case of the Jewish nation, which, though frequently appealed to by the advocates of the permanence of complexion and other physical characters, really tells the other way, when fully stated. This case is particularly satisfactory, on account of the evidence of general purity of descent through a long succession of generations, during which the scattered residence of the race has subjected its members to a great variety of external conditions. Now, although the descendants of Abraham are still generally recognisable by certain peculiarities of physiognomy, we find a great variety of complexion among them. In this country blue eyes and flaxen hair are not unfrequent; but a light brunette hue with black hair is most common. In Germany and Poland, the ordinary complexion is more florid, with blue eyes and red hair. On the other hand, the Jews of Portugal are very dark; whilst those who have been settled from very remote times in Cochin and the interior of Malabar, are so black as not to be distinguishable by their complexion from the native inhabitants. Thus it may be stated as a general proposition, that the complexion of the Jews tends to assimilate itself to that of any nation in which their residence has been sufficiently prolonged; while of this assimilation, the introduction of a small amount of extraneous blood does not by any means afford an adequate explanation.

After dwelling upon the effects of climate on many other

* DR. WINTERBOTTOM, vol. i. p. 187. From SMITH “On the Complexion and Figure of the Human Species;” and PROFESSOR ZIMMERMAN.

nations in Asia, and of the different tinges and hues of several of the African tribes, the writer proceeds:—

Complexion, therefore, must be admitted to be no such definite distinction, as can sever the Negro races from other branches of the human family. Nor will the character of their hair be found more conclusive; though it has been asserted by some to be a more lasting, and therefore more trustworthy, criterion,—so much so, that the African nations have been collectively termed “woolly-haired.” Now, it is clearly proved by microscopic examination, that the hair of the Negro is not wool; and that its intimate structure differs from that of the fairer races, solely in the greater quantity of pigmentary matter contained in its interior,—as is the case with jet-black hair in our own country. The crisp, twisted growth of Negro hair is the only sign by which it can be really separated from the straight and flowing hair of Europeans. But a little consideration will show the futility of attempting to separate races on distinctions, which do not exceed such variations as may be observed within the limits of any single race. For instance, among the African nations, some have a dark complexion, and are conformable in other respects to the Negro type, yet, at the same time, have long flowing hair. On the other hand, there are many Europeans, having no admixture of Negro blood, with hair so crisp and frizzled as almost to deserve the epithet of woolly.....A general view of the phenomena belonging to the various complexions of the human race must compel us to admit, to a very considerable extent, the influence of climate among the causes of these varieties. Thus it is only in the intertropical regions, and in the countries bordering upon them, that we meet with the greatest depth of colour in the skin; and all the nations inhabiting those regions have an inclination to complete blackness, which may, however, be kept in check by other circumstances.It must be admitted, that the relation between climate and colour is not *perfectly* uniform; but it is at least as uniform as the relation between colour and race; that is, the difference of shade among different families of nations which have been exposed sufficiently long to the same climatic influences, is not greater than that which presents itself among individuals of the same nation.....We have seen that the Arab, living in the country of the Negro, becomes of Negro blackness; that the Negro, dwelling on the banks of the Nile, presents the dark red tinge of the ancient Egyptian; that the Jew, transplanted into the northern regions of Europe, has the original swarthy complexion of his race replaced by a fair and even a florid hue, whilst another offset of the same stock rivals in blackness the Hindoos among whom he dwells; that the Hindoo, when he migrates to the high lands of the Himalaya range, becomes, in process of time, as fair as the Europeans who have come thither from the far north; that the nations proved by affinities of language to be descendants of the great Asian stock, which has dispersed itself through every variety of climate, admit of every variety of colour; and that equal and similar varieties abound among the members of other groups of nations (for instance, the American and the Polynesian) whose geographical distribution and linguistic affinities afford a strong presumption of a common origin. We cannot conceive that any candid person can weigh this mass of evidence, without coming to the conclusion, that the most extreme differences of complexion are unsafe indications of an original distinctness of race; and that these differences owe their origin far more to the prolonged influence of external physical conditions, than to any other assignable causes.

Any other conclusion, this intelligent writer observes, involves the case in inextricable difficulties and inconsistencies; and

having arrived at precisely the same result by a comparison of the cranial conformation of the different races, he once more returns to the subject of colour:—

If we take complexion, again, as our guide, we shall be led into greater absurdities; for we must then split up the Jewish people into half a score of diverse races: between the ruddy Saxon and the black Hindoo we must establish a dozen of distinct grades; and when we come to the African, American, and Oceanic nations, we must assign a new Adam and Eve to almost every tribe.*

Physiologists are not agreed as to the original colour of the human race, nor does revelation afford us any direct assistance upon this subject. About the close of the first thousand years, we read, "There were giants in the earth in those days," and that "the daughters of men were *fair*." (Gen. vi. 2, 4.) And in the Old Testament we often find women praised for their beauty. Because Sarai, the wife of Abram, was "a fair woman to look upon,"—that is, there was something in her personal appearance that was more than common,—the father of the faithful was induced to give way to unbelief, and distrust of the providence of God, when he gave the improper advice, "Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister." † (Gen. xii. 11, 13.) Of Rebekah it was said, "And the damsel was very fair;" (Gen. xxiv. 16;) and of Rachel, Laban's youngest daughter, that she "was beautiful and well favoured." (Gen. xxix. 17.) And it is also recorded of Esther, that "the maid was fair and beautiful." (Esther ii. 7.) Samson's father-in-law, who had unjustly deprived him of his wife, said to him, "Is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her." (Judges xv. 2.) And subsequently we read, that "in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job." (Job xlii. 15.) The description given of the birth of Moses is not only that "he was a goodly child," (Exod. ii. 2,) and "a proper child," (Heb. xi. 23,) but that he "was exceeding fair." (Acts vii. 20.) And on his coming "down from the Mount," whither he had gone to receive "the two tables" from Jehovah, it is said "that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him." "And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone." (Exod. xxxiv. 29, 35.) It is said of David the son of Jesse, that "he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to:" that he was "a comely person;" and that "when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he

* "Edinburgh Review," pp. 449, 452, 457, 458, 482. (1848.)

† Which she was, although by another mother.

was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance." (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 18; xvii. 42.) Absalom was distinguished, amongst other things, for his fine person. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him." (2 Sam. xiv. 25.) Of the three Hebrews, with Daniel at their head, who had declined to partake of the king's food, and who had "pulse to eat, and water to drink," it is said, "Their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat." (Dan. i. 12, 15.) In other parts of the inspired volume, we have similar allusions: "My beloved is white and ruddy. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh." (Solomon's Song v. 10—13.) We also read, "Sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks." "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple." (Solomon's Song ii. 14; iv. 3; vii. 5.)

On the other hand, we find it written, "I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar as the curtains of Solomon." (Solomon's Song i. 5.) Again, it is written, "My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat." (Job xxx. 30.) "Their visage is blacker than a coal. Our skin was black like an oven because of the terrible famine." (Lam. iv. 8; v. 10.) "All faces shall gather blackness." (Joel ii. 6; Nahum ii. 10.)

Now, it must be admitted that many of the preceding quotations from the sacred scriptures are to be understood in a metaphorical sense. Those from the Minor Prophets are applied to the Jews, whose countenances are said to have changed and turned black, like persons ready to be strangled, being struck with terror at the approach of God's judgments. The passages from Solomon's Song unquestionably refer to Christ and his church, in the various conditions to which it is liable in this world. And even in those taken from the first book of Moses, and other historical parts of holy writ, in which the expressions of "fair to look upon," "very fair," "beautiful and well favoured," and others, so frequently occur, it is a question whether these terms do not apply as much to a beautiful symmetry of form, with a comeliness of features, and a gracefulness of movement,

as to the colour of the skin, or to a freshness or whiteness of complexion.

But, admitting the latter to be included in those commendations of corporeal beauty, we have no account of the complexion of Adam and Eve. We may, however, indulge in the supposition, that our first parents were, as to colour, like Moses, "exceeding fair," understanding the term in its general acceptation; and, in support of this opinion, it may be said, that "God created man in his own image;" and that as white is an emblem of purity, Adam was created a white man; and all the pictorial representations of our great progenitor, both ancient and modern, seem to favour the idea. On this point others think differently, and amongst these are some of the Africans, who state our race to have been at first black. Cain, they say, was a Negro; but he became so pale with fear and remorse when he had murdered his brother, that his colour never returned.

Yet not only Negro but White physiologists have been found who held the opinion that the human race was originally black. We have already mentioned that Negro children are nearly as fair as Europeans at birth, that they continue so for several days, and that the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet continue whitish through life. Another fact is certain, that whilst white parents have never been known to have black offspring, children are born of black parents sometimes entirely white, and retain that colour: these are of the Albino variety, several instances of which have come under my own observation.

"Secret things belong unto the Lord our God;" and where no distinct revelation is made on a subject, it is in general perhaps safer for us to be silent, or to confess our ignorance, and thus refrain from speculation. But the primary condition of the human race even in this respect is too interesting a question to be passed by altogether; and, therefore, without entertaining either of the extreme views of white or black, much less the strange and marvellous accounts which have been put forth by some writers as to the original size, physical strength, &c., of the first man, but taking into consideration the locality and the climate where Adam and Eve first breathed the vital air, the nature of the composition of which man was formed, and the name given to him, ADAM, "which signifies *red*," without at all wishing to be wise above what is written, may we not indulge in the supposition that they resembled in complexion some of the light brownish or copper-coloured Moors or Foulahs in Western Africa? The writer in the Edinburgh Review

already quoted says,—“We may state our own conclusion, drawn from a comparison of the geographical, physiological, and glottological considerations involved in it, that some part of High Asia was the centre from which the world was peopled; and that the race still inhabiting that region most nearly represents the original stock.”* Against this conclusion it may be objected, that, since the deluge, there has been a considerable change in the climate of that country as well as of others. It may be so; but admitting this for the sake of argument, then we fall back upon one of the principal reasons for supposing that our first parents were neither white nor black; that is, upon the colour “of the dust of the ground” of which “the Lord God formed man,” and the name which he received. “Josephus thinks that he was called ADAM by reason of the reddish colour of the earth out of which he was formed; for ADAM in Hebrew signifies *red*.” This is disputed by Sir William Jones, “who thinks it may be from *Adim*, which in Sanscrit signifies *the first*. The Persians, however, denominate him ADAMAH, which signifies, according to Sale, *red earth*.”†

This opinion receives additional weight from the mass of “evidence collected by Dr. Prichard respecting the physical characters of the ancient Egyptians. The conclusion to which it conducts him is a conviction that the ancient Egyptians were so closely allied to the Negro race, that the origin of both was probably the same. The complexion of the ancient Egyptians, as represented by their own artists, seems to have been of a red copper or light chocolate colour, and to have resembled the present complexion of the reddest of the Foulah and Kafir tribes.”‡

Dr. Primatt, who wrote upwards of a century ago, when touching upon the subject of colour, says,—“It has pleased God to cover some men with white skins, and others with black; but as there is neither merit nor demerit in complexion, the 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.” It comes to this, then, “Whether a man be white or black,” or neither, “such he is by God’s appointment;” it was foreseen, and determined that it should be so: and here, as

* “Edinburgh Review,” p. 486. (1848.)

† REV. RICHARD WATSON’S “Biblical and Theological Dictionary,” art. *Adam*.

‡ “Edinburgh Review,” p. 452. (1848.)

in all the other parts of the Divine workmanship, we see the wisdom and the goodness of God in adapting the skin, hair, &c., both of animals and the human species, to the various and changeable climates and latitudes in which they reside. In northern climates, for instance, men have long hair, and sheep have wool. In southern climates sheep have hair, and Africans and others have woolly heads; and we know that climate affects the hair of the head, as well as the complexion.

After all, the very striking difference of colour between the African and European is merely superficial. "We are accustomed to say, that colour is 'only skin-deep;' but, in point of fact, it is *not even skin-deep*; for it does not reach the true skin, being entirely confined to the *epidermis*, or scarf skin. It was formerly supposed that between the true skin and scarf skin there lay a proper colouring layer, to which the term *rete mucosum* was given; and it was imagined that this layer was greatly developed in the dark-skinned races, but nearly wanting in those of fair complexion. This account of it, however, when submitted to the test of microscopic inquiry, has been found to be totally incorrect." *

One thing is certain, that though the Negro skin is black, it is less rough than that of the children born in northern latitudes, and has, in fact, the sleekness and softness of velvet; and that, though the Negroes work naked in the hottest hours of the day, their skin never blisters, while that of white sailors does whenever the sun reaches them. How common it is for Europeans who have been much exposed to the direct rays of the sun, especially in a tropical climate, to become "tanned" or "sun-burnt" in the face and hands, while the parts of the body which are habitually covered retain their original fairness! On the other hand, the Africans enjoy hot, dry weather, while moisture and cold make them shiver, and unfit for labour. We close this part of the subject, therefore, in the language of holy writ, as applicable to the Negro race:—"Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept." (Solomon's Song i. 6.)

II. AS TO CONFIGURATION: I have seen thousands of the Jollof, Mandingo, Foulah, and other tribes on the continent of Africa, who are not a whit behind some of the finest specimens in England for beautiful features, symmetry of form, height of

* "Edinburgh Review," p. 445. (1848.)

stature, and physical strength.* But as we shall have occasion to refer to some further particulars of these and other nations, I shall here, in support of the foregoing statement, adduce a few quotations from some respectable writers. Dr. Winterbottom was for some time physician to the colony of Sierra-Leone, soon after the formation of the settlement; and, from his residence there, professional skill, and general intelligence, was well qualified to write upon this subject. When speaking of the inhabitants in that locality, he says,—“Both men and women are in general above the middle size, well proportioned, sprightly, and of an open countenance. Although the palm of elegance may be denied to them, yet they possess a great degree of ease in all their actions. The manners of the females, particularly the younger part, are not devoid of grace, and are free from every appearance of constraint. The estimation of female beauty among the natives in this country is the same as in most others. The young women are in general remarkable for the beautiful^{***} contour of their limbs, and for an ingenuous, open countenance. Their eyes are often large and well formed, their ears small and neat. Their necks and bosoms are well turned, scarcely indeed to be surpassed by ‘the bending statue which enchants the world.’ The frankness of their manners is tempered with an agreeable timidity towards strangers, which renders them still more interesting.” The learned Doctor admits that there is “as great a variety of features among these people as is to be met with in the nations of Europe,” but that “the sloping contracted forehead, small eyes, depressed nose, thick lips, and projecting jaw, with which the African is usually caricatured, are by no means constant traits; on the contrary, almost every gradation of countenance may be met with, from the disgusting picture too commonly drawn of them, to the finest set of European features. Want of animation does not characterize them, and faces are often met with which express the various emotions of the mind with great energy.” When speaking of the Foulahs, this gentleman says, “Among those of them whom either curiosity or commerce had attracted to the settlement at Sierra-Leone, I saw a youth whose features were exactly of the Grecian mould, and whose person might have afforded to the statuary a model of the Apollo Belvidere.” †

* Witness the celebrated athlete from the Guinea-Coast; a cast of whose body is conspicuously displayed in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, London.

† DR. WINTERBOTTOM’S “Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra-Leone,” &c. vol. i. pp. 181, 197, 200. (1803.)

M. Goldberry, an intelligent French writer on Western Africa, when speaking of the Jollofs, says,—“They are always well made: their features are regular, and like those of Europeans, except that the nose is rather round, and their lips thick. They are said to be remarkably handsome, and their women beautiful. The complexion of the race is a fine, transparent, deep black; their hair is crisp and woolly.” The same writer, when speaking of the Mandingoes, whose colour is also black, with a mixture of red, says,—“Their features are regular, their character generous and open, and their manner gentle.” Major Laing says,—“The appearance of the Mandingoes is engaging; their features are regular and open; their persons well formed and comely, averaging a height rather above the common.”

With regard to the Foulahs, who are spread in various tribes over the countries between the Senegal and Gambia Rivers, and in the regions farther south as far as Sierra-Leone, and for some hundreds of miles in the interior, though the case cited by Dr. Winterbottom cannot be taken as a sample for the whole in all its particulars, yet those who have seen any of this numerous part of the population of Western Africa agree in describing them substantially as Mungo Park has done; though it must be admitted, there is considerable difference between the various branches of the Foulah tribe, both as to complexion and features, as will be shown in a subsequent chapter.

“The Foulahs,” says Mr. Park, “such of them at least as reside near the Gambia, are chiefly of a tawny complexion, with soft, silky hair, and pleasing features;” and this he repeats when speaking of the Foulahs of Bondou. M. Goldberry says, “The genuine Foulahs,” meaning the Foulahs of Teembo and Foota Jollon, “are very fine men, robust and courageous. They have a strong mind, and are mysterious, reserved, and prudent; they understand commerce, and travel in the capacity of merchants even to the extent of the Gulf of Guinea. They are formidable to their neighbours. Their women are handsome and sprightly. The colour of their skin is a kind of reddish black; their countenances are regular, and their hair is longer and not so woolly as that of the common Negroes.”

It may be objected, that these are particular, detached, and isolated cases, and that they are exceptions to the rule. In reply to this, let the reader peruse the following summary from Dr. Prichard’s excellent work:—

The dark coloured nations of Africa do not appear to form a distinct race, or a distinct kind of people, separated from all other families of man by a broad line

and uniform among themselves, such as we ideally represent under the term Negro. There is, perhaps, not one tribe in which all the characters ascribed to the Negro are found in the highest degree; and in general they are distributed to different races, in all manner of ways, and combined in each instance with more or fewer of the characters belonging to the European or the Asiatic.

The distinguishing peculiarities of the African nations may be summed up into four heads; namely, the characters of complexion, of hair, features, and figure. We have to remark,—

1. That some races, with woolly hair and complexions of a deep black colour, have fine forms, regular and beautiful features, and are in their figure and countenances scarcely different from Europeans. Such are the Jolofs near the Senegal, and the race of Guber, or of Haúsa, in the interior of Súdón. Some tribes of the South-African race, as the darkest of the Kafirs, are nearly of this description, as well as some families or tribes in the empire of Kongo; while others have more of the Negro character in their countenances and form.

2. Other tribes have the form and features similar to those above described: their complexion is black, or a deep olive or copper colour approaching to black; while their hair, though often crisp and frizzled, is not the least woolly. Such are the Bisheri, and the Dawakil, and Hazorta, and the darkest of the Abyssinians.

3. Other instances have been mentioned in which the complexion is black, and the features have the Negro type, while the nature of the hair deviates considerably, and is even said to be rather long and in flowing ringlets. Some of the tribes near the Zambesi are of this class.

4. Among nations whose colour deviates towards a lighter hue, we find some who have woolly hair, with a figure and features approaching to the European. Such are the Bechuana Kafirs, of a light brown complexion. The tawny Hottentots, though not approaching the European, differ from the Negro. Again: some of the tribes on the Gold-Coast and the Slave-Coast, and the Ibos in the Bight of Benin, are of a lighter complexion than many other Negroes, while their features are strongly marked with the peculiarities of that race.*

There is, then, we contend, nothing in the physical peculiarities, or the variety which is observable in the countenances and features of the preceding nations and tribes of Africa, to indicate that they are a distinct species of the human race; and even if we were to select the most unfavourable specimens of the African tribes, we may add, in the language of the above excellent writer, that “their personal deformity and intellectual weakness, if these attributes really belong to them, must be regarded as individual varieties. Similar defects are produced in every human race, by the agency of physical circumstances, parallel to those under which the tribes in question are known to exist. If these were reversed, it is probable that a few generations would obliterate the effect which has resulted from them.” This is the case; for we know that climate, diet, and the various modes of life, have great power over the features,

* DR. PRICHARD'S “Researches into the Physical History of Mankind,” vol. ii. pp. 340, 341.

form, and stature of man, as well as in affecting the colour. Hence West-Indian children, educated in England, improve not only in complexion, but in elegance of features; an alteration arising, perhaps, equally from change of climate, of diet, and of education. The difference between the children of liberated Africans who attend the Mission-schools in Western Africa and their parents, in point of intelligence, and even in their features and personal appearance, is very striking. But, "as to configuration, we sometimes see great variety of this in the same families,—the prominent and the retiring forehead; the aquiline and the Grecian nose; the long, the round, and the oval face. The man who should gravely assert that these could not be the children of the same parents, would be considered one with whom it would be folly to hold any argument."* Again: in members of the same family we see some smooth, some hairy; some tall, some short; some fair, some brown: but are we able to tell, from these peculiarities, which carries the ensigns of genius, which bears the impression of wisdom? We see genius, and the expansion of the intellectual powers, sporting and developed in various physical forms: we see this, tall in Newton, bulky in Hume, slender in Voltaire, diminutive and deformed in Pope: to say nothing of many eminent divines who were small in stature, one of whom gave a practical exemplification of his own poetic effusion,—

"The mind's the standard of the man."

We close our observations on this subject in the words of an elegant author, who observes, that "of all animals, the differences between mankind are the smallest. Of the lower races of creatures the changes are so great as often entirely to disguise the natural animal, and to distort or to disfigure its shape. But the chief differences in man are rather taken from the tincture of his skin, than the variety of his figure; and in all climates he presents his erect deportment, and the marked superiority of his form."*

III. Then, as to REMOTENESS OF SITUATION.—Whatever weight there may be in this objection as to the peopling of the New World, (and even this has been sufficiently cleared up in ROBERTSON'S "History of America,") the objection can scarcely be entertained for a moment with regard to Africa; for it is not improbable that some parts of North-Eastern Africa were inhabited previous to the deluge; but if they were not, we have the

* REV. J. STANLEY, SEN.

† GOLDSMITH'S "Animated Nature."

clearest evidence that, soon after the flood, Africa was peopled by the descendants of Noah, or, rather, by one branch of Noah's family, namely, by Ham and his descendants;—Cush, the son of Ham, and grandson of Noah, and Nimrod, Noah's great-grandson, the mighty hunter, who became a mighty builder. Besides, from the contiguity of that continent to Asia, and some parts of it especially to the Garden of Eden, the residence of our first parents, and from the very early mercantile traffic which we know to have taken place between Northern Africa and the East, even prior to the era of Moses, there can remain no doubt that the inhabitants of Africa have all sprung from the same source; and, with ourselves, are the descendants of one common pair.

But it is still contended, even by those who believe in the common origin of the human race, that the continent of Africa generally, or the greater part of the kingdoms in the interior, and the native tribes in the South and on the Western coast in particular, are nevertheless mentally inferior to the inhabitants of other parts of the globe; and not only so, but that education and other circumstances will never be able to raise them to an equality with those of their fellow-men who enjoy the blessings of civilization. That they are in the mass, at present, far behind the white races, I at once admit; but I am at issue with those who advocate the latter part of this sentiment: such writers must have forgotten, that there was a time in the history of Britain, when our own ancestors were described by the philosophers at Rome, not only as being below mediocrity in civilization, but they were considered to be too stupid even for slaves; and therefore Cicero advised his friend Atticus not to obtain his slaves from Britain, "because they are so stupid, and utterly incapable of being taught, that they are unfit to form a part of the household of Atticus."

In the preceding brief description of the physical character of several of the nations in Western Africa, (of the Foulahs, for instance,) we find them spoken of as "having a strong mind," that they are "prudent" and "understand commerce," and that "in the capacity of merchants" they travel some hundreds of miles. The same may be said of many other tribes: indeed, no unprejudiced person who has had much personal intercourse with the Mandingo, Jollof, Foulah, Serrawoolli, Bambarra, and other nations, can entertain the slightest doubt of the equality of intellect between white and black men. Dr. Prichard, in his general observations on the intellectual faculties of the African nations, observes: "But if it is pretended, that all the woolly-

haired races in Africa are uniformly inferior in intellect to other tribes of men, the assertion is at most a gratuitous one. Nay, it is contradicted by the most clear and decisive testimony. Travellers in South Africa have been struck with the proofs of vigour and acuteness of understanding displayed by the Amazulah, Amakosah, Bechuana, and other Kafir nations. And if the alleged inferiority of organization and of capacity in the skull is the ground on which deficiency of intellect is ascribed to the woolly-haired nations; this, at least, does not apply to the Kafirs, many of whom have a form of the head, and particularly an expansion of the anterior parts of the skull, resembling the heads of Europeans." "A similar objection to this doctrine might, indeed, be furnished by many black races between the tropics, and among those tribes who are considered as genuine Negroes. I need not repeat what I have said respecting the physical and the intellectual characteristics of the Mandingoes, and the people of Guber, Hausa, and other nations." *

On "the assertion," "All the woolly-haired races in Africa are uniformly inferior in intellect to other tribes of men," Dr. Prichard has well observed that it "is at most a gratuitous one; nay," that "it is contradicted by the most clear and decisive testimony," as in the preceding paragraph; and he then proceeds to show that those minute philosophers, who take the gauge of intellectual capacity from the disposition of the bones of the head, and link morality with the contour of the countenance,—men who measure mind by the rule and compasses, and estimate capacity for knowledge and salvation by a scale of inches, and the acuteness of angles,—have not done the African nations justice even on this principle: for, he remarks,—

The crania of Negroes existing in European collections, and those which have been principally examined by anatomists, have been almost exclusively taken from tribes who may be supposed to have presented the most unfavourable specimens of the African organization. They have been the skulls of unfortunate wretches kidnapped from the coast, or their enslaved offspring. It was from Negro skulls of this description that those proportional measurements were taken by Soemmering and others, from which an attempt was made to prove that the amplitude of the brain is less in the Negro than in other races of men..... I have endeavoured to prove, that there is a fallacy in all those statements, arising from the standard of comparison, which is a given extent of facial bones, or length of the superior *maxilla*; that one of the prominent peculiarities of the strongly-marked Negro head is an absolute excess in the length of the upper jaw, the extent of which, therefore, ought to be the basis of comparison; and that from these measurements of Soemmering no decisive result can be deduced. This opinion has received a

* DR. PRICHARD'S "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," vol. ii. pp. 347, 348.

most ample confirmation from the results of a series of observations by Professor Tidemann, published in the "Philosophical Transactions" for 1836, on the brain of the Negro in comparison with the brain of the European and that of the orang-outang. In this paper the learned author proposes to answer the two following questions:—

"First. Is there any important and essential difference in the structure of the brain between the Negro and the European?"

"Secondly. Has the brain of the Negro any greater resemblance to the brain of the orang-outang than has the brain of the European?"

To these inquiries the author has obtained very satisfactory solutions.....In comparing the Africans with other races of men in relation to the capacity of the cranium, by which he estimates the magnitude of the brain, M. Tidemann adopted the following method of proceeding: 1. He weighed the skull with and without the under jaw-bone. 2. He then filled the cavity of the skull with dry millet-seed, through the *foramen occipitale magnum*. The skull was then weighed again carefully filled. 3. He then deducted the weight of the empty skull from that of the filled one, and thus obtained a measure of the capacity of the cavity of the *cranium*. Tidemann has given the results of a great number of observations made on this method. Forty-one instances display the capacity of the cavity of the cranium in Negroes of different races. Seventy-seven similar measurements of male European skulls are added, twenty-four of male Asiatics of the so-termed Caucasian race, twelve of female Europeans, twenty of skulls of the Mongolian, and twenty-seven of the American race, and forty-three of the Malayan and Polynesian nations, in which Australians are included. The general result of these comparisons is, that the cavity of the skull in the Negro is generally in no degree smaller than in Europeans and others of the human race. Tidemann concludes, that "the opinion of many naturalists, such as Camper, Soemmering, Cuvier, Laurence, and Vievey, who maintain that the Negro has a smaller brain than the European, is ill-founded and entirely refuted by my researches." He says, "I look upon Camper's facial line and facial angle as very unsatisfactory in determining the capacity of the skull, the size of the brain, and the degree of intellectual power." *

In harmony with this we may add, in the language of another able writer, "And, for Negro physiognomy, as though that should shut out the light of intellect, go to your national museum; contemplate the features of the colossal head of Memnon, and the statues of the divinities on which the ancient Africans impressed their own forms; and there see, in close resemblance to the Negro feature, the mould of those countenances which once beheld, as the creations of their own immortal genius, the noblest and most stupendous monuments of human skill, and taste, and grandeur. In the imperishable porphyry and granite is the unfounded and pitiful slander publicly, and before all the world, refuted. There we see the Negro under cultivation. If he now presents a different aspect, cultivation is wanting. That solves the whole case." †

* DR. PRICHARD'S "Researches into the Physical History of Mankind," &c.

† REV. RICHARD WATSON'S Works, vol. ii. pp. 94, 95.

It appears, then, from the preceding extracts, in the inferences from which I have been confirmed by personal observation, that there is nothing in the physical character and constitution of the African,—nothing in the organization of the brain, the contour of the countenance, the colour of the skin, or the formation of the woolly-haired head,—which affords the least presumption of inferior endowment of intellectual or moral faculties. The Rev. J. Ramsay, from whom we have already quoted, who spent many years in the West Indies, and who had an opportunity of judging of the mental character of the Africans, even in a state of slavery, in the fifth section of his “*Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies*,” observes:—

Having shown how little can be rationally concluded against the capacity of Negroes from their equatorial settlement, flat nose, woolly head, projecting chin, high calves, and black skin, we come to facts.

Now we know, that house Negroes, who are generally Creoles, and are conversant with their white masters, have all the address, intrigue, and cunning of family servants in Europe. In their masters they can mark the ridiculous point, the improper conduct, and often give these superior beings that advice, which they have not wisdom enough to follow; often manage their foibles, and mould them to their own interest.....Negroes are capable of learning any thing that requires attention and correctness of manner. They have powers of description and mimicry that would not have disgraced the talents of our modern Aristophanes. The distillation of rum, the tempering of the cane-juice for sugar, which may be considered as nice chemical operations, are universally committed to them. They become good mechanics; they use the square and compass, and easily become masters of whatever business they are put to. They have a particular turn for music, and often attain a considerable proficiency in it without the advantage of a master. Negro sick nurses acquire a surprising skill in the cure of ordinary diseases, and often conquer disorders that have baffled a host of regulars. Hence our black beaux, black belles, black gamesters, black keepers, black quacks, black conjurers, and all that variety of character which strikes in their masters, or promises to add to their own dignity or interest. But what can we expect them to attempt in the higher departments of reason? Their slavish employments and condition; their being abandoned to the caprice of any master; the subjection in which it is thought necessary to keep them: all these things depress their minds, and subdue whatever is manly, spirited, ingenuous, and independent among them. And these are weights sufficient to crush a first-rate human genius. Had it been the lot of a paradoxical Hume, or of a benevolent Kaimes, to have cultivated the sugar-cane, under a planter, in one of our old islands, the first probably would have tried to have eked out his scanty pittance of two pounds of flour or grain per week, by taking up the profession of a John Crowman, or conjurer; and doubtless would have got many a flogging for playing tricks with, and imposing on the credulity of, his fellows, to cheat them of their allowance. The turn of the other to works of taste might have expressed itself in learning to blow a rude sort of music from his nostril, through a hollowed piece of stick; or, if blessed with an indulgent master, he might have learned to play by the ear a few minuets, and fiddle a few country dances, to enable the family and neighbours to pass an evening cheerfully together.

The truth is, a depth of cunning that enables them to overreach, conceal, deceive, is the only province of the mind left for them, as slaves, to occupy. And this they cultivate, and enjoy the fruits of, to a surprising degree. I have, as a Magistrate, heard examinations and defences of culprits, that for quibbling, subterfuge, and subtlety, would have done credit to the abilities of an attorney, most notoriously conversant in the villanous tricks of his profession. Their command of countenance is so perfect, as not to give the least clue for discovering the truth; nor can they be caught tripping in a story. Nothing in the turn or degree of their mental faculties distinguishes them from Europeans; though some difference must appear, if they were of a different or an inferior race.*

This brings us again to the fact of the universal corruption of human nature. The African has actually got the family mark upon him. Originally, "the Negro was God's image carved in ebony," but he is fallen; and now,

"His follies and his crimes have stamp'd him man."

But we hasten to a different process or mode of meeting the charge of mental imbecility urged against the teeming millions of the descendants of Adam who are scattered over the vast continent of Africa: for the sacred scriptures have not left us to determine the title of any tribe, or nation, or continent, to the full honours of humanity by accidental circumstances. "To man has been given the law, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart;' and to be capable of loving God is the infallible criterion of our peculiar nature. So extensively has this principle been applied by Missionary Societies, that the philosophy in question is now refuted more by facts than by reasoning. They have determined whether the races cast out and spurned by this theory are our brethren, and, as such, entitled to our fraternal yearnings; they have determined who are men, by determining who are capable of that universal and exclusive law to man,—the love of God. The Negro through all his shades, the Hottentot through all his varieties, the Indians of America, and the natives of New-Holland, have all, in our own days, been inspired with the love of God through the gospel; and again we see, that 'in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, but that Christ is all in all.'" "They have dived into that mine from which, we were often told, no valuable ore or precious stone could be extracted; and they have brought up the gem of an immortal spirit, flashing with the light of intellect, and glowing with the hues of Christian graces."† We say nothing of by-gone days, of Africa's ancient glory, where still moulder

* RAMSAY'S "Essay," pp. 242—246.

† REV. RICHARD WATSON'S Works, vol. ii, pp. 90, 93.

the ruins of Thebes with its hundred gates, and where the mighty pyramids still rear their lofty fronts, after the lapse of three thousand years. We say nothing of that day when "she poured forth her heroes on the field, gave bishops to the church, and martyrs to the fires:"—"Modern times have witnessed, in the persons of African Negroes, generals, physicians, philosophers, linguists, poets, mathematicians, and merchants, all eminent in their attainments, energetic in enterprise, and honourable in character; and even the Mission-schools in the West Indies exhibit a quickness of intellect, and a thirst for learning, to which the schools of this country do not always afford a parallel."* Still more modern times have produced "a great cloud of witnesses" to bear their testimony, that, however degraded, and even brutalized, the mind of the African may be by sin and deep-rooted superstition,—a superstition interwoven and dovetailed in his nature, and rendered venerable from its antiquity and long-continued habit,—yet there is in the "gospel of Christ," which is "the power of God," a mighty moral lever that can and does raise him in the scale of civil and religious society; a principle which can disinter the mental faculties, and quicken into quivering sensibility what appeared to be a mass of unconscious brutality; a principle which takes hold of the heart, transforms and expands the mind, elevates and ennobles the whole man, and makes him altogether "in Christ a new creature." And many an African Negro—"the savage all wild in his glen"—has been arrested by the triumphs of gospel-grace; and those that "went out to see what was done, have found the man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind;" and therefore, without mixing the smallest particle of acrimony in replying to this unfounded slander against the Negroes, we say that "the charge of mental inferiority must in future lie rather against those who bring it, than against the African;"† for he has been proved to be "a man and a brother," a Christian and a scholar.‡

* REV. RICHARD WATSON'S Works, vol. ii. pp. 94, 95.

† DR. HARRIS'S "Great Commission."

‡ The spirited author of an admirable little work, entitled "Jamaica Enslaved and Free," touching on the Negro character, says,—“But let facts bring out the truth, as they do in the circumstance, that two native Africans are gone back to the wild plains which gave them birth, as English clergymen!” And he then asks, “Can Hume’s lie be again repeated, after this additional confutation of his theoretical statements, when in the arrogance of his mind he said of native Africans, ‘They are inferior to the rest of the species, and utterly incapable of the higher attainments of the mind?’”

This fact, therefore, it is contended, gives the direct negative to the other charge, "the judicial sentence of God resting upon the Negro." A part of Africa has been reclaimed, Christianized, and civilized;—no one dares question this: testimonies the most disinterested and impartial have been voluntarily borne to this fact, by naval, military, and civil officers, as well as by intelligent and enterprising travellers who have visited the various evangelical Mission-stations in Southern and Western Africa. It is true the bright spots on this dark continent "are few and far between." But if a part has already been enlightened and evangelized, however small a portion, why may not the whole?

And yet, strange to say, to this one-fifth part of the population of our world is applied the prophetic malediction of Noah: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." (Gen. ix. 25.) And it is inferred from this passage, that Africa is still under the ban of the Almighty; and from this supposed fact the inference has been, that Africa is the common plunder of any invader who has hardihood enough to steel his heart against every principle of justice and humanity. What an accumulation of misery and wrong has been inflicted upon that unhappy country for many generations past, in the shameful traffic in human flesh and blood! And yet there is nothing in scripture to warrant, or even to palliate, these enormous injuries perpetrated upon Africa: for, as the eloquent advocate and friend of the Negro already quoted observes, "The malediction of Noah (if we even allow it to be one, and not a simple prediction) fell not upon the Negro races; it fell chiefly on Asia, and only to a very limited extent upon Africa; it fell, as the terms of the prophecy explicitly declare, upon Canaan; that is, in scripture style, upon his descendants, the Canaanites, who were destroyed, or made subjects, by the Israelites; and perhaps upon the Carthaginians, who were subverted by the Romans. Here was its range and its limit: the curse never expanded so as to encompass a single Negro tribe." *

But, waving this somewhat controverted point, whatever may have been the intention of that passage originally, it will be sufficient for our present purpose to state, in reply, that the gospel repeals every national malediction, and addresses itself to men everywhere: "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John i. 17.) The anathemas, therefore, of former dispensations have long since been rescinded and abolished; for no nation or tribe can remain

* REV. RICHARD WATSON'S Works, vol. ii. p. 96.

accursed under the Christian economy, since Christ, "the Desire of all nations," hath appeared "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke i. 79.) "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." (John iii. 17.) It was for this very purpose that "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless" mankind, "in turning away every one from his iniquities." (Acts iii. 26.) Christianity, therefore, we repeat, turns all curses into benedictions. Its office is to bless, and to bless "all the kindreds of the earth:" it is light after darkness, health after sickness; it announces "liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" it proclaims "the acceptable year of the Lord;" (Isai. lxi. 1, 2;) and it is emphatically "good tidings of great joy to all people." (Luke ii. 10.)

Having, as I hope, satisfactorily proved that the inhabitants of the vast continent of Africa have a common origin with ourselves; that they are the descendants of Adam and Eve; and that, though morally and mentally degraded, they are nevertheless capable of improvement; that there is in the gospel a divinity and power that can and does meet their case; it follows, that Africa, as well as other nations of the earth, is destined to become subject to the dominion of the Redeemer, and to "be blessed in him whom all nations shall call blessed." For the teeming millions of Africa "God spared not his own Son;" for them Christ shed his "precious blood;" and therefore "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (1 Tim. ii. 4—6.) It was not for a few out of each quarter of the globe that the Saviour died, or for many out of all nations, or even for the greater part of the human race; but "He tasted death *for every man*." (Heb. ii. 9.) And to Africa the commission of the risen Saviour doubtless extended, when he said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark xvi. 15.) And Africa is unquestionably included in those glorious and sublime passages of holy writ which predict the universal empire of the Son of God; when "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth;" (Psalm lxxii. 8;) and shall receive "the Heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" (Psalm ii. 8;) when "the

earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" (Isai. xi. 9;) "and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd." (John x. 16.)

To these general scriptural truths we may add, that there are special and particular allusions to this part of God's creation in the sacred volume: not only as regards the past, but also with respect to the future. From sacred as well as from profane history, we know what Africa has been. But here we cannot enlarge: suffice it to say that Africa, though not the birth-place of the adorable Redeemer, was the asylum of the infant Saviour; for "the young child departed into Egypt," and there found a refuge from his blood-thirsty foes; that Africa was the cradle of the Christian church, and the repository of ancient literature; and that in that part of the globe Christianity achieved some of its proudest conquests, and secured many of the noblest testimonies to its truth and power which were ever supplied in any region where the banner of the cross has been unfurled. And we know that there was a period, and that for centuries, when Northern Africa occupied no subordinate station in ecclesiastical rank; when, from her episcopal thrones and councils, she issued her decrees in all the dignity of conscious authority, and enforced them with a power which she knew could not be disputed: twelve centuries of darkness and degradation intervene between that period and the present. But though the voice of Africa has been for centuries silent amid the Christian communities of the earth, her candlestick removed, her light extinguished, and little or nothing left of her once numerous and flourishing churches; yet she is not forgotten, much less excluded from the compassion of the Saviour; she is not doomed to outer darkness, but shall come "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." It is true "the young child" tarried in Africa but for a short period: he "was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son.'" (Hosea xi. 1; Matt. ii. 15.) But, though he was called out of Egypt, he "shall come into" it again, "and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. For they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a Great One, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of

hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." (Isai. xix. 1, 20, 21, 24, 25.)

"Africa," then, "with all thy just complaints" against thy slanderous foes and cruel oppressors, and "against the practice of Christian states, thou hast none against the doctrines of the Christian's Bible! That is not a book, as some have interpreted it, written, as to thee, 'within and without,' in 'lamentation, and mourning, and woe:' it registers against thee no curse; but, on the contrary, exhibits to thee its fulness of blessings;" and "establishes thy right to its covenant of mercy, in common with all mankind."* Nay, it foretells thy future greatness; for thy name is written there, not with a curse, but thou too "shalt know the Lord," and "the Lord of hosts shall bless" thee, "saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands." And it is further written, "Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." (Psalm lxxviii. 31.)

The conversion of Africa to God, then, is clearly predicted: not merely some parts of it, such as Egypt, Ethiopia, or Abyssinia, but the whole continent. Africa! lift up thy head: for though thou art fallen, "thy redemption draweth nigh!" The blessed Jesus gave thee honour, and bade thee hope, at the baptism of the "man of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians" by Philip the deacon, who "preached unto him Jesus:" and when he was baptized, though he "saw Philip no more," yet he "went on his way rejoicing." (Acts viii. 27, 35, 39.) And soon shall all thy peoples and nations "be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Africa, weep no more! Deeply as thou art plunged in ignorance and vice, thou art included in the purchase of redeeming mercy; and in all thy sun-burnt plains, and in all thy trackless forests, shall thy children ultimately stretch out their hands unto God! Tene-riffe, lift up thy voice from thy throne of clouds, nor let Atlas refuse an answer to the watchman's cry, and let it echo along the sides of the hills, and on the tops of the mountains, and in the dales and valleys, "The morning cometh!" Break forth into singing, ye noble rivers Senegal and Gambia, ye Niger and Nile, and let the whole continent, in its every latitude and longitude, join in the swelling, bursting chorus that shall be heard "in heaven," on earth, and in hades, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever!" (Rev. xi. 15.)

* REV. RICHARD WATSON'S WORKS, vol. ii. p. 96.

CHAPTER II.

AFRICA, AND THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE.

By whom and at what Time Africa was circumnavigated—The Discovery of America, and the Doubling of the Cape of Good Hope—Both these Events proved injurious to Africa—Origin of the African Slave-Trade—Cruelty of the Spaniards towards the Aborigines of America—Las Casas' Proposal to Cardinal Ximenes, Regent of Spain—The Emperor, Charles V., grants a Patent—Las Casas' Account of Spanish Cruelty to the native Indians—Heylin's and Dr. Robertson's Account of an Indian Nobleman—The Inconsistency of sending to Africa for a Supply of Slaves—Charles V. and Las Casas saw their Error—The Spanish Slave-Trade revived—The English engage in the Slave-Trade—Captain Hawkins—Queen Elizabeth—Contradictory Accounts of the English Slave-Trade cleared up by James Bandinel, Esq.—The English Slave-Trade continued—Thrown open by Act of Parliament—The Trade rapidly increased—The French actively engage in it—Great Britain, though not the First to embark in it, was soon Foremost—As a Nation we are verily guilty—The Voice of our Brother's Blood crieth against us from the Ground.

THE whole of Africa, except in that part where it is joined to Asia, was known to be surrounded by the sea; but of its general figure, and its extent towards the south, the ancients had no accurate knowledge. If we may credit the story of Herodotus, however, Africa was circumnavigated, instrumentally, at least, by Necho king of Egypt, upwards of two thousand years ago. For though the Egyptians themselves were not navigators, their country necessarily became the channel of a large portion of the Indian trade, as well as that of Ethiopia; and Necho, one of the most illustrious of the native kings of Egypt, who was in advance of the age in which he lived, eagerly sought the solution of the grand mystery regarding the form and termination of Africa. For this purpose he employed a number of Phenician sailors, who, proceeding down the Red Sea, entered the Indian Ocean, and made the circuit of the southern promontory, passing through the Pillars of Hercules, and ascending up the Mediterranean back to Egypt. "They related that, in the course of this very long voyage, which occupied three years, they had frequently drawn their boats on land, sown grain in a favourable place and season, waited till the crop grew and ripened under the influence of a tropical heat, then reaped it and continued their progress. They added, that, in passing the most southern coast of Africa, they were surprised by observing the sun on their right hand, that is, to the north of them; a statement which causes Herodotus himself to reject their report: and yet

this very fact affords the strongest confirmation of it to us who know that to the south of the equator this must have really taken place.”* Subsequently to this, we have another account of the circumnavigation of Africa by a private adventurer of the name of Eudoxus, a native of Cyzicus, who lived about one hundred and thirty years before Christ. This account is perhaps somewhat apocryphal, though by some it is contended that Eudoxus actually made the circuit of Africa: but, whether these statements be true or not, for the actual discovery of the southern extremity of Africa we are indebted to the Portuguese.

The fifteenth century of the Christian era was the age of maritime enterprise and inquiry. Though the science of navigation was then in its infancy, and the mariner's compass but little understood, there were not wanting a few bold spirits, who, actuated by an ardent passion for discovery, ventured to brave the terrors of the deep, far from the sight of land. In the year 1487 Bartholomew Diaz, under the patronage of John II. of Portugal, fitted out a fleet, and proceeded along the coast of Africa; and, having endured many hardships, he at length came in sight of the Cape which terminates Southern Africa. But he proceeded no farther, fancying that he had arrived at the boundary of the earth; and, being intimidated by the darkness and tempests with which he was surrounded, he returned without effecting a landing on its shores. On account of the heavy gales which he experienced, he gave it the name of *Cabo des tolos Tormentos*, or “the Cape of Storms,” which, however, was subsequently exchanged, by the king his master, for *Cabo du bonne Esperanse*, or “the Cape of Good Hope,” from the prospect or “good hope” which it afforded him of opening a maritime path to India. Thus one grand incitement to European enterprise, at that time, was the discovery of a passage by sea to the East Indies, which laid open to all nations the commerce of that country, then monopolized by the Venetians.

It was in the year 1492 that Columbus, in quest of a westerly passage to the East Indies, was unexpectedly interrupted in his course by the islands of America; and, five years afterwards, (in 1497,) another enterprising nautical spirit was found in the person of Vasco de Gama, who pursued and accomplished the same object by doubling the Cape of Good Hope; and to him belongs the honour of first setting foot on that part of the vast continent of Africa. It was in the spring of the same year that “John Cabot, the father of Sebastian Cabot, a Venetian by

* MURRAY'S “Narrative of Discovery and Adventure in Africa.” (Edinburgh.)

birth, but who resided many years in Bristol, was sent by the king of England, Henry VII., on an expedition of discovery in the same direction; the main object being to find a north-west passage to the Indies. He steered directly west, and arrived in June at a large island, which he called *Prima Vista*, but which has since become well known under the familiar name of Newfoundland. Upon the discoveries made in this voyage the English founded their claim to the eastern portion of North America.*

But the treasures of the East were still the objects of pursuit to the Portuguese and other nations; and therefore each of these events, the two former especially, (the discovery of America by Columbus, and the doubling of the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama,) operated greatly to the disadvantage of Africa. For the coast of that continent, after having served as a clue to conduct navigators to India, was itself comparatively neglected, not on account of any natural inferiority in its soil, climate, or productions, but because the Africans, not having advanced so far in the arts as the East Indians, nor having then discovered such quantities of the precious metals as the Americans, could not immediately supply the European demand for those desirable productions which the commerce of the East and West afforded. Thus Asia and America became the principal theatres of the ambition and cupidity of Europeans; and happy had it been for Africa if they had so continued. It is distressing to record the rapid progress of European iniquity among the simple and untutored nations inhabiting the other quarters of the world. Its operation in America was deplorably injurious to Africa; for it was soon found, that the aborigines of the Western world could not endure the toils imposed on them by their new masters. "Hence arose the *apparent*, or rather *pretended*, necessity of resorting to Africa for a supply of labourers in the form of slaves; and here commenced the Slave-Trade,† that

* CONDER'S "Modern Traveller," vol. xxii. p. 73.

† This, we say, was the commencement or origin of the African Slave-Trade, but not of Slavery itself; for that, in one form or other, had existed in the world from the most remote period of history. It was tolerated among the patriarchs, and recognised among the Jews. It also existed among the ancient Pagan nations, —the Egyptians, Phenicians, and Greeks; and, eighteen centuries ago, when Britain was a distant colony of Rome, the unfortunate inhabitants of our own island were torn from their homes, and toiled for a Roman master, along with the dark-skinned and more pliant natives of Ethiopia. Long before the first voyage of the enterprising Columbus, the celebrated Portuguese navigator Anthony Gonzales, of whom more will be said anon, in exploring the coast of Africa, had, in 1434, seized

scourge of the human race which has kept down a great part of the Africans in a state of anarchy and blood, and which, while its nefarious existence is tolerated, will prove the grand obstacle to their improvement and civilization.”*

It was not, however, till the beginning of the sixteenth century that the Slave-Trade assumed a regular form. “So early as the year 1503, a few slaves had been sent from the Portuguese settlements in Africa into the Spanish colonies in America.”† But still the native Indians sank under the harassing tasks assigned to them by their masters, which were so overwhelming, that the extinction of the whole race seemed inevitable; for “the natives of Hispaniola alone were reduced, in the short space of fifteen years, from at least one million to about sixty thousand souls.”‡ In 1511, Ferdinand V., king of Spain, permitted them to be carried in great numbers; and, after Ferdinand’s death, and during the minority of Charles V., Las Casas, bishop of Chiapa, styled the Protector of the Indians, proposed to Cardinal Ximenes, then regent, to establish a regular system of importing Negro slaves from Africa into Hispaniola to work the mines of the island. The bishop urged the cardinal to adopt this measure upon the ground of humanity to the natives of Hispaniola. But this enlightened statesman dismissed the plan altogether, declaring it to be, in his opinion, unlawful to consign innocent people to slavery at all, and wholly inconsistent with humanity to deliver the inhabitants of one country from a state of misery, by consigning to that state the inhabitants of another country. “The cardinal, however, in rejecting the scheme of Las Casas, was not inattentive to the miseries suffered by the Indians. He gave directions that strict inquiry should be made into their state, and stringent regulations adopted for securing their kind treatment; but his views as to the African Slave-Trade, and his wishes as to the Indians, were alike disregarded.”

Charles V. soon afterwards assumed the reins of empire; and representations were made to him of the diminution of the Indians in the several islands settled by the Spaniards, and of

a number of Negroes, whom he carried to the south of Spain; and from that time it became customary for the captains of vessels who landed on the Gold-Coast, or other parts of the coast of Guinea, to carry away a few young Negroes of both sexes; and thus the practice soon grew into a traffic.

* C. B. WADSTROM’S “Essay on the Colonization of Western Africa,” p. 4. (1794.)

† CLARKSON’S “History of the Slave-Trade,” p. 48.

‡ ROBERTSON’S “History of America,” p. 60.

the superior patience and hardihood of the Africans; and he was urged to permit a further importation of the latter into the islands, *porque era mas util el trabajo de un Negro que de quatro Indios*: "because the work of one Negro was more than equal to that of four Indians." * In 1517 he "granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, containing an exclusive right of importing four thousand Africans into America;" and the islands of Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto-Rico received at that time the annual supply of four thousand Africans to work their mines and cultivate their lands. The conduct of the Spaniards towards the aborigines of the New World appears to have been, about this time, almost without a parallel, even in the history of the Slave-Trade itself; and it has been well observed, that "although the suggestion of Las Casas is not justifiable, yet his pity for the Indians is not to be wondered at, when the horrors he witnessed are considered. 'The whole story of mankind,' says Edwards, (vol. i. p. 104,) 'affords no scene of barbarity equal to that of the cruelties exercised by the Spaniards on the unoffending natives of the Leeward Islands.' The Spaniards distributed them into lots, and compelled them to dig in the mines without intermission till death put an end to their sufferings. Such as attempted resistance or escape were hunted down with dogs, which were fed on their flesh. Some Spaniards called-in religion to sanctify their cruelty; forced their captives into the water, and, after baptizing them, cut their throats to prevent their apostasy." †

Las Casas mentions, himself, the following story: "I once beheld," says he, "four or five principal Indians roasted at a slow fire; and as the victims poured forth screams which disturbed the commanding officer in his slumbers, he sent word they should be strangled. But the officer on guard (I know his name, and I know his relations in Seville) would not suffer it; but, causing their mouths to be gagged, that their cries might not be heard, he stirred up the fire with his own hand, and roasted them till they all expired: I saw it myself." ‡ Dr. Peter Heylin, in his "History of the whole World," who wrote about eighty years after Las Casas, after speaking of the probable origin or peopling of America, says, "But from what root soever they did first descend, certain it is that they had settled here many ages since, and overspread all the parts

* BANDINEL, "Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," p. 29.

† *Idem*, *ibid*.

‡ EDWARDS'S "History of the British West Indies," vol. i. p. 111. From LAS CASAS, *Ant.* 1579.

and quarters of this spacious continent : there being no place which the Spaniards, or any other adventurers, found desolate, or waste, and without inhabitants. But their numbers are much diminished since these late discoveries ; the Spaniards behaving themselves most inhumanly towards this unarmed and naked people ; killing them up like sheep appointed to the slaughter, or otherwise consuming them in their mines and works of drudgery. And had not Charles V. ordained, with most Christian prudence, that the natives should not be compelled to work in the mines against their will, but that the Spaniards should provide themselves of slaves elsewhere, the natives in a little longer time had been quite exterminated, to the great reproach of Christianity and the gospel. For so exceeding barbarous and bloody were they at their first coming thither, that Haithney, a nobleman amongst them, being persuaded to embrace the Christian faith, demanded, first, what he should get by being of that religion ; and was answered, that he should get heaven, and the joys thereof : then would he know, what place was destinate to such as died unbaptized ; and was answered, that they went to hell, and the torments of it : finally, asking unto which of these two places the Spaniards went, and being told they went to heaven, he renounced his baptism, protesting that he would rather go to hell with the unbaptized, *than to live in heaven with so cruel a people.*" *

The "nobleman," or chief, here referred to, must have been very imperfectly acquainted with the principles of our holy religion, even in its theory ; nor could he have formed any just conception of the miseries of that place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ;" or he would not have expressed himself as he did, when he said, "he would rather go to hell with the unbaptized, than to live in heaven with so cruel a people : " but it shows the man's strong feeling of indignation at the oppressive and barbarous conduct of the Spaniards ; and so far as the Slave-Trade is concerned, and in protesting against its iniquitous and diabolical traffic, it reflects no discredit either on his head or his heart. This strong feeling he entertained against the Spanish nation up to his death ; for on the conquest of Cuba in 1511, under the command of Diego Velasquez, "the only obstruction the Spaniards met with was from Hatuey, a cazique, who had fled from Hispaniola, and had taken possession of the eastern extremity of Cuba. He stood upon the defensive at their first landing, and endeavoured to drive them

* HEYLIN'S "Cosmographie, and History of the whole World," p. 1017. (1657.)

back to their ships. His feeble troops, however, were soon broken and dispersed; and he himself being taken prisoner, Velasquez, according to the barbarous maxim of the Spaniards, considered him as a slave who had taken arms against his master, and condemned him to the flames. When Hatuey was fastened to the stake, a Franciscan friar, labouring to convert him, promised him immediately admittance into the joys of heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith. 'Are there any Spaniards,' says he, after some pause, 'in that region of bliss which you describe?' 'Yes,' replied the monk; 'but only such as are worthy and good.' 'The best of them,' returned the indignant cazique, 'have neither worth nor goodness: I will not go to a place where I may meet with one of that accursed race.' " *

But to return to the importation of Africans into the American islands: as they were found to be a more docile and hardier race than the Indians, so they were worked accordingly; and we shall be at a loss to find the principle of humanity either in the one case or the other. The island of Margarita was discovered in the third voyage of Columbus, in 1498; and it grew rapidly into importance "by reason of the rich pearl fishing which they found on the shores thereof. But the Spaniards either could not, or would not, compel the natives to dive into the sea for pearl; but bought Negro slaves from Guinea, and the coast of Africa, whom they enforced with great torments to dive unto the bottom of the sea, many times seven or eight fathoms deep, to bring up the shells in which that treasure was included: where many of them were drowned, and some maimed with sharks and other fishes." † The natives of Western Africa, therefore, who were forcibly shipped and sent to the Spanish colonies in America, under the soft name of "Negro labourers," were compelled to dig in the mines, dive into the sea, or cultivate the land, namely, the sugar plantations. Now, whether the sugar-cane be indigenous to the West Indies, is doubtful; but it is certain that it grows spontaneously in Africa; and therefore, to take no higher ground, it was surely a preposterous thing to drag the Africans across the Atlantic to the West Indies, there to drudge and toil amidst whips and chains, in cultivating a commodity which, had they been prudently and humanely dealt with, they might have been induced to raise as an article of commerce upon their own soil, and that much

* ROBERTSON'S "History of America," vol. i. p. 60. From LAS CASAS, p. 40.

† HEYLIN'S "Cosmographie," p. 1090.

nearer to the European markets than the nearest of the West-Indian islands. We cannot, therefore, join with the historian previously quoted, in commending the "Christian prudence" of the sovereign of Spain, in compelling his subjects in America to "provide themselves of slaves elsewhere," much as we may admire him for interposing on behalf of the aborigines of the New World in protecting them "from working in the mines against their will." There is a difficulty, also, in reconciling the proposal of Las Casas, with the humane and charitable spirit of that excellent man; but "the fault was in the head, not in the upright heart;" and it is some relief to know that the Spanish philanthropist at length saw his error and confessed it, as appears from the following quotation: "It was proposed by Las Casas to relieve the natives by sending out Castilian labourers, and by importing Negro slaves into the islands. This last proposition has brought heavy obloquy on the head of its author, who has been freely accused of having thus introduced Negro Slavery into the New World. Others, with equal groundlessness, have attempted to vindicate his memory from the reproach of having recommended the measure at all. Unfortunately for the latter assertion," but opportunely for the full vindication of his purity of intention, "Las Casas, in his '*History of the Indies*,' confesses, with deep regret and humiliation, his advice on this occasion, founded on the most erroneous views, as he frankly states; since, to use his own words, '*the same law applies equally to the Negro as to the Indian.*' But so far from having introduced Slavery by this measure into the islands, the importation of Blacks there dates from the beginning of the century. It was recommended by some persons in the colony, as the means of diminishing the amount of human suffering; since the African was more fitted by his constitution to endure the climate and the severe toil imposed on the slave, than the effeminate islanders. It was a suggestion of humanity, however mistaken; and, considering the circumstances under which it occurred, and the age, it may well be forgiven in Las Casas, especially taking into view, that, as he became more enlightened himself, he was so ready to testify his regret at having unadvisedly countenanced the measure."*

Charles V. also "lived long enough to repent of what he had inconsiderately done" by the patent he had granted in 1517; for, "in the year 1542, he made a code of laws for the better protection of the unfortunate Indians in his foreign dominions,

* PRESCOTT'S "*History of the Conquest of Mexico.*"

and he stopped the progress of African Slavery by an order that all slaves in his American islands should be made free," thus showing that he was a friend both to the Indians and to the Africans, as a part of the human race : manumission took place as well in Hispaniola as on the Continent. Shortly afterwards, however, Charles abdicated the throne ; and on Philip assuming the reins of government, the order was reversed ; Slavery was revived in America ; and the importation of slaves from Africa was again permitted.* Not only so, but they were imported in such quantities, that there was soon a Negro for every Spaniard in the colonies ; and in whatever new direction the Spaniards advanced in their career of conquest, Negroes went along with them, not willingly, but of necessity. But though they bore, with tolerable patience and fortitude, the hardships connected with their new situation, we have instances recorded, even of an early date, when they attempted to rescue themselves from servitude, and thus become their own masters ; but they were generally severely chastised for their temerity, or cruelly put to death.

The precise time when the English Slave-Trade commenced is not known ; but the first importation of slaves from Africa by our own countrymen, of which we have any authentic record, was in the reign of Elizabeth, in the year 1562 : this was by a Captain (afterwards Sir John) Hawkins, who, having received information that Negroes were very good merchandise in Hispaniola, and that slaves or Negroes might easily be had on the coast of Guinea, fitted out three ships, sailed to Guinea, obtained three hundred Negroes, carried them to Hispaniola, sold them, and returned to England with the produce. Queen Elizabeth is reported to have sent for him on his return from this voyage, to have expressed her concern at the undertaking, and to have told him that "if any Africans should be carried away without their free consent, it would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertaking." Captain Hawkins promised to comply with the injunctions of Elizabeth in this respect ; but he did not keep his word ; for, being a species of freebooter, he persisted in his lawless enterprises ; and, in two years after, he made another voyage, when he seized many of the inhabitants, and carried them off as slaves, which occasioned Hill, in his "Naval History," in the account he gives of this second voyage, to use these remarkable words : "Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into

* CLARKESON'S "History of the Slave-Trade," p. 50.

slavery, an injustice and barbarity which, so sure as there is vengeance in heaven for the worst of crimes, will some time be the destruction of all who allow or encourage it." In 1568 Hawkins made his third and last piratical and kidnapping voyage to Africa; and the remarkable words of Hill just quoted, and the fate which Elizabeth had predicted, fell upon him; for this last voyage terminated miserably.* Surprise has been expressed by some writers, "that such a trade should have been suffered to continue under a queen who had so solemnly and properly expressed her abhorrence of its injustice and cruelty; but this is attributed to the pains taken, by those interested, to keep her in ignorance of the truth:" whilst some affirm that "the first recognition of the trade by the English government was in 1562—3, in the reign of Elizabeth, when an Act was passed legalizing the purchase of Negroes; yet, as the earlier attempts made by the English to plant colonies in North America were unsuccessful, there did not, for some time after the passing of this Act, exist any demand for Negroes sufficient to induce the owners of English trading-vessels visiting the coast of Africa to make Negroes a part of their cargo."

There appears to be some discrepancy in these two statements. How an Act could be passed "legalizing the purchase of Negroes," and Queen Elizabeth "kept ignorant of the truth," is difficult to solve. But this little mist is dispersed in a work of great merit by James Bandinel, Esq., a gentleman long employed in the Foreign Office, and who, from his official connexion with the Government, is well qualified to give to the public an authentic and correct record of its transactions. The work alluded to is entitled, "Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," and was published in 1842. It is inscribed to the Earl of Aberdeen, at that time Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and was placed at the disposal of Government. Mr. Bandinel states, that, in 1585, (not in 1562,) Elizabeth granted to Lords Leicester and Warwick a patent to trade to Barbary for a period of twelve years; and in three years afterwards (1588) she granted another patent to a company to trade to the Senegal and Gambia for the space of ten years. Many authors insinuate, that by this patent she virtually gave permission to trade in slaves; whilst some affirm, that no voyage was actually undertaken under the patent which she granted. Mr. Bandinel observes: "Those writers, however,

* CLARKSON'S "History of the Slave-Trade," p. 52; "Parliamentary Debates," p. 212. (1806.) See also BANDINEL'S "Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," pp. 36, 37.

appear to have been mistaken in both points; for I find in Hakluyt and in Astell a mention of three voyages undertaken under this patent: one in 1589; a second in 1590, by Thomas Dassell and others; and a third in 1591, by R. Rainolds and Dassell; and this last voyage is specially declared to have been undertaken in virtue of Her Majesty's most gracious patent given in the year 1588. The account of it, though short, is very precise: the several places visited, and the trade at each of the places resorted to, are particularized: hides, gums, ivory, grains, ambergris, rice, ostrich-feathers, and some gold. But Negroes are not mentioned; so that I see no ground for supposing that, excepting Hawkins, any Englishman had, as yet, mixed himself up with the African Slave-Trade."* Mr. Bandinel adds in a note, from Hakluyt, vol. ii. p. 610, "Hakluyt considers this patent to be of sufficient importance to give it *in extenso*. No mention in it is made of a trade in slaves." In 1631, Charles I. granted a charter to Sir B. Young, Sir K. Digby, and others, for trade to Africa. "This was the second British chartered company for trading to Africa; and Edwards says, that the merchants under that charter supplied the British settlements in the West Indies with Negroes for working the estates. "This," observes Mr. Bandinel, "is the first record I find of the English embarking in undertakings for the African Slave-Trade since the solitary instance of Hawkins."†

But, detestable as every pure mind must perceive it to be, the trade in slaves was so lucrative, and so gratifying to the lust of gold, that it blinded the mind to all its horrors, and so blunted the feelings of Europeans to all sense of justice, that it is not improbable that some of our own countrymen engaged in trade, vigilant and calculating as they are, had, previous to this, embarked in the traffic. One instance we have upon record, (in addition to that of Captain Hawkins,) which has escaped, it is presumed, the notice of Mr. Bandinel. This was on the island of Margarita, at one time so famous for its pearls, but since of less note. This island was visited "in the year 1601, by the English under Captain Parker, who received here £500 in pearls for the ransom of prisoners; and took a ship which came from the coast of Angola, laden with three hundred and seventy Negroes, to be sold for slaves."‡ This was about forty years after Hawkins had first disgraced the British nation and

* BANDINEL'S "Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," pp. 38, 39.

† *Idem*, p. 44. From ANDERSON, vol. ii. p. 42.

‡ HEYLIN'S "Cosmographie," p. 1090.

name. But, according to Mr. Bandinel's statement, the chartered company of 1631 did not actually embark in this trade till ten years after the charter had been granted, which would make about other forty years subsequent to Captain Parker's visit to Margarita. It was "in 1641 the industrious planters in Barbadoes procured some sugar-canes from Pernambuco in Brazil. This was the first of our colonies which fell into sugar-plantations; and as it was impossible to manage the planting of that commodity by white people in so hot a climate, so neither could a sufficient number of such be had at any rate. Necessity, therefore, and the example of Portugal, gave birth to the Negro Slave-Trade from the coast of Guinea." * "This seems to mark the time, when the English began to embark in undertakings for importing slaves from Africa; but it does not appear that they yet entered into what was called the 'carrying trade' for other nations. They contented themselves with supplying to the British settlements already mentioned (Bermuda, Antigua, Montserrat, &c.) the few slaves which they wanted." † This, therefore, clears up the contradictory statements of previous writers, so far as the British Government is concerned, up to that period.

But though Great Britain did not take the lead in commencing the Slave-Trade, yet, as her settlements were forming in the West-India islands, and the shameful traffic in human beings having once begun, it proceeded and gathered strength from day to day: every where the colonists commenced plantations, and these colonies were stocked with slaves. Sanctioned by Charles I. and Charles II., and by succeeding monarchs, this new species of commerce rapidly increased. In the year 1662 a third chartered company was formed, entitled, "The Company of Royal Adventurers of England, trading to Africa." That company undertook to supply the British West-India colonies with three thousand slaves annually; but they soon amounted to about four thousand five hundred, and in a few years afterwards to treble that number; so that the island of Jamaica, which was added to the British crown in 1655, and which contained at that period only about fifteen hundred Whites, and about an equal number of Negroes, had so greatly increased, that, in 1673, there were 7,768 Whites and 9,504 Negroes on the island; and Barbadoes, about the same time, had 50,000 Whites, and 100,000 Negroes. ‡

* BANDINEL'S "Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," p. 47. From ANDERSON, vol. ii. p. 72.

† *Idem*, p. 48.

‡ *Idem*, p. 53.

But "in 1697 the trade was thrown open by Act of Parliament," and the statute-book of Britain was stained with the foul blot of thus officially and publicly recognising this inhuman traffic; the consequence was, that at this period about 25,000 Negroes were landed in the British colonies annually, partly by the Royal African Company, and partly by British traders; yet, after the passing of this Act, "the annual exportation was at once nearly doubled. In 1712 the number of British ships engaged in the Slave-Trade was thirty-three; but so rapidly did the trade increase in the succeeding thirteen years, that in 1725 the number of ships had risen to two hundred." * "Macpherson, in his 'History of Commerce,' states that the number of Africans shipped in 1768, by all nations, for America and the West Indies, was estimated at 97,000; that of these the British shipping took 60,000, and the French 23,000; the remainder being divided in small portions among the shipping of other nations; the Portuguese at that time only taking 1,700." † But the French soon after this were found to be more energetic in this trade. "The average export of France from Africa for 1786, 1787, and 1788, is given by Arnould (*Balance de Commerce*, part ii. § 3) at 30,000; and this statement is confirmed by the official returns, which make the importation for the year 1787, 30,839, and for 1788, 29,506. Thus, in the five years immediately preceding the revolution, about 150,000 Negroes had been imported into the island of St. Domingo, of whom, if the usual proportions were preserved, near two-thirds must have been male adults. Can we wonder at the scenes which have since passed there, when we combine with this circumstance the absurd, perfidious, and cruel proceedings of the French Government towards the colonies, and the manner in which it has uniformly sported with the hopes and fears of the Negro race?" ‡ It appears from Mr. Bandinel's statistics on the European Slave-Trade, that about the middle of the last century, there were in the European settlements in America, and in the British possessions in the West Indies, 777,736 Negro slaves, nearly one half of whom belonged to Britain; and that "list does not include the Danish, Swedish, and Dutch possessions in the West Indies; nor the English, French, or Dutch possessions in Guyana; nor the Spanish possessions on the mainland of America, and in Cuba and Porto Rico; nor the Portu-

* "Parliamentary Debates," p. 199. (1806.)

† BANDINEL'S "Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," p. 63.

‡ "Parliamentary Debates," p. 197. (1806.)

guese possessions in Brazil and elsewhere."* At this period Jamaica contained 90,000; but from 1700 to 1786 the number of slaves imported by Britons into that one island was computed at 610,000; and in little more than a single century, from the year 1680 to 1786, 2,130,000 Negroes were imported into the British West Indies alone!

Great Britain, then, has nothing to boast in the simple fact, that the guilt of originating this horrible system does not belong to her; for she was not far behind in the start; and having once followed the example of other nations, and embarked in it, she threw into it her accustomed energy, and soon outstripped all the rest. The language of the sons of Jacob, therefore, when they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear," is but too applicable to us as a nation. "*We are verily guilty,*" recklessly guilty, ten-fold more guilty, concerning our African brother, than any other nation, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us to come to his rescue, and we would not hear. It was not because we did not hear, or that we could not feel for him. It was because we would not hear. Humanity gave way to avarice, justice to oppression; and a power that ought and might have been exerted in protecting the Africans, and in punishing the man-stealer, was, alas! more energetically employed than any other state in robbing Africa of her children, to increase her own comfort and private wealth, and thus add to her public revenues.

I repeat, *we are verily guilty*; guilty in proportion to our station in the scale of nations; *more* guilty, because mentally, morally, and physically superior to the puny, popish, and half-civilized countries which had originated this monstrous evil. We are verily guilty, "in that we *saw* the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." Yes; "when he besought us;" for as this language is not metaphorical, but was doubtless literally true in reference to Joseph's captivity, so has this petition been presented, with uplifted hands, with imploring looks and gestures, by many a poor Negro: he has "besought us," with streaming eyes and pathetic appeals; appeals which would have melted into pity any heart save that of the slave-dealer, who goes out sometimes singly, and, when a convenient opportunity presents itself, he then, tiger-like, springs upon his prey, drags his victim into the thicket, and in the

* BANDINEL'S "Some Account of the Trade in Slaves from Africa," pp. 64—66.

night carries him off a slave. And this has been the case not merely with here and there an individual, or now and then a family; but whole villages have been depopulated; and cargo after cargo of the defenceless, innocent Negroes have we as a nation carried away from their native land. And year after year, and generation after generation, have British ships, and British capital, and British subjects been engaged in trading with the flesh and blood, the bones and muscles, of their fellow-creatures!

Surely, "the voice of our brother's blood crieth" against us "from the ground." Yes, the sands of Africa, saturated with the life's blood of tens of thousands who have been slain in the seizure, cry against us from the ground; the deserts and the trackless forests, strewed with the skulls and bones of the thousands who have sickened and died in the march to the coast, cry against us from the ground; the prison-houses and slave-barracoons planted along the skirts of the coast on the borders of the Atlantic, crammed with hundreds of Negroes who have survived the deadly march, promiscuously thrown together with shackles on their legs, half perished with hunger,—these cry against us from the ground. And, now that the black hull of the rakish vessel is approaching the coast, and these prisoners are liberated,—liberated only to be the more closely packed on board the slaver,—O, what bitter lamentations, what multitude of voices, cry against us from the ground! The wind and the waves, the mighty surge on the beach,—these join in the melancholy chorus; and the scores of Negroes who are often swamped and drowned on their passage to the slave-ships, and whose bodies are washed ashore by the swelling tide,—these, once more, cry against us from the ground. But the bitter cries that are heard on board those floating tombs of gasping humanity on the mighty deep, by the hundreds who are stowed below the decks, and the sum total of misery endured by those who live to reach the opposite continent, are known only to God himself!

CHAPTER III.

THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE.

THE Existence of the Slave-Trade to be deeply regretted—The Attention of some eminent Men directed to its Abolition—High Tribute to Granville Sharp—Negro Slaves coming to England—Famous Case of SOMERSET, in 1772—Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce—The Society of Friends—Writers in Favour of Abolition—Godwyn—Baxter—Whitefield—John Wesley—Ramsey—First Petition sent to Parliament—Small Committee of Quakers—The Inhabitants of Bridgewater petition Parliament—Clarkson's "Essay on the Slave-Trade"—Importance of its Publication—Clarkson devotes his Life to the Cause—A Society organized and Committee formed—Magnitude of the Object—The Subject introduced into Parliament—Opposition to the Measure—The Friends of Abolition persevere—Debates in Parliament—Memorable Session of 1807—The Slave-Trade abolished by the British Parliament.

A REVIEW of the origin, progress, and frightful extent of the African Slave-Trade, with the dreadful evils and miseries connected with it, cannot but awaken, in the mind of every lover of his species, surprise and deep regret that the statute-book of Great Britain should ever have been tarnished with so foul a stain. That such a crime should have been allowed to continue so long without bringing down upon us some heavy national judgment from Heaven, can only be attributed to the long-suffering and abundant goodness of Him who is "slow to anger," and who "delighteth in mercy." But, "after this scourge had been permitted to desolate Africa and to disgrace mankind for two centuries and a half, the attention of men was at length directed to it by some eminent philanthropists of this country. Among these, a high place must be assigned to Granville Sharp, than whom a purer spirit never resided in the human form.....The wholesale violation of all human rights, and flagrant wreck of all Christian duties, with which the Slave-Trade and West Indian Slavery had so long outraged and insulted the world, early attracted his regard; and he persevered in trying the legal question, at first held to be desperate,—How far a slave, coming to this country under the power of his master, continues subject to that authority, or gains his personal liberty in common with the other subjects of the realm. Although not bred to the legal profession, he devoted himself to the study of the law, for the purpose of prosecuting this contention; he enlightened lawyers with the result of his

researches; he overpowered opposition by the force and the closeness of his reasonings; he disarmed all personal opposition by the unruffled serenity of his temper, the unequalled suavity of his simple yet frank and honest manners; he gave his fortune as well as his toil to the cause; and he ceased not until he obtained the celebrated judgment of the King's Bench, so honourable to the law and constitution of this country,—that a slave cannot touch our soil, but immediately his chains fall away.”*

Of “the celebrated judgment of the King's Bench,” to which allusion has been made, and which took place in 1772, the following was the origin:—It had been a common practice with planters, merchants, and others, residing in the West Indies, even before the year 1700, when they occasionally came to England, to bring with them Negro slaves to act as servants during their stay. It was perfectly natural that persons thus circumstanced should compare their own condition of slavery and hardship with the freedom and comfort enjoyed by servants in England; and that, considering what would be their own hard fate on their return to the islands, they should frequently abscond from their masters. By the slaveholders it was contended that the Negroes were as much their slaves when on British ground as when in the colonies; and therefore the masters, by advertisement and otherwise, made search for them, and often had them seized and carried away by force. The London papers not only contained descriptions of the persons of the runaways, and stated the rewards offered for their apprehension, but sometimes inserted advertisements of auctions at which slaves who had *not* absconded were to be sold, either by themselves, or in the same lot with horses, carriages, and harness, or any other stock of the proprietor. An announcement of this kind was published in the “Gazetteer,” April 18th, 1769, and reads as follows:—“At the Bull and Gate Inn, Holborn, a Chestnut Gelding, a Tim Whisky, *and a well-made, good-tempered Black Boy.*” And on November 28th of the same year, an advertisement appeared in the “Public Advertiser” to this effect: “To be sold, a Black Girl, the property of J. B——, eleven years of age; who is extremely handy, works at her needle tolerably, and speaks English perfectly well; is of an excellent temper, and willing disposition. Inquire of Mr. Owen, at the Angel Inn, behind St. Clement's Church, in the Strand.”†

* “Speeches of Henry Lord Brougham,” vol. ii.

† “Memoirs of Granville Sharp,” vol. i. pp. 8, 75.

Thus was England for a time disgraced, as the seat both of Slavery and the Slave-Trade. "The slaves could be sold, with all their good qualities particularized; and those who had absconded were seized by their masters, or by men employed by them, in the very streets, and dragged from thence to the ships: and so unprotected were these poor slaves, that people in nowise connected 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."* What a palpable contradiction was this to the bold assertion of the advocates of Slavery,—that Negroes were *not* kidnapped in Africa,—when the thing was actually done in the streets of London! But matters of this kind were not allowed to continue with impunity; and Granville Sharp was one of the first, most active, and energetic agents in putting a stop to such disgraceful proceedings.

In the year 1765, an African slave, named Jonathan Strong, was brought from Barbadoes by his master, who, while in England, treated him very cruelly, particularly by beating him on the head with a pistol, which occasioned it to swell, and afterwards produced a disorder in the eyes, which threatened the loss of his sight. To this an ague and fever succeeded, and a lameness in both his legs. In this deplorable condition he was turned adrift by his master, and left to go whither he pleased. He was happily directed to Mr. Granville Sharp's brother,—a surgeon, whose kindness and humanity led him to devote a portion of his time to healing the diseases of the poor. Here it was that Granville Sharp met with him, who, pitying his hard case, supplied him with money, and afterwards got him a situation in the family of an apothecary, to carry out medicine. When Strong had become healthy and robust in his appearance, his master (Mr. David Lisle, a lawyer) happened to see him engaged in this new employment; and immediately formed the design of repossessing himself of him. Having found out Strong's residence, he employed two persons to kidnap him. This was managed by sending for him to a public-house in Fenchurch-street, and there seizing him. By these men he was conveyed without a warrant to the Poultry Compter, where he was sold by his master to John Kerr, for thirty pounds. In his distress, Strong sent to Mr. Sharp, who immediately went to see the prisoner, but was refused access to him. He, however, insisted on being admitted to him, and charged the keeper

* CLARKE'S "History of the Slave-Trade," p. 65.

of the prison at his peril to deliver him up, until he had been carried before a magistrate. Mr. Sharp then waited upon Sir Robert Kite, the lord mayor, and obtained from him an appointment to hear the case. At the time assigned, Mr. Sharp attended, as did also a notary public, and the captain of a ship which was to have conveyed Strong to Jamaica. After a long discussion, the lord mayor discharged Strong, as he had been taken up without a warrant. But no sooner was the poor African thus discharged, than the captain took hold of him, and said aloud, "Then I now seize him as my slave." On this, Mr. Sharp promptly laid his hand on the shoulder of the captain, and said to him, "I charge you, in the name of the king, with an assault upon the person of Jonathan Strong; and all these are my witnesses." At this charge, made in the presence of the lord mayor and others, the captain was greatly intimidated, and, fearing a prosecution, let go his prisoner, who departed under the protection of Mr. Sharp.*

But though the injured Africans, whose causes had been tried, escaped slavery; and though many who had been forcibly conveyed into dungeons and on ship-board, ready to be transported into the colonies, had been delivered from their captivity through the indefatigable exertions of Mr. Sharp; he was not yet satisfied. The issue had not hitherto been put on the broad ground, "Whether an African slave coming into England became free." This was the question which he wished to see determined; and he resolved to have it fairly settled at the first opportunity that offered. A case exactly in point soon occurred. A Negro, named JAMES SOMERSET, was brought to England by his master in 1769, who intended after a time to take him back: but, before their departure, Somerset, anxious to avoid another exposure to the evils of Slavery, absconded. A strict search was made for him, and he was taken and forcibly conveyed on board ship. The circumstance was brought under the notice of Mr. Sharp, who immediately commenced legal proceedings upon it; and as the master defended his right to the Negro, it was brought to a trial, and was argued at three different sittings, in January, February, and May, 1772. The ablest counsellors were employed on both sides, and the opinion of the judges was taken on the point. The memorable result was a glorious triumph for the cause of humanity. It was declared, that as soon as the Negro set his foot on British ground, he was free.

In allusion to this decision Cowper wrote his beautiful lines:—

* CLARKSON'S "History of the Slave-Trade," pp. 66, 67.

“Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs
 Imbibe 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 on, then,
 And let it circulate through every vein
 Of all your empire: that where Britain’s power
 Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.”

“Thus ended,” says Mr. Clarkson, “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, ought always to be remembered with gratitude by the friends of this great cause.” But chiefly to Granville Sharp, under Divine Providence, are we to give the praise, as being the man “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. To him we owe it, that we no longer see our public papers polluted by 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.”†

This benevolent and distinguished individual stopped not here, but continued to be a zealous and useful coadjutor,

* This execrable practice was not, however, wholly abolished at once. For several years afterwards, rebels against humanity were still to be found. The following advertisement was sent to Mr. Sharp in 1782, copied from a Liverpool newspaper: —“Liverpool, Oct. 15th, 1779. To be sold by auction, at George Dunbar’s office, on Thursday next, the 21st inst., at one o’clock, a *Black Boy*, about fourteen years old, and a large *Mountain Tiger-Cat*.” —“Memoirs of Granville Sharp,” vol. i. p. 140.

† CLARKSON’S “History of the Slave-Trade,” pp. 71, 72.

through the long period of his after-life, in all that related to the extinction of the African traffic and the Slavery of the colonies. He was soon after followed in his bright course by Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. Of the former "it has been justly said,—nor can higher praise be earned by man,—that to the great and good qualities of Las Casas,—his benevolence, his unwearied perseverance, his inflexible determination of purpose, piety which would honour a saint, courage which would accomplish a martyr,—he added the sound judgment and strict sense of justice which were wanting in the otherwise perfect character of the Spanish philanthropist." And of Mr. Wilberforce it has been observed, with equal truth, that "few persons have ever either reached a higher or more enviable place in the esteem of their fellow-creatures, or have better deserved the place they had gained, than William Wilberforce. He was naturally a person of great quickness and even subtilty of mind, with a lively imagination, approaching to playfulness of fancy. And hence he had wit in an immeasurable abundance, and in all its varieties; for he was endowed with an exquisite sense of the ludicrous in character,—the foundation of humour,—as well as the perception of remote resemblances,—the essence of wit. These qualities, however, he had so far disciplined his faculties as to keep in habitual restraint, lest he should ever offend against strict decorum, by introducing light matter into serious discussion, or be betrayed into personal remarks too poignant for the feelings of individuals. For his nature was mild and amiable, beyond that of most men; fearful of giving the least pain in any quarter, even while heated with the zeal of controversy on questions that roused all his passions; and more anxious, if it were possible, to gain over, rather than to overpower, an adversary; disarming him by kindness, or the force of reason, or awakening appeals to his feelings, rather than defeating him by hostile attack.

"His eloquence was of the highest order. It was persuasive and pathetic in an eminent degree; but it was occasionally bold and impassioned, animated with the inspiration which deep feeling alone can breathe into spoken thought, chastened by a pure taste, varied by extensive information, enriched by classical allusion, sometimes elevated by the more sublime topics of holy writ,—the thoughts

'That wrapt Isaiah's hallow'd soul in fire.'

"Few passages can be cited in the oratory of modern times of a more electrical effect than the singularly felicitous and striking

allusion to Mr. Pitt's resisting the torrent of Jacobin principles : 'He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague was stayed.'... Wherefore, when he stood forward as the leader of the Abolition, vowed implacable war against Slavery and the Slave-Trade, and consecrated his life to the accomplishment of its destruction, there was every advantage conferred upon this great cause."*

But without detracting one iota from the well-earned fame of the three illustrious individuals already mentioned, who may be regarded as the leading stars in this moral hemisphere, whose brilliancy and usefulness to mankind death itself could not extinguish; for, though dead, they are yet speaking by their writings;—yet justice to other friends of Africa and the Abolition cause, who had previously exerted themselves on behalf of the oppressed Negroes, demands here a passing notice of their efforts.

It cannot be denied, then, that in a collective capacity the Society of Friends have the fairest claim to be considered, if not the originators, yet among the earliest, the warmest, and the most persevering supporters of Abolition. Their founder, George Fox, had solemnly warned them not to engage in a traffic so utterly indefensible; and the celebrated William Penn, as early as 1668, denounced it as cruel, impolitic, and unchristian. At their Annual Meeting in 1696, the subject was introduced to the whole society in America; and the members, some of whom, notwithstanding the instructions of their leaders, had engaged in the traffic, were cautioned not to purchase any more slaves, and enjoined to treat most mercifully those whom they might then possess. Similar injunctions and cautions were given at every Annual Meeting for many successive years; and, in 1727, at the general Yearly Meeting in London, it was resolved, "That the importing of Negroes was cruel and unjust, and was therefore severely censured by the Meeting." At each Annual Meeting for twenty years afterwards, they invariably passed substantially the same resolution; thus keeping the subject continually before their members. But, in 1760, they proceeded still farther: for they passed a declaration, at their Annual Meeting of that year, that they would exclude from their Society all who participated in any way in the guilty traffic. Almost the first recorded instance of a voluntary surrender of slave-property occurred in 1770, when a gentleman of that Society, named Miffin, having inherited from his father

* "Speeches of Lord Brougham."

nearly forty slaves, generously gave them their liberty, and employed them as freemen.*

It appears, then, that, as a body, the Friends were the earliest advocates of the Negro race, and made the most vigorous and systematic efforts to effect their rescue. But while we give them the commendation which is so justly their due, it would be absurd to assign to them all the merit of Abolition. Several of the old English writers of eminence, without expressly referring to African Slavery, had in a general way testified against the criminality of "bringing one human being into absolute subjection to the will of another." Our great poet Milton, Bishop Sanderson, and others had gone thus far; and were followed by several distinguished individuals of the English Church, and of other communities, who raised their voice against the accursed traffic by writing expressly on the subject.

The first English writer who specially advocated the cause of the Africans was Morgan Godwyn, a Clergyman of the Church of England. He wrote a treatise entitled, "The Negro's and Indian's Advocate," which he dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the island of Barbadoes he had been an eye-witness of the sufferings of the oppressed Blacks, and in an affecting manner he exposed to his countrymen the brutal sentiments and conduct of their tyrants. About the same time, the celebrated Richard Baxter on several occasions pleaded the rights of the Negroes. In his "Christian Directory" he severely animadverted upon the trade, saying, that "those who go out as pirates, and take any poor Africans, and people of another land, who never forfeited life or liberty, and make them slaves or 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 of burden, 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 close and forcible manner, showing the great inconsistency of this traffic, and the necessity of treating those already in bondage with tenderness, and with a due regard to their spiritual concerns.

About this time, and subsequently, many other tracts and pamphlets relating to Slavery issued from the press; and several authors who did not write expressly on the subject, took care to denounce the traffic in Negroes as one which is no less repugnant to the feelings of humanity than to the principles of

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

religion. Poets, as well as divines and historians, and even dramatic writers, did not fail to lift up their voice in its execration. The Rev. Messrs. J. Wesley and G. Whitefield, both of whom had witnessed the worse than brutal treatment of the Blacks in America, fearlessly proclaimed, from the pulpit and from the press, the evils of "this complicated villany." As far back as 1739, Mr. Whitefield, when in America, addressed a printed letter to the settlers of several of the States in which Slavery most abounded. This production had the desired effect upon many of those who perused it. He continued a firm friend to the poor Africans, pleading their cause through life, and was the means of enlisting many thousands of his followers in their favour. Mr. Wesley, too, wrote a spirited and able pamphlet on the subject, which he entitled "Thoughts upon Slavery," and which was published in 1774, two years after the famous case of Somerset had been decided. In this little work Mr. Wesley grapples with the monster evil in a masterly manner. After defining Slavery, and distinguishing it from that mild domestic service which obtains in our country, he refers to the place whence the slaves are taken, and describes Africa, in its physical and moral aspects. He states that the soil is productive, and in many parts well cultivated, bringing forth fruits, vegetables, and grain in abundance; and that the meadows are capable of feeding large herds of cattle. He speaks of the inhabitants as being comparatively mild and well disposed; and affirms that they are by no means difficult to govern, and that, instead of being the stupid, senseless savages which they have been described to be, they are, considering their few advantages, the very reverse. He next touches upon the manner in which the slaves are procured, the places to which they are conveyed, and the treatment which they undergo in the colonies; and he closes the pamphlet with an appeal to merchants, captains, planters, and others interested in the continuance of the Slave-Trade. The last paragraph consists of a prayer devoutly offered up to Almighty God, and is as follows:—

"O thou God of love, thou who art loving to every man, and whose mercy is over all thy works; thou who art the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and who art rich in mercy unto all; thou who hast mingled of one blood all the nations upon earth; have compassion upon these outcasts of men, who are trodden down as dung upon the earth! Arise, and help these that have no helper, whose blood is spilt upon the ground like water! Are not these also the work of thine own hands, the purchase of thy Son's blood? Stir them up to cry unto thee in the land of

their captivity, and let their complaint come up before thee ; let it enter into thy ears ! Make even those that lead them away captive to pity them, and turn their captivity as the rivers in the south. O burst thou all their chains in sunder ; more especially the chains of their sins ! Thou Saviour of all, make them free, that they may be free indeed !”*

Nor did Mr. Wesley stop here ; for Mr. Clarkson, in his “History of the Slave-Trade,” after speaking of “the celebrated divine” who “undertook the cause of the poor Africans” in the above-mentioned tractate, adds, “Mr. Wesley had this great cause much at heart, and frequently recommended it to the support of those who attended his useful ministry :” and soon after the first Abolition Committee was formed, one of their sittings “was distinguished by the receipt of letters from two celebrated persons.” One of these “was Mr. John Wesley, whose useful labours as a minister of the gospel are so well known to our countrymen.” The date of this Committee was August 27th, 1787. Mr. Clarkson further remarks, “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 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 ‘Thoughts 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 October 30th, 1787, “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

* WESLEY'S Works, vol. xi. pp. 75, 76.

† CLARKSON'S “History of the Slave-Trade,” p. 259.

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." * Nor was this all: for it may be further added, as proof of the deep and unabated interest which he took in the abolition of Negro Slavery, that one of the last letters he ever wrote was addressed to Mr. Wilberforce only four days before his death, exhorting him to persevere in the "glorious enterprise" of effecting the abolition of the traffic in the sinews and blood of men. "Go on," he writes, "in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American Slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it." † Such was Mr. Wesley's brief, but strong and dying, testimony against Slavery: for it is believed that this was actually the last letter he ever wrote; and the eminent statesman and Christian philanthropist to whom it was addressed, docketed the letter, "John Wesley's Last Words." ‡

Several able pamphlets and tracts preceded and followed Mr. Wesley's publication in 1774, which assisted the good cause; but which we cannot particularize in this brief account of the Slave-Trade. It must not be omitted, however, that in 1784, another able and zealous advocate of the Negroes was found in the Rev. James Ramsay, vicar of Teston, in Kent, who had resided nineteen years in the island of St. Christopher's, where he had abundant opportunities of observing the treatment of the Negroes, and had studied the laws relating to them. Some two or three years after his return to England, he published a work which he called, "An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies." Attempts were made by interested parties to answer and refute the charges contained in Mr. Ramsay's Essay; but these attacks only served to call forth "A Reply to personal Invectives and Objections," by the same author: and Captain J. S. Smith, R.N., who had been an eye-witness, nobly came forward and corroborated the statements of Mr. Ramsay; so that by this controversy the cause of truth gained increased sway.

Public attention being thus in some degree arrested, the

* CLARKSON'S "History of the Slave-Trade," p. 261.

† WESLEY'S Works, vol. xiii. p. 127. ‡ "Life of Wilberforce," vol. i. p. 297.

wrongs of Africa soon found an active commiseration among the body of Friends, of whom we have already spoken. From this time that benevolent Society appears to have entertained a growing desire 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 the oppression of the Blacks. But it was now ready to make an appeal to others, and to bear a public testimony in favour of the Negroes. Accordingly, in the month of June, 1783, when a Bill had been brought into the House of Commons, providing certain regulations with respect to the African trade, the Society of Friends presented a petition to the legislature, praying that something might be done to ameliorate the condition of the slaves. This was the first petition which was ever presented to parliament in favour of the abolition of the Slave-Trade.*

These efforts led to the combined exertions of a few individuals, who met together to consult what steps could be taken to abolish the Slave-Trade, and to liberate the slaves in the West Indies. The first meeting was held in July, 1783, one month after the Friends had petitioned the House of Commons; and it consisted of only six individuals; namely, William Dillwyn, George Harrison, Samuel Hoare, Thomas Knowles, John Lloyd, Joseph Woods. To promote the object which they had in view, they conceived it necessary that the public mind should be enlightened respecting it. They had recourse, therefore, to the public papers; to which each member in turn was appointed to write. Several articles, consequently, appeared in two of the London, and in many of the provincial, newspapers. The next year, (1784,) they began to print books on the subject. The first was from the pen of Joseph Woods, one of the Committee. It was entitled, "Thoughts on the Slavery of the Negroes;" and contained a sober and dispassionate appeal to the reason of all, without offering offence to 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.†

About the same time, the Society of Friends, in their collective capacity, published a pamphlet exposing the horrors of Slavery; copies of which were sent to the king, the queen, and most of the members of parliament. This work was 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."

* CLARKSON'S "History of the Slave-Trade," p. 93.

† Ibid. p. 96.

Two thousand copies of this pamphlet were printed: these were soon disposed of; and shortly after orders were given by the same body of Christians for the reprinting and circulation of ten thousand additional copies of "the Case."

In the following year, (1785,) the Association continued their exertions as before, and the public attention was again called to the subject by Benezet's "Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies on the calamitous State of the enslaved Negroes." Copies of this pamphlet were sent by the Society of Friends to magistrates, clergymen, and ministers of all denominations, and to the masters of all the great schools, and several academies. In this year, this little band of philanthropists was strengthened by the addition of David Barclay, an active member of the Society of Friends, who soon gave practical proof of his abhorrence of Slavery and his love of liberty: for, on becoming possessed of an estate in Jamaica, on which were more than thirty slaves, he very honourably emancipated them all. In this same year, a public meeting was held in the town of Bridgewater, when the mayor, the Rev. G. White, and some other gentlemen, advocated the cause of Abolition. The result of this meeting was, that a petition to the British Parliament from the inhabitants of Bridgewater, in favour of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, was agreed upon, and was presented to the House of Commons by the Honourable A. Poulet and Alexander Hood, Esq., the members for the town. This was the second petition that was drawn up respecting this important subject.

Thus this little Association, though "small and feeble was its day," was nevertheless silently doing a great work; and by not being "weary in well doing," but continuing their publications and other means, they had already effected a happy change in the minds of many influential individuals, and won them to the support of their great undertaking. Every year now brought with it some fresh and able friends; whereby their faith was strengthened, their hope encouraged, and their exertions stimulated.

But the year 1785 was perhaps most remarkable on account of the publication of a pamphlet by Thomas Clarkson, to whom, while pursuing his studies at Cambridge, "the Slave-Trade" was given as the subject of an Essay which gained one of the University prizes. The origin of this important event was as follows:—Dr. Peckard, then Vice-Chancellor of the University, had distinguished himself in the early part of his life by certain publications on the intermediate state of the soul, and by others in favour of civil and religious liberty, and had read with attention and inter-

est the publications of the Association against the Slave-Trade. When it devolved upon him to preach a sermon before the University, he powerfully and eloquently exposed the evils of Slavery, and denounced it as a system utterly at variance with every Christian precept. As he was then considering what subject he should select for a Latin prize-essay for the Senior Bachelors, it occurred to him that none would be more suitable than some point connected with Slavery: he therefore fixed upon the question, "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" Only a few weeks were allowed for the composition.

Clarkson, having in the preceding year gained the first prize for the Latin dissertation, entered with all the ardour of rival scholarship on the subject, determined, if possible, to sustain his reputation. To obtain all the information he could upon Slavery, he repaired to London; and, having purchased Benezet's "Historical Account of Guinea," with such other books bearing on the question as he could then procure, he returned to Cambridge, and commenced his task. Little did he imagine what would be the result. Instead of the pleasure he had anticipated in the skilful arrangement of his materials to secure success in his literary contest, his mind was continually on the rack by the successive narrations, in the course of his reading, of oppression the most villanous and cruel. "It is impossible," he remarks in his "History of Slavery," "to imagine the severe anguish which the composition of this Essay cost me. All the pleasure I had promised myself from the contest was exchanged for pain by the astounding facts that were now continually before me. It was one gloomy subject from morning till night. In the day I was agitated and uneasy; in the night I had little or no rest. I was so overwhelmed with grief, that I sometimes never closed my eyes during the whole night; and I no longer regarded my Essay as a mere trial for literary distinction. My great desire now was to produce a work that should call forth a vigorous public effort to redress the wrongs of injured Africa."

Bearing this idea constantly in mind, and being extremely anxious that no thought that was connected with the subject should escape unrecorded, Clarkson always slept with a light in his room, so that he might rise at any time in the night, and put down any thing that occurred to his mind. An Essay composed under such intensely excited feelings, and with such great care, could hardly fail to be successful. On completing it, Clarkson handed it to the Vice-Chancellor, and was again honoured with the first prize. But neither his literary reputation, though he was by no means insensible to this, nor the time which elapsed from the period when he finished his Essay to the day when its merits were adjudged, could divert his attention from the all-absorbing subject. His desire to expose the cruelties of Slavery abated not. After reading his Essay in the Senate-house, in June, 1785, as is the usual practice, when the interest in such compositions commonly subsides, the subject continued to engross all his thoughts. "I could not," he says, "divest myself of the feeling that it was the duty of some one to expose the horrors of this bloody traffic. It grew upon me from day to day, and I could no longer keep my mind at rest."*

It will be seen, then, that though, previously to Clarkson's Essay, much had been done, but little good comparatively had

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

been the result. Some more decided step required to be taken to bring the facts of the case fully before the public. An individual was needed who would boldly and incessantly labour in the work. Such an one was now raised up by a gracious Providence in the person of Clarkson, on whose mind a growing conviction fastened itself, that a vigorous personal effort ought immediately to be made. His feelings on repairing to London, after having read his Essay before the University Senate, he thus touchingly describes: "During my journey, the melancholy subject was not a moment absent from my thoughts. I became several times seriously affected on the road. I occasionally stopped my horse, dismounted, and walked. I tried frequently to persuade myself that the statements in my Essay could not be true. But the more I reflected on the authorities on which they were founded, the more constrained was I to give them credit. I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the roadside; and here it forcibly occurred to me, that if the statements I had made were facts, it was high time that something should be done to put an end to such cruelties."

This was in the summer of 1785. In the autumn this conviction became, if possible, deeper. The Abolition question was the sole object of his thoughts: waking or sleeping, he scarcely ever forgot it. He sometimes walked into the woods, that he might meditate on it in solitude. But there the question still recurred, "Are these things true?" and the reply was the same: "They are:" and the same inference was drawn: "Then surely some person should interfere." At length, with a modest hesitation arising from his being "a young man of only twenty-four," he embarked on his glorious career by translating his Essay into English, and enriching it with such additional facts and illustrations as had occurred to him since he first composed it,—facts which were the most likely to impress the public mind with the abominations practised in the horrid traffic. The work was printed, and 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." It was ushered into the world, as he himself tells us, "in the month of June, 1786, or in about a year after it had been read in the Senate-house in the first form."

This work contained a much more able exposure of the evils connected with the African Slave-Trade than was to be found in any former one. It was welcomed by all the friends of liberty and humanity; and Clarkson soon found, by the nume-

rous invitations which he received from different families, that there were some who took a lively interest in the welfare of the despised and oppressed Negro.

While the Essay was making its way, and bringing many new friends to the cause of Abolition, Clarkson was using his utmost efforts to acquire more knowledge on the subject, that he might the more effectually expose its evils. He remarks, "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, and 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." This Mr. Clarkson emphatically did, though not without due deliberation. Dining one day with some friends of the cause at the house of Sir Charles Middleton, then Comptroller of the Navy, and afterwards Lord Barham, he avowed that he was ready cheerfully to relinquish all other pursuits and prospects, and to devote himself entirely to the cause of Abolition. This declaration was made in the presence of several gentlemen, all of whom applauded it highly, and promised to further the great object by every means in their power.

Clarkson, though he had not made this avowal inconsiderately, was nevertheless the next morning "a little uneasy," and questioned whether he had deliberated sufficiently to be able to fulfil the pledge which he had given to the company on the preceding day. He therefore determined to give the subject a full consideration, and to balance every thing on both sides of the question. For this purpose he took a walk to the favourite place of his meditations,—the woods; and having reached their solitude, he reviewed the whole matter. He derived encouragement, on the one hand, from his interview with Sir Charles Middleton, M.P., which opened to him a new source of information and knowledge on the Slave-Trade, Sir Charles being connected with the naval department of the public service. Clarkson could also calculate on the assistance and support of Dr. Porteus and Lord Scarsdale, both of whom were members of the House of Lords. He had likewise secured the co-operation of Mr. Langton, who had an extensive acquaintance with members of both Houses of the legislature; and he could depend upon Granville Sharp, J. Phillips, Ramsay, Dillwyn, and the little Committee to which he belonged, as well as on the whole Society of Friends, and some of his own personal

acquaintance. On the other hand, he had been designed for the Church, had already advanced as far as deacon's orders in it: his prospects were brilliant, and the idea of sacrificing them all staggered him not a little. He felt, too, a thirst after worldly interests and honours, which he could not at once extinguish. He then asked himself seriously, "Am I prepared to make the sacrifices that will be required, and to endure the hardships that will probably have to be borne? And is there any chance that my efforts will be successful?" He "was more than two hours in solitude under this painful conflict:" but at length he yielded, grace triumphed, divine power was imparted, and he made up his mind according to the pledge he had given,—“not because I saw any reasonable prospect of success in my new undertaking, but in obedience, I believe, to a higher Power.” He adds, “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.”

In Mr. Clarkson we have a fine illustration of Christian philanthropy,—that charity which “seeketh not her own.” He had, on other occasions, as well as in the instance which thus determined his public career, obtained sufficient academical honours to open before him the high road to further fame; and he had at his command private property enough to set him at liberty from any necessity of taking up the labours of a learned profession as the means of his support. Having a higher ambition than that which is content to receive honour from men, he was at once determined in the one object of his disinterested pursuit,—one which was of sufficient interest to demand all the energies of his soul, while it would most assuredly be blessed with “the honour which cometh from God only.”

Being fully decided, Clarkson now entered on his work with renewed zeal. He visited every person that he could find in and around London who had been in Africa, or in the West-Indian colonies, or in any situation which gave them an insight into the Slave-Trade. He boarded all the vessels that had been engaged in that traffic, and inspected the wretched apartments in which the slaves had been confined during the voyage. In short, he devoted his life to waging an implacable war with the huge monster of Slavery. The evidence which he collected, and brought before a Committee formed to obtain the Abolition of the trade, drew the attention of Mr. Wilberforce, and secured at once the services of that great man, whose subsequent life was devoted to the cause of liberty, whose dying moments were cheered by its triumphs, and whose name will be immortalized in connexion with its history.

The first meeting of this Committee was held at the house of Mr. Wilberforce; and there were present, besides Mr. Clarkson, the Hon. John Villiers, Mr. Powys, Sir Charles Middleton, Sir Richard Hill, Mr. Granville Sharp, Mr. Ramsay, and Dr. Gregory. After this, several friends of the Abolition met once a week; and they were now of opinion that the time was approaching when they might petition with good effect: they were only waiting for Mr. Wilberforce to give his word that he would introduce the subject in Parliament. Mr. Langton delicately hinted this, adding that no one could do it with such good effect: on which Mr. Wilberforce pledged himself that he would do so when the proper time arrived,—a pledge which all were happy to receive, and which he nobly performed.

There was now no difficulty in forming a Committee to bring the evils of Slavery more fully before the British nation, and to organize a Society for its entire Abolition: an object which Clarkson had regarded as of great importance. Accordingly, on May 22d, 1787, he had the happiness to see it formed. The names of the individuals composing it were the twelve following:—Granville Sharp, William Dillwyn, Samuel Hoare, George Harrison, John Lloyd, Joseph Woods, Thomas Clarkson, Richard Phillips, John Boston, Joseph Hooper, James Phillips, Philip Sansom. All these were present: and Granville Sharp, who stands at the head of the list, and whom Clarkson styles “the father of the cause in England,” was called to the chair. The next five on the list had been members of the previous Association; and the whole Committee, except three,—Clarkson, Sharp, and Sansom,—were members of the Society of Friends. Several other benevolent and distinguished persons belonged to the Abolition Society, though they were not members of the Committee.

The Abolition of Slavery, and the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, were two distinct things; and as the former evil owed its existence to the latter, it was thought desirable to commence operations against the traffic. Almost their first resolution pledged them to circulate, more extensively than had yet been done, information on this subject. They therefore published a “Summary View of the Slave-Trade, and the probable Consequences of its Abolition,” besides several other powerful tracts. It was not enough for this little band of philanthropists to know that the air of England was too pure to be breathed but by freemen, and that a slave cannot touch our soil but immediately his chains fall off. No; though

“That’s noble, and bespeaks a nation proud,”

yet that was not enough. Their object was to cut off any farther supplies from Africa for the West-India markets, to block up the impure stream at the fountain-head, to dig up the poisonous tree by the root, to destroy the monster, and lay the giant low: it was to sever the head from the trunk; for they conceived that, on the abolishing of the trade in slaves, the death of Slavery must inevitably follow.

But an object so great, and the removal of evils so numerous and complicated, were not expected to be accomplished without steady and united effort, combined and untiring perseverance. The trade in slaves was not confined to a single locality, or to one or two parts of the continent of Africa. It began at the river Senegal, and continued winding with the coast through its several geographical divisions for more than three thousand miles. It was not merely by the inhabitants skirting this long line of coast that the supplies were furnished: but towns and villages many hundred miles inland were ransacked, and their indwellers led captive to the sea-side, where vessels were waiting to carry them across the Atlantic. Besides, this species of trade had existed for nearly three hundred years; it was interwoven into the system of commerce, and was an important item in the revenue of nations. The planters and African merchants vigorously exerted themselves to oppose its annihilation: thousands, deeply interested in its continuance, lifted up their voice against its abolition. Looking, then, at these as some of the evils and difficulties in connexion with the Slave-Trade, it "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."

But the Committee was now formed; and, two days after its formation, its members met again to promote the object of its institution; and on June 12th its fourth meeting was held. While the Committee was prosecuting its labours in London, Clarkson was journeying from one part of the kingdom to another, visiting Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, and other places, to collect further information upon the subject. Many pamphlets and letters, illustrative of the evils of Slavery, were now printed, and distributed gratuitously throughout the country. The subject having at length excited general attention, public meetings were held, and many petitions were sent to Parliament, praying for the abolition of a traffic which had so long disgraced our national character.

The time had now arrived for the topic to be discussed in the British Parliament; which was accordingly done on May 9th, 1788. Mr. Pitt, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Wilberforce through indisposition, introduced the subject in the House of Commons. He was ably supported by Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Sir W. Dolben, Mr. Whitbread, and several others. The Motion passed unanimously: but, as it only went to pledge the House that the Slave-Trade should be investigated the next sessions, the result could scarcely have been otherwise. "It was supposed that this would have terminated the parliamentary discussion of the subject for that session; but Sir W. Dolben, a warm friend of Abolition, desirous of at once abolishing some of the cruelties practised in the trade, moved, on May 22d, for leave to bring in a Bill, that the number of slaves brought in the vessels should be in proportion to their tonnage. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Whitbread, and ably supported by several members; and leave was given to bring in the Bill. The parties at Liverpool and Bristol now became alarmed, and resolved to oppose the measure with all their power. They got up several petitions in favour of the trade; and they so far succeeded as to obtain leave to be heard by counsel at the bar of the House in its defence." But, notwithstanding this, the Motion was carried by a large majority.

"The Bill was carried to the Lords on June 18th; and its opponents had the audacity again to apply to be heard by counsel, though they had so signally failed in the Commons. Leave was granted them, and the same witnesses were examined; but, as the same searching queries were not put to them, the impression was less favourable for Abolition. The debate was protracted for several days; the Bill was violently opposed, and it was feared by its friends that it would have been lost for the session. At length, however, it was carried, and on the last day of the session it received the royal assent."*

Thus it will appear that though a great impression had been made on the public mind generally in favour of the poor Africans, there were many both in and out of Parliament who contended for the continuance of the disgraceful traffic. Nor did this opposition easily subside; for "when Mr. Wilberforce had, with matchless powers of eloquence, sustained by a body of the clearest evidence, unveiled all the horrors of a traffic which, had it been attended with neither fraud nor cruelty of any kind, was confessedly, from beginning to end, not a commerce, but a

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

crime, he was defeated by large majorities, year after year. When, at length, for the first time, in 1804, he carried the Abolition Bill through the Commons, the Lords immediately threw it out; and the next year it was again lost in the Commons. All this happened while the opinion of the country was, with the single exception of persons having West-India connexions, unanimous in favour of the measure. At different times there was the strongest and most general expression of public feeling upon the subject; and it was a question upon which no two men endowed with reason could possibly differ; because, admitting whatever could be alleged about the profits of the traffic, it was not denied that their gain proceeded from pillage or murder. Add to all this, that the enormous evil continued to disgrace the country and its legislature for twenty years, although the voice of" nearly "every statesman of any eminence was strenuously lifted up against it, and although every press and every pulpit in the island habitually cried it down."*

But the day of redemption was drawing nigh; and the friends and advocates of the Abolition ceased not their endeavours: they were not yet "weary in well-doing;" nor did they doubt of success, though they had been defeated again and again. The indefatigable Clarkson, therefore, "took another journey" to collect fresh matters of fact; that, in case the House of Lords should insist upon hearing evidence on the general question, he might be prepared to furnish them with it: for the point was now almost certain of being carried in the next session in the House of Commons. Accordingly, on June 10th, 1806, the subject was again introduced in the Lower House by Mr. Fox, and in the Upper House, on the 24th of the same month, by Lord Grenville. The Resolution which was moved in both Houses successively was to the following effect: "That this House, considering the African Slave-Trade to be contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy, will, with all practicable expedition, take effectual measures for the Abolition of the said Trade, in such manner, and at such period, as may be deemed advisable." This Motion led to a lengthy debate in both Houses. Its principal opponents in the House of Commons were General Tarleton, Lord Castlereagh, General Gascoyne, and Sir W. Young; and, in the House of Lords, Lord Hawkesbury and the earl of Westmoreland were the two greatest opponents. The advocates

* LORD BROUGHAM.

for Abolition in the Lower House, in addition to the illustrious names of Fox and Wilberforce, were Sir Ralph Milbank, Mr. Francis, Sir Samuel Romilly, Lord Henry Petty, Sir John Newport, Mr. Canning, and Mr. Smith; and, in the Upper House, besides Lord Grenville, who introduced the Motion, its supporters were the bishop of London, the Lord Chancellor, the bishop of St. Asaph, Lord Holland, the earl of Suffolk, Earl Stanhope, Earl Grosvenor, Lord Ellenborough, and Earl Spencer.

The opponents to the measure had a variety of objections, which they hesitated not to urge. The Motion was considered as ill-timed, and likely to prove injurious to the trade of Liverpool. It was asserted to be an act of injustice to the African merchants, especially the planters and others holding property in the West Indies. It was alleged, too, that the revenue of the country would be considerably affected by the Motion. Some contended for the continuance of this iniquitous traffic on account of its antiquity, and actually quoted from the sacred volume in support of its perpetuation. Nay, they coolly urged, that it was an act of kindness to the Africans to carry them to the West Indies, inasmuch as they were so totally degraded in their moral and mental faculties, that nothing could cure them, being evidently doomed by nature to Slavery: and they complained of the harsh language which some of the advocates of the Abolition used in denouncing the Trade.

But these extraordinary views of the case were ably met and combated by the friends of the oppressed Negro. As to its being ill-timed, the bishop of St. Asaph, in the Upper House, commenced by observing, "My Lords, I cannot but assent to every part of the Resolution now before your Lordships at any season of the year, or any day of the year, or any hour of the day." Mr. Francis said, "The members for Liverpool were at liberty to ask for compensation, but he for one would never grant it, for the loss of a trade which had been declared to be contrary to humanity and justice." And as to its antiquity, the bishop of London contended that this afforded no argument for its continuance. Such a mode of defence, he observed, would prevent the removal of any evil. It would justify the practice of the Chinese, who have for many hundred years exposed their infants in the streets to perish. It would justify piracy; for that practice existed long before we knew any thing of the African Slave-Trade. Besides, as Mr. Smith, in a previous debate upon the Abolition, in replying to the antiquity of Slavery, very forcibly remarked, "Because a practice had

existed, did it necessarily follow that it was just? By this argument every crime might be defended from the time of Cain!"

The assertion that scripture countenanced this ungodly traffic, was most ably refuted in both Houses; and it was pronounced to be "one of the greatest libels that was ever published against the Christian religion." Both Mr. Wilberforce in the Commons, and two noble Lords in the Upper House, fearlessly and very justly placed the slave-dealers where the apostle places them; namely, with "man-stealers," with the "murderer of fathers and of mothers," and with the most profane criminals upon earth. Lord H. Petty rescued the slandered Africans from the imputation of mental inferiority, by showing that they had proved to be good soldiers and non-commissioned officers; and that they had been placed in situations requiring fidelity, intelligence, and courage, and had fully answered the expectations of those who thought the most favourably of them. And then, lastly, as to the "hard words" which some of the advocates of Abolition had applied to the Slave-Trade, and of which the opponents to Abolition complained, such as "robbery, rapine, and murder;" it was contended that there was no reason to recall any of those epithets; for they were the most appropriate to the system which they designated. It was proved that Mr. Bryan Edwards, himself interested in the Slave-Trade, had, in a speech in the House of Assembly of Jamaica, designated it "a system of rapine, robbery, and murder:" and Lord H. Petty well remarked, "I wish they who complain of these hard words would reserve their indignation for those who are guilty of the acts, instead of visiting it on those who only do their duty in describing them."*

After many able speeches in support of the Resolution, it was triumphantly and gloriously carried in the House of Commons by a majority of 99; there being for the Motion 114, and against it only 15. It also passed the House of Lords by a majority of 41 to 20.

Encouraged by this moral victory, the Abolition Committee and the other friends of the oppressed Negro received fresh strength and spirit; for it was now almost universally believed, in consequence of what had already taken place, that the Slave-Trade had received its death-wound, and that the hateful system could not long survive. At length the memorable session of 1807 arrived; and now a Bill called "An Act for the Abolition

* HANSARD'S "Parliamentary Debates."

of the Slave-Trade" was introduced into Parliament; and, contrary to the practice hitherto adopted, it was first brought forward in the House of Lords. Lord Grenville opened the debate with a very luminous speech; and, the question being called for at four o'clock in the morning, it appeared that the personal votes and proxies in favour of the Motion amounted to 100, and those against it to 36. Thus passed the Upper House the first Bill in England which decreed that the African Slave-Trade should cease. On February 10th, the Bill was carried to the House of Commons; and, after much able speaking, the House divided, when there were for the question 283, and against it only 16. The feeling in favour of the measure had now become so general in the Commons, that, Mr. Clarkson observes, "several of the old opponents of this righteous cause went away unable to vote against it, while others of them stood in their places and voted in its favour." On March 16th, the Bill was read a third time, and then passed without a division; and on the 23d of the same month, it received the last sanction of the House of Peers; and Lord Grenville congratulated the House on the completion, on its part, of the most glorious measure that had ever been adopted by any legislative body in the world.

But even at this stage of its progress, when victory had all but crowned the mighty and long-continued efforts of its friends, there was, says Clarkson, "an awful fear throughout the kingdom, lest the Bill should not receive the royal assent before" the dissolution of the ministry, which was hourly expected. Happily, however, the commission for the royal assent to the Bill was obtained in time, and but just in time, to be executed before the dissolution took place. At half-past eleven in the morning of March 25th, 1807, letters were received by each member of the Cabinet, requesting them to deliver up the seals of office. The Lord Chancellor, having just then been informed that His Majesty had ordered his consent to be given to this Bill by commission, proceeded immediately to pass it in the usual way. "And just as the clock struck twelve, while the sun was shining in its meridian splendour, as if to witness the august act, and to sanction it by its glorious beams, the Magna Charta of Africa was completed." Thus terminated, after twenty years' struggle, one of the most glorious contests that was ever carried on in any age or country: and thus, to a certain extent, was realized the poet's aspiration,—

"That where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too!"

CHAPTER IV.

ABOLITION OF BRITISH SLAVERY.

ABOLITION of the British Slave-Trade—More stringent Measures adopted to render it effectual and complete—The Slave-Trade and Slavery two distinct Things—The Attention of the Public is now directed to the latter—Miseries of West-Indian Slavery—Anti-Slavery Society formed—Petitions to Parliament for the Abolition of Slavery—Mr. T. F. Buxton selected as the parliamentary Leader by the venerable Wilberforce—Letters of Mr. Wilberforce to Mr. Buxton—The Subject introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Buxton—His spirited Reply at the Close of the Debate—Opposition in the Colonies to any Change in the System—Persecution of Missionaries—The Rev. John Smith's Imprisonment at Demerara—Feeling of the Nation in favour of Emancipation—Death of the Rev. John Smith in the Jail at Demerara—"Smith's Case" brought before the House of Commons—Touching Incident—The Protomartyr Stephen—Rev. W. J. Shrewsbury driven from Barbadoes—Mr. Buxton brings this Case before the House—Persevering Efforts of the Anti-Slavery Society—The Cabinet Ministers, though favourable to Abolition, lean towards the Planters—The Nation becomes aroused in favour of immediate and total Abolition—Petitions sent to Parliament—Opposition of the Planters and others interested in the Continuance of Slavery—Persecutions of Missionaries—Parliamentary Session of 1833—Great Anti-Slavery Meeting at Exeter-Hall—Number of Petitions—One from the Females of Britain—Presented by Mr. Buxton—The Abolition Bill passes both Houses of Parliament—Receives the royal Assent—Memorable First of August, 1834, and 1838—British Slavery exterminated—Noble Effect of the Measure.

THE Bill for the Abolition of the British Slave-Trade, as we have seen, received the royal assent on March 25th, 1807; and this law came into operation on and after January 1st, 1808. That was a deed well done. Though the struggle was long, and the issue of the conflict sometimes appeared doubtful, at length victory came; and the authorised and shameless traffic in slaves which had so long stamped a stigma upon our country was abolished, and the gigantic foe was "cast down;" but, alas! he was "not destroyed." For though the above-mentioned Act made the Slave-Trade illegal, by whomsoever carried on, in the British dominions, and prohibited British subjects from engaging in it in any country whatsoever; yet, as forfeitures and penalties of a pecuniary kind were the only consequences of violating the law, the temptations of high profit induced many, both capitalists and adventurers, to defy the prohibitions of the statute; and the clearest proofs were soon furnished of Englishmen being employed in the Slave-Trade

under the most flimsy disguises. In the year 1811, therefore, an Act was carried by Mr. Brougham, making the Slave-Trade felony, punishable with transportation for fourteen years, or imprisonment and hard labour. But even this was found inadequate to check or bank up the poisonous stream; so that in 1824 the Slave-Trade was declared to be piracy, and the punishment enacted was death. In 1837, however, when the number of capital offences was diminished in consequence of the milder character that was given to the criminal law, the punishment for trading in slaves was changed to transportation for life. And there is every reason to think that no British subjects are now, or have for many years been, directly engaged in this execrable traffic.

But the friends and supporters of Abolition did not content themselves with the accomplishment of that victory, great and glorious as it was. The Abolition of the Slave-Trade, and the Abolition of Slavery, are two distinct things; and having succeeded in the former, they now turned their attention to the latter. For, supposing that the Slave-Trade was abolished, its effects were not annihilated. Personal and hereditary Slavery still existed in all its cruel and aggravating forms. There were thousands and tens of thousands in the British colonies in the West Indies, who were groaning under the heavy task, and bending beneath the iron yoke. Mr. Clarkson, therefore, not long after the Abolition of the Slave-Trade, composed and printed a pamphlet entitled, "Thoughts on the Necessity of abolishing Slavery." Neither he nor his coadjutors had ever regarded the Abolition of the Trade as a final measure. Their ultimate object had ever been the entire extinction of Slavery itself, which in that publication was proved to be the source of innumerable evils, and as impolitic as it was unjust. To promote this and other objects, a Society was formed in May, 1807, called "The African Institution;" which, while it directed its attention to the foreign Slave-traffic as still carried on by other nations, with the view of inducing them to adopt measures for its abolition, bestowed its chief care upon West-Indian matters, as they naturally came more within the power of this country.

The accounts received from the colonies confirmed the statements which Mr. Clarkson had made in his able pamphlet. The sufferings of the captive Negroes were still unalleviated; they were held in the most degrading bondage, and treated with the utmost cruelty. They were over-worked and ill-fed, and every means was employed to brutalize and stultify their minds.

Facts have been related in connexion with West-Indian Slavery, sufficient to wring the soul with anguish, to mingle gall in our bread in the day when we heard them, and to agonize the slumbers of the night with thoughts of horror. Many pages of true narrative have met the eye on this subject, that we should shrink from encountering a second time; deeds have been listened to, which the lips refuse to utter; books have been perused, that are laid aside, being "written within and without," full of "lamentations, and mourning, and woe." The writhing population of our colonies were "minished and brought low;" their bodies were crushed with unvarying oppression; and hope was utterly expelled from their hearts. Like the children of Israel under their Egyptian taskmasters, they "hearkened not to" the voice of the comforter, "for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." (Exod. vi. 9.) "On the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter." (Eccles. iv. 1.) Years had passed away, but the Abolition of the Slave-Trade had not conferred on *them* the slightest boon: there was no appearance of that gradual Abolition of Slavery which, it was confidently asserted, would, without any farther legal enactment, certainly follow. Clarkson had, in his able pamphlet, exposed the folly of supposing that such would be the result. He had likewise proved Slavery to be at variance alike with Christianity and with the laws of England; and had demonstrated that its effects were most pernicious, morally and physically, to the owners as well as to the slaves; that emancipation was safe and practicable, and would be beneficial to both parties; and that liberty was essential to accountability, being the birth-right of every intelligent being, in whatever country or condition he might be born.

Similar statements had been made in several other able pamphlets, published at different times, by various authors: but the political affairs of Europe for some years prevented the matter from being vigorously taken up. In March, 1823, the Anti-Slavery Society was formed. The first thing which they did was to circulate authentic information on the subject as extensively as they could. They did this by the publication of various tracts and pamphlets descriptive of British Colonial Slavery. These were drawn up in a simple yet interesting style, and contained most powerful appeals to the sympathies of the nation in behalf of the suffering Negro. They were eagerly read by all classes; and England seemed to be suddenly aroused from its insensibility; so that, before the ensuing May, more than two hundred petitions from various parts of the country were presented

to Parliament, praying that some measure might be taken to abolish Slavery in the British Colonies. Most of the speeches delivered at the meetings held in different towns were powerful and striking ; and, as these were printed, the matter was thus brought more fully before the public, and became one of deep and unusual interest.*

The magnitude of the subject was indeed worthy of all the interest it excited. The destiny of nearly a million of human beings quivered in the balance. Whether they should be treated as men endued with immortal souls, or be looked down upon as the beasts which perish ; whether they should enjoy the liberty to which all God's creatures are entitled, as of right, or be harassed, oppressed, tormented, and stinted both of bodily food and of spiritual instruction ; whether the colonies should be peopled with tyrants and barbarians, or be inhabited by civilized and improving Christian communities ; were questions calculated to put in action all the best principles of our nature, and to move all the noblest feelings of the human heart. It was no wonder, therefore, that a matter of such vast importance was taken up by the enlightened, the humane, and the religious, all over the empire.

But, after all, Parliament was the field in which the battle was to be fought. Mr. Wilberforce, the eloquent champion of the African race, was sinking enfeebled under the weight of years, and the want was felt of a new parliamentary advocate. But a gracious Providence, always ready to help those who look for Divine aid, had provided one in the person of Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas Fowell) Buxton, whose name so early as 1817 was amongst the directors of the African Institution, and who had been in the House of Commons for five years as member for the borough of Weymouth. He had already proved himself an able ally of Sir James Mackintosh in the amelioration of our criminal code, had taken an active part in the abolition of suttees in India, and had given powerful support to Mr. Wilberforce in his endeavour to prevent an apprehended extension of Slavery in our South-African possessions. Indeed, Mr. Wilberforce had had his eye upon him for some time, as an able and active coadjutor in every thing that was humane, philanthropic, and truly good, even before he came into Parliament. In a letter which Mr. Wilberforce wrote to Mr. Buxton in November, 1816, when the latter had taken an active part in relieving the distress which prevailed in Spitalfields, and had made an

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

excellent speech on the occasion, after congratulating him on his "successful effort in behalf of the hungry and the naked," he says, "I anticipate the success of the efforts which I trust you will one day make in other instances, in an assembly in which I trust we shall be fellow-labourers." And in the following year, when Mr. Buxton had published a work on "Prison Discipline," which produced a powerful impression, Mr. Wilberforce wrote to him on the subject, and thus concluded: "May it please God to continue to animate you with as much benevolent zeal, and to direct it to worthy objects! I hope you will come soon into Parliament, and be able to contend in person, as well as with your pen, for the rights and happiness of the oppressed and the friendless. I claim you as an ally in this blessed league." And in May, 1821, Mr. Wilberforce again addressed him, in a letter of some length. After stating that "it is now more than thirty-three years since" he "for the first time gave notice in the House of Commons that he should bring forward the question concerning the Slave-Trade;" and that he was prevented from doing so, when the time arrived, by indisposition; but that Mr. Pitt readily at his request undertook the matter: he now appealed to Mr. Buxton, under somewhat similar circumstances, as he had long wished "to bring forward that great subject,—the condition of the Negro slaves in our transatlantic colonies;" but he had been waiting, with no little solicitude, for a proper time and suitable circumstances of the country for introducing this great business: and, latterly, for some Member of Parliament, who, if I were to retire or to be laid by, would be an eligible leader in this holy enterprise." He then states, "I can no longer forbear resorting to you, as I formerly did to Pitt, and earnestly conjuring you to take most seriously into consideration the expediency of your devoting yourself to this *blessed service*. . . . Let me, then, entreat you to form an 'alliance' with me, that may truly be termed 'holy;' and if I should be unable to commence the war, and, still more, if, when commenced, I should be unable to finish it, do I entreat that you would continue to prosecute it." *

It was not, however, till after long and mature deliberation that Mr. Buxton accepted the weighty charge involved in Mr. Wilberforce's proposal,—that he should become the leader of the Anti-Slavery cause in the House of Commons; though he had been nominated to it by the solemn voice of the venerable Wilberforce, and the unanimous suffrages of such men as

* "Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton," pp. 62, 75, 117, 118.

Stephen, Allen, William Smith, Lushington, Zachary Macaulay, and other friends, who encouraged him to enter upon this arduous undertaking. But he appears to have arrived at his final decision in the autumn of 1822, when Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Macaulay spent some weeks at his residence at Cromer-Hall in Norfolk. The session of 1823 was now rapidly approaching: and as "the great subject has fallen into my hands," to use his own words, "I am very earnest about Slavery. It seems to me that this is to be the main business of my life,—this and Hindoo widows." Early in March, 1823, Mr. Wilberforce published his well-known "Appeal on behalf of the Slaves." Petitions, as already observed, now "began to flow in:" the lead was taken by the Society of Friends, and it was determined that the presentation of their appeal by the hands of Mr. Wilberforce should be the opening of the parliamentary campaign.

He introduced it by saying that a similar petition which he had had the honour of presenting nearly thirty years before, had been the first effort against the kindred iniquity of the Slave-Trade; and that, in presenting this one, he considered that the first stone was laid of an edifice which would flourish at some future period, an ornament to the land. Mr. Canning asked whether it was his intention to found any Motion upon it. Mr. Wilberforce said it was not, but that such was the intention of an esteemed friend of his. Mr. Buxton then gave notice that on the 15th of May he would submit a Motion, "that the House should take into consideration the state of Slavery in the British colonies." The 15th of May arrived, and just before he went to his honourable post, Mr. Buxton wrote to a friend as follows: "In five minutes I start for the House. I hope to begin at five o'clock. I am in good health, in excellent spirits, with a noble cause, and without a fear. If I am only given a nimble tongue, we shall do."*

Such was the manner in which Mr. Buxton entered upon this "holy enterprise," this "blessed service." He began by moving a Resolution, "That the state of Slavery is repugnant to the principles of the British constitution and of the Christian religion; and that it ought to be gradually abolished throughout the British colonies, with as much expedition as may be found consistent with a due regard to the well-being of the parties concerned." This was the first sound of the trumpet in the holy war of emancipation; and from that moment the doom of

* "Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton," pp. 127—129.

British Slavery was sealed: for though many a hard-fought battle and many a wearying delay intervened, the great cause of African freedom was never more to be effectually obstructed.

The debate concluded with a reply from Mr. Buxton, who had been told by his opponents that the Negro did not feel his slavery, and that the danger arose not from Slavery itself, but from the discussion of it in the House; to which he answered, "What, then, does the slave require any hint from us that he is a slave, and that Slavery is of all conditions the most miserable? Why, Sir, he hears this, he sees it, he feels it, too, in all around him. He sees his harsh, uncompensated labour; he hears the crack of the whip; he feels, he writhes under, the lash. Does not this betray the secret?"

' This is no flattery; these are counsellors
That *feelingly* persuade him what he is.'

He sees the mother of his children stripped naked before the gang of male Negroes, and flogged unmercifully; he sees his children sent to market, to be sold at the best price they will fetch; he sees in himself, not a man, but a *thing*,—by West-Indian law a chattel, an implement of husbandry, a machine to produce sugar, a beast of burden! And will any man tell me, that the Negro—with all this staring him in the face, flashing in his eyes, when he rises in the morning, and when he goes to bed at night—never dreams that there is injustice in such treatment, till he sits himself down to the perusal of an English newspaper, and there to his astonishment discovers, that there are enthusiasts in England, who from the bottom of their hearts deplore and abhor all Negro Slavery? There are such enthusiasts; I am one of them; and while we breathe, we will never abandon the cause, till that *thing*, that chattel, is reinstated in all the privileges of *man*." *

Mr. Buxton's characteristic style, and his spirited reply, are mentioned by Mr. Wilberforce as having been, "not sweet indeed, but excellent:" and a recent writer on this subject has beautifully remarked, "It must have been interesting and affecting to see the comparatively youthful senator step forward and consecrate his energies to the great cause, while the venerable Wilberforce sat by, like a parent eagle, impelling, directing, supporting, and delighting in the flight of its eaglet; or, rather, like the ancient prophet Elijah, anointing his successor, and leading him to the spot where his own prophetic mantle should

* HANSARD'S "Parliamentary Debates."

descend upon him, as the pledge of 'a double portion of his spirit.'"* Mr. Buxton had indeed caught his spirit, and he gave the subject a voice within those walls which have so frequently echoed with the eloquence awakened by the most momentous interests. In introducing that celebrated Motion he boldly declared, "The object at which we aim is the *extinction of Slavery*,—nothing less than the extinction of Slavery,—in nothing less than the whole of the British dominions."

The Motion, upon the whole, was well received by the House, though it involved too many interests for it to make its way to the extent so much desired by its advocates. Mr. Canning's Amendment, therefore, varying but little from the Motion of Mr. Buxton, speedily passed both Houses of Parliament. But as the execution of the Bill was left to the colonial authorities, it proved, as had been feared, to be entirely useless. The plans for the instruction of the Negroes, and for the amelioration of their condition, with those corrections of abuses upon which Parliament had determined, were entirely disregarded by the colonial authorities; and the Bill became a mere dead letter. Indeed, the news of Mr. Buxton's attack on what the planters considered to be their just rights, and of the acquiescence of the Government in his principles, were received in the West Indies, with two or three honourable exceptions, with the most vehement indignation. For some weeks after the arrival of the despatches, not the slightest restraint seems to have been put on the violent rage of the planters. An extract from the "Jamaica Journal" of June 28th, 1823, will furnish a specimen of the abuse lavished upon the British Parliament, and "those canting, hypocritical rascals," the Abolitionists. The extract is as follows: "We will pray the Imperial Parliament to amend their *origin*, which is *bribery*; to cleanse their *consciences*, which are *corrupt*; to throw off their *disguise*, which is *hypocrisy*; to break with their *false allies*, who are the *saints*; and finally to banish from among them all the purchased rogues, who are three-fourths of their number."†

The missionaries on the spot, of various denominations, received a large share of abuse and persecution, and were, in several instances, imprisoned. But the Anti-Slavery Society had been previously formed and organized; and many provincial and local societies and committees, in different parts of the

* COPLEY'S "History of Slavery."

† "Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton," p. 138.

country, were in active operation, in which the venerable Clarkson again took an active and distinguished part : and this great philanthropic Society took care to inform the public of all that transpired in the colonies, by means of the seasonable pamphlets and tracts which they constantly published.

It was also about this time, that is, early in the year 1824, that the great case of the missionary Smith's persecution, trial, imprisonment, and untimely death,—in which all the forms of judicature had been prostituted, all the rules of law broken, and all the principles of justice outraged,—came before the House of Commons. The Rev. John Smith was an excellent and devoted missionary belonging to the body of Independents. He was an innocent man ; yet, being brought before a court-martial of militia officers at Demerara, he was condemned to be hanged. But his treatment in prison destroyed his previously failing health, and he died in his dungeon about half-past one o'clock on the morning of February 6th, to the everlasting disgrace of the local authorities and most of the European inhabitants of that island. The persecution and imprisonment of Mr. Smith caused a great sensation in England, even before the report of his death arrived : and the conduct of the directors of the London Missionary Society, on this deeply affecting occasion, was marked by deep sympathy for their calumniated agent, as well as by much prudence, self-possession, and dignified firmness in seeking redress at the Colonial Office.

On the 1st of June a Motion respecting "Smith's Case" was brought forward in the House of Commons by Mr. (now Lord) Brougham, "in a brilliant speech of four hours' length, which produced a strong effect upon public feeling." Nearly two hundred petitions, from various denominations, and from different parts of the kingdom, had been presented at that time, expressing the same sentiments of indignation. Mr. Brougham's Motion of censure was powerfully supported by Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Denman, Mr. Williams, and Dr. Lushington : and though the Motion was lost, the debate was of singular service to the cause. The great speeches delivered were spread through all parts of the country ; the nakedness of the horrid system was exposed ; the corruptions as well as the cruelty of Slavery were laid bare ; the determination of the colonies to protect its worst abuses was demonstrated ; the necessity of the interference of the mother-country with a strong hand was declared ; and even the loss of the Motion showed the people of England how much their own exertions were still required, if they would see Slavery extirpated, by proving that upon them alone the fate of the

execrable system hung. From that time the nation began to awaken to the truth; and the religious public especially was strongly enlisted on behalf of the oppressed missionaries and their persecuted converts; and this feeling soon increased into a detestation of the system of which such intolerance was the natural fruit.

I cannot forbear transferring to these pages, from "the Life of Sir T. F. Buxton," an affecting yet deeply interesting fact connected with some of the last moments of the persecuted and martyred Smith, which the amiable and excellent editor of the work has, in a most praiseworthy manner, rescued from oblivion. "When Smith was dying in his prison, (which is described as a place only suited to purposes of torture,) he was compelled by his persecutors to draw a bill upon the funds of the London Missionary Society, in order to defray the expenses of his so-called trial. Many years afterwards the secretary of that Society, in arranging some old papers, met with this bill. In looking at it, his attention was drawn to one corner of the sheet, and, on examining it more carefully, he found, written in a minute hand, the reference, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9; on turning to which he found the text, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.'"* This touching incident affords a striking proof of the divinity and power of the gospel which Mr. Smith had preached to others, in the support which it afforded him under peculiarly trying circumstances: for it may be truly said he died *in* the cause of God, and he died *for* it; but

" His God sustain'd him in his final hour :
His final hour brought glory to his God."

We have also, in this beautiful quotation, a fine illustration of that divine charity that "thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; charity" that "never faileth." (1 Cor. xiii. 5, 7, 8.) We recognise in the persecuted missionary of Demerara the spirit of the proto-martyr Stephen, who, whilst pelted to death with stones, which crushed his body, "kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." (Acts vii. 60.)

But though there was a similarity in the deaths of these two Christian martyrs, their funerals were very dissimilar. The bitter persecuting Jews had stoned Stephen to death; but they

* "Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton," p. 140.

were not so inhuman as to deny him burial, they did not prohibit his friends from attending him to the grave. Hence it is stated, "Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him." (Acts viii. 2.) But this privilege was denied to the martyred Smith, and that in a British isle in the nineteenth century. The authorities at Demerara had even prohibited the afflicted wife from attending the body of her husband to its last resting-place; and he was interred at four o'clock in the morning instead of ten in the forenoon, as was at first intended. But "Mrs. Smith exclaimed, in a loud and frantic voice, 'General Murray shall not prevent my following my husband to the grave, and I will go in spite of all he can do.'" Accompanied, therefore, by her faithful friend Mrs. Elliott, though they were threatened with imprisonment if they attempted to follow the corpse, she "left the jail at half-past three in the morning, dark as it was, accompanied only by a free black man, with a lantern; and proceeded to the burial-place, where they beheld the mournful spectacle,—a beloved husband, and a dear friend, committed to the silent grave."*

But to return: In the following year Mr. Wilberforce, the great champion of the oppressed, retired from Parliament; on which occasion he wrote to Mr. Buxton as his "PARLIAMENTARY EXECUTOR," wishing him to move for a new writ for Bramber: and, seven years afterwards, his heart being still in the work, though he had left the House, he again wrote to his "dear friend," as his "heir-at-law," urging him to direct his attention to the subject of the Slave-Trade as conducted by foreign nations, as well as to the extinction of Slavery in the British colonies.

Soon after the insurrection at Demerara, a riot took place at Barbadoes; the Rev. William J. Shrewsbury, a Wesleyan missionary, was driven from the island by an infuriated mob of Whites, the Wesleyan chapel was demolished, and "not one stone left upon another." In June of this year, (1825,) Mr. Buxton brought this subject before the House of Commons, in a long and able speech. He did this without any application on the part of the Wesleyan Society: his speech was the spontaneous emanation of his own sense of justice, and respect for religious liberty: and in this spirit he was ably supported in the House by different Members. Mr. Canning, when speaking of Mr. Shrewsbury, said, that "there did not appear the slightest ground of blame or suspicion." Mr. Shrewsbury had been charged, among other matters, with corresponding with Mr.

* SMITH'S "History of Missionary Societies," vol. ii. p. 355.

Buxton: but the latter stated in the House, "I never received from or wrote to him a single letter; nor did I know that such a man existed, till I happened to take up a newspaper, and there read, with some astonishment, that he was going to be hanged for corresponding with me!" The result of this discussion was the unanimous "indignation" of the House of Commons at the disgraceful transaction in Barbadoes, and an assurance, in its Address to His Majesty, of its readiness "to concur in any measure which His Majesty may deem necessary for securing ample protection and religious toleration to all His Majesty's subjects in the West-India colonies."

Mr. Buxton, in his reply, observed, "He was glad that the discussion had taken place; he was sure it would do much service. He rejoiced, also, at the manly sentiments uttered by the Right Honourable Secretary for Foreign Affairs. It would teach the West Indians to be more moderate in their future measures. They had had their triumphs over justice and humanity: the missionary Smith was mouldering in his grave; the missionary Shrewsbury was an exile; and the noble-minded Austin, who vainly attempted to stem the torrent of prejudice, had lost his golden hopes of church-preferment, and was at that moment a stipendiary curate in an insignificant village. A few more such triumphs would only hasten the downfall of the whole system. He wished it to be distinctly understood, that it was his firm and unalterable resolution to devote all his life and his efforts to advocate the cause of the slaves; and that he would persist in that course, in spite of opposition, unpopularity, obloquy, or falsehood."

The Anti-Slavery Society at this juncture commenced the issue of regular monthly publications; and at the end of the year they held a public meeting in London, and again petitioned Parliament to take into consideration the subject of Negro Slavery, and to adopt more effective means for its Abolition. Their example was followed by the country at large; and nearly six hundred and fifty petitions, all most respectably and numerous signed, were presented during the ensuing Session. The effects of the debates on the persecuted missionaries and the destruction of mission-property became the universal topic; and the name of the martyred Smith especially was the general rallying cry. The Cabinet Ministers, on the whole, were rather friendly than otherwise to Abolition; but they wished it to be carried on their own plan, and were averse to the employment of other agents than the regularly constituted colonial authorities. There was, in fact, on the part of the Government, too

much leaning towards the planters ; and the most flimsy excuses were constantly adduced for not adopting decisive measures. Mr. Buxton in 1824 had boldly charged the Government with vacillation, and with the violation of a "distinct pledge that the condition of the slave population should be ameliorated:" and when the same devoted advocate of the Negroes presented the London petition against Slavery on the 1st of March, 1826, he again pointed out how ineffectual had been the recommendations of the Government to the colonial legislatures generally. He closed his speech by saying, "I am anxious to say nothing that can give offence to any party ; but it is my duty broadly to declare my confirmed and deliberate conviction, that this House must do the work themselves, or suffer it to be altogether abandoned." *

But the Government preferred to give the West Indians "another year" before they would legislate, so that nothing was accomplished during that session. But the impossibility of any thing being done effectively by the legislatures abroad to relieve the oppressed, became daily more apparent. The accounts received from the colonies were still most unsatisfactory. The most studied inattention was paid to the parliamentary injunctions, and very determined opposition made to the introduction of any measures that would diminish the rigours of Slavery. It now became certain that Slavery would never be ameliorated by the masters of slaves ; their laws would never reach the evil : the remedy, as Mr. Buxton had stated, could only be effectually applied by the Government of a free people. At length the British lion was aroused, shook his mane, stood erect, and resolved to accomplish his purpose. The spirit-stirring lines of Cowper were the sentiment of the whole nation :

" My ear is pain'd,
My soul is sick, with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
We have no slaves at home : then why abroad ? "

The time was now approaching when the chains of the Negro were to be snapped asunder : their cry, and the united cry of Britain, had reached the ear of Heaven. Upwards of five thousand petitions in favour of Negro Emancipation were presented to Parliament during the session of 1831 ; and the annual meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society of that year was crowded to excess, and the Resolutions were in favour of immediate and total Abolition. The West-Indian proprietors resident in Eng-

* HANSARD'S "Parliamentary Debates."

land were panic-stricken at the mighty movement that was now going on; and, to counteract the progress of public opinion, they published and circulated through the country a manifesto, declaring Abolition to be inevitably ruinous to the slaves as well as to their owners, boldly contradicting the well-authenticated instances that had been published of the manner in which the slaves were still treated, and falsely asserting that so much was their condition now improved that they were perfectly contented and happy. These assertions were believed by a few; but by the great majority of the nation they were treated with the contempt which they merited.

The colonial authorities, finding that matters were coming to a crisis, were maddened with rage. They determined to wring from the oppressed Negroes the utmost degree of labour they could exact, and to treat them with the most rigorous severity. Their plan was, wickedly and wantonly to goad them into disobedience by their unreasonable exactions, and then to make their revolt a pretext for asserting their unfitness for emancipation.* They abridged the Christmas holidays, which from time immemorial had been allowed to the slaves; and once more vented their spleen against the missionaries, several of whom they arrested in the street, dragged them from their homes, and "cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely." (Acts xvi. 23.) The missionaries of different denominations were designated sectaries, and none was exempt from abuse and persecution. Moravians, Baptists, and Wesleyans were alike stigmatized as fanatics. The Rev. Messrs. Knibb and Burchell of the Baptist Society were driven from the island of Jamaica; and they arrived in England at the very juncture when their evidence before a Parliamentary Committee was of the utmost value. Among the Wesleyans, the Rev. Messrs. Williams, Campbell, Whitehouse, Orton, Greenwood, Box, and Rawden, had been thrown into jail, and barely escaped with their lives. The planters stopped not here, but demolished the chapels in which the poor despised Negro had worshipped the God of heaven, burnt or pulled down the mission-houses, and tried every expedient to banish the missionaries, intimating that nothing short of their removal could save the islands from ruin.

But all this outburst of feeling on the part of the planters, and others interested in the continuance of Slavery, only tended to increase the desire and determination, on the part of the

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

friends of the long-oppressed Negro, to ask for immediate and total Abolition. At length the session of 1833 arrived, and the first reformed Parliament assembled. The Anti-Slavery Society in London held their meeting this year a month earlier than usual. The Great Room at Exeter-Hall was crowded to excess. Lord Suffield took the chair. The speeches were most eloquent and interesting; and the Resolutions were to the effect that immediate emancipation was safe and practicable, and was a debt which had long been due to the oppressed Negroes. A few days afterwards, another meeting was held in the same Hall, at which were present delegates from the principal towns in the United Kingdom. Samuel Gurney, Esq., took the chair. A Resolution was passed unanimously, that Slavery must and should be exterminated; and a memorial to that effect, signed by all the delegates, was drawn up and presented the next day to Earl Grey.*

Lectures were delivered in all the counties of the kingdom. Crowded meetings were every where held; and the friends of the cause bestirred themselves from one end of the country to the other. The newspapers and periodicals caught the enthusiasm; the cause of mercy seemed the cause of religion; and many of the clergy and Dissenting ministers did not hesitate to urge upon their flocks the sinfulness of Slavery, and the righteousness of joining heart and hand for its overthrow. The flame soon spread far and wide; and from every corner of the land petitions poured in. The number of signatures attached to the petitions presented this session were calculated to amount to nearly a million and a half.† One of the petitions was from the females of Great Britain, which, within a very short period, had received no less than 187,000 signatures. This was presented by Mr. Buxton; but the document was so bulky that he was himself unable to carry it; so that "three honourable members went out with Mr. Buxton, and, by the united exertions of the four, the petition was brought in and placed upon the table, amidst the laughter and cheers of the House."‡

This was on the 14th of May, and the Government Bill for Emancipation was introduced to the House by Mr. Stanley, then Colonial Secretary, on the same evening. It underwent various modifications, and did not finally pass both Houses till the 20th of August. It was not entirely what the Abolitionists wished; but they were thankful for it as it was; and on

* TAYLOR'S "Biographical Sketch of Thomas Clarkson."

† "Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton," p. 316.

‡ *Idem*, p. 321.

August 28th it received the royal assent. The Bill which was then passed enacted, that Slavery should cease to exist in the British colonies, on the 1st of August, 1834. From that time a system of apprenticeship was to commence; and the domestic slave was to have his full liberty in 1838, and the field-slave two years later. The premium of twenty millions to the planters, as a remuneration for the loss which, it was assumed, they would sustain, was strongly objected to by some of the Abolitionists, who also contended that every Negro ought at once to have been made absolutely free, without any pecuniary grant whatever. But Slavery was felt to be an evil of dreadful magnitude; and, as the nation had for ages participated in the guilt of it, both by connivance and direct sanction, though the sacrifice of twenty millions of money on the part of the country was great, the sum was cheerfully advanced; and the measure altogether gave general satisfaction, especially to the religious part of the community.

The anxiously-expected First of August, 1834, at length arrived; and the precious boon of liberty was bestowed on upwards of eight hundred thousand Negroes, who were then raised from the condition of chattels, and goods, and *things*, to the dignity of man; and our nation was freed from a load of guilt which had long hung like a mill-stone about our necks, ready to sink us to perdition. In the Statute-Book there was now an Abolition Code. Liberty of conscience was given to the too long degraded and persecuted Negro in all our Colonies; and Great Britain, from whose empire the sun never sets, became on that day universally free!

That day was hailed with unutterable delight by the recipients of the boon, as well as by the friends of Abolition. That day made the slave a free man, knocked off his fetters, and healed that soul into which the iron had so frequently entered. It was observed very generally throughout England as a day of rejoicing: and what a pleasing contrast did that morning present, in the West Indies, to the assertions of the fearful and feverish planter, and to scenes of former times! In several of the islands proclamations were issued which announced the First of August as a day of Public Thanksgiving, and ordered all churches and chapels to be opened at the usual time for morning service, as on the sabbath-day. Business was suspended, and the shops were universally closed: it was a holiday by common consent; and that ever-memorable and glorious day was passed in a religious and most happy manner. Many thousands of human beings, who had that morning, for the first time, breathed the air of freedom,—of freedom at least from

absolute bondage,—assembled in cheerful crowds to praise and worship Him who “looseth the prisoners.”

The Rev. Peter Duncan, though not in the West Indies at the time, was intimately acquainted with West-Indian affairs; and, in his interesting “Narrative of the Wesleyan Mission to Jamaica,” observes on this subject: “The eventful First of August at last arrived,—a day which, according to the predictions of some, was to be marked with disorder, rapine, and blood. But how delightfully were such predictions falsified! The behaviour of the emancipated Negroes exceeded the expectations of their best friends. On that day, and the following sabbath, thousands of the apprentices were seen wending their way to the house of prayer. Jamaica had never witnessed such vast religious assemblies before. Never on that island had so many voices been raised in praise to the Giver of all good: never had so many united in prayer at the throne of the heavenly grace. Thousands of petitions ascended to God on behalf of the king, and the benevolent in the mother-country, through whose efforts the oppressed had been set free. It is true, restrictions did exist under the system of apprenticeship; but much was gained. THE REIGN OF PERSECUTION WAS AT AN END; and no man was allowed to invade the sacred rights of conscience. *Sunday markets were abolished*; and all might employ the time of the day in attending to those sacred exercises for which the sabbath was instituted.”*

In some of the Wesleyan chapels watch-night services were held on the previous evening, when suitable and appropriate sermons were preached; and, just as the clock struck twelve, it was stated that the First of August had arrived, with the cheering announcement, “You are all free!” Gratitude flowed from every heart, and tears of joy ran down many a sable face; whilst some, in the fulness of their loyalty to their beloved sovereign, and with an enthusiasm which had never before been witnessed, loudly exclaimed, “God save the king! Long live King William IV.! God save the king!” Devout and fervent prayers were then offered up for the king, the royal family, the British Parliament, and British Christians generally, by whom, under God, the great boon was conferred; and the spirit of loyalty and gratitude was great and general. But was the Author and Giver of “every good and perfect gift” left out of the question? By no means. One of the missionaries, from whom we have already quoted, and who communicated the

* DUNCAN’S “Narrative of the Wesleyan Mission to Jamaica,” pp. 361, 362.

result of the First of August to the Missionary Committee from the island of Antigua, where the legislature wisely dispensed with the apprenticeship, thus writes: "O how did my heart thrill with ecstasy, while hundreds upon hundreds, just delivered 'from the house of bondage,' made the place ring again," whilst yet upon their knees, "with the voice of joy and thanksgiving! It was like Israel in the time of David and Solomon, when 'all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord, and the king.' (1 Chron. xxix. 20.)"*

Another Wesleyan missionary, in describing a parallel scene which occurred in another chapel on the same island at the same hour, says, "It seemed as if the very heavens rejoiced with us; for just at this moment the thunder rolled, with all the majesty of a royal salute, while the clouds poured down their precious contents upon the thirsty ground, as if emblematical of those hallowing influences of the Holy Spirit which we then felt."† Throughout every island, in fact, rang the glad sound of thanksgiving to the Father of all; for the chains were broken, and the slaves were free. One of the Moravian missionaries, writing from Jamaica, says, "We have good reason to believe that this was a day of real blessing. The Negroes frequently expressed their thankfulness to God for the benefit conferred upon them; and promised good conduct, on their part, in their new civil condition. One said, 'First we thank the Father in heaven, and then the king, and *massa*,' his master and former owner. Surely, then, on the first day's enjoyment of freedom, a sufficient pledge was given for its future improvement. To God were its earliest hours devoted, in a grateful acknowledgment, that, while the boon was a blessing in itself, it was the more sacred, because He was the great Dispenser of it. At his feet the freed men poured out the exuberant joy of their hearts; and, from the lips of his minister, they willingly received those truths which were calculated to make them free indeed, to seal on their hearts a lasting sense of the favour that day conferred, and embody in their lives every thing which could adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour."

The interest of that auspicious day was, indeed, greatly heightened by the consideration that the pure influence of our holy religion, the religion of the gospel, had procured this great blessing, on the one hand; and, on the other, had prepared the recipients for the right use and enjoyment of it. It was the

* "Wesleyan Missionary Notices," vol. vii. p. 555.

† *Idem*, p. 554.

influence which Christianity had exerted upon the masses of the people at home, that obtained this great charter; and it was missionary toil abroad, and the preaching of the same everlasting gospel, which had supported the Negro under the infliction of grievous wrongs, and which now fitted and prepared him to enter upon the possession of his undoubted rights. "Glad tidings" of the peaceable conduct of the Negroes reached England from all the colonies, thus proving that they were worthy of the confidence which was reposed in them: and the general feeling was, "To God be all the praise!"

Thus closed the memorable First of August, 1834. By many persons that great measure was regarded as an experiment, connected with considerable hazard; but it succeeded beyond the hopes of its most devoted advocates. The religious Negroes very generally did honour to their profession; and subsequent events have proved emancipation to be productive of great good. Education now began to advance with surprising rapidity; and Christianity made a steady progress, that sanctified the boon which the emancipated Negro had received; so that the debased and crouching slave became converted into an industrious and happy peasant, whose godliness and honesty commanded general respect. The following extract from a series of articles on the West Indies, which appeared in the "Christian Times" of March 2d, 1849, will exhibit the truth of this statement:—

In Jamaica and British Guiana there are at least fifty thousand persons who, only a few years ago, were slaves, who are now living on their own freeholds, upon which they have, for the most part, erected houses for themselves of a far more durable and comfortable kind than the Negro houses they formerly occupied. It is no uncommon thing, in the latter colony, for twenty or thirty Negroes who have been refused leases of the houses and grounds they occupied when slaves, or to whom the land-owners declined to sell those houses and grounds, to become purchasers of an estate of five hundred acres; to employ a surveyor to divide it amongst them in lots proportioned to the capital which each one contributed; by their united labour to make up the sea and back dams; to open, widen, and deepen the canal by which the land is drained; to make up the roads running through the estate; to build each one a comfortable house for his family; and to erect, by their joint exertions, a place of worship in which they, and the Negroes on contiguous estates, meet for mutual instruction and the worship of the Almighty.

Four years soon passed away, and, by the praiseworthy exertions of British Christians, on the First of August, 1838, the apprenticeship system throughout all the islands ceased, and Slavery was entirely exterminated. That day was also celebrated as a day of public thanksgiving; and religious services were held, when appropriate sermons were preached, and suitable

addresses delivered. The Negro then became fully free ; every link of the galling chain was broken ; the sun of liberty shone upon him in unclouded glory : his sabbaths were his own, his children were his own, and he could worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. On that day the sceptre of Queen Victoria extended only over freemen in the West Indies, not a single slave being left in thralldom.

“ ‘ But then, it has cost the country twenty millions ! ’ And do we grudge it ? It has cost us twenty millions ; but *it has saved the colonies !* It has cost us twenty millions ; but *it has liberated the Negroes !* It has cost us twenty millions ; but *it has preserved our honour*, and raised our fame among the nations of the earth. It has cost us twenty millions ; but, I trust, *it has saved us from the anger of that Deity*, who could not but have looked upon us in wrath and indignation, had not this evil been removed.” Thus spoke Sir Fowell Buxton at the Wesleyan Missionary Anniversary in Exeter-Hall. And this feeling was general ; for the poet’s philanthropic aspiration was caught by the nation : that was the feeling

“ Through every vein
Of all your empire :—that where Britain’s power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too.”

And therefore twenty millions of money were cheerfully given. That was a noble sacrifice ; but it was in a noble cause ; and we may conclude this chapter in the words of an eloquent citizen of another nation : “ Great Britain, loaded with an unprecedented debt, and with a grinding taxation, contracted a new debt of a hundred million dollars, to give freedom, not to Englishmen, but to the degraded African. I know not that history records an act so disinterested, so sublime. In the progress of ages, England’s naval triumphs will shrink into a more and more narrow space in the records of our race. This moral triumph will fill a broader, brighter page.” *

* DR. CHANNING.

CHAPTER V.

THE AFRICAN SLAVE-TRADE.

THE Slave-Trade unsubdued—Great Britain no longer participates in the Traffic—Has used her diplomatic Influence with other Nations—Great Expenditure incurred in discouraging the Slave-Trade—The Slave-Trade not destroyed, but increased—Sir T. F. Buxton's Statement—The Construction of Slave-Ships—Enormous Profits of the Slave-Trade—The Middle Passage—Capture of the "Carolina"—Original Tonnage allowed to Slave-Ships—The "Patacho" Slaver at Rio de Janeiro—Extracts from the Rev. P. G. Hill's Pamphlet, entitled "Fifty Days on board a Slaver"—A recent Capture near Sierra-Leone—The Negroes branded with red-hot Irons—Twenty thousand Negroes constantly on the Atlantic—Villages depopulated by Slave-Hunters—The Distress of the Africans at the Loss of their Relatives—The Hebrew Maid, and Jacob's Son Joseph—An Appeal to Christian Parents.

HAVING briefly sketched the rise, progress, and abolition of the British Slave-Trade, and the termination and destruction of Slavery in the British empire, the accomplishment of which sheds an halo of glory on our nation, and which is worthy of being placed upon everlasting record; the question almost involuntarily starts up, "But is the Slave-Trade abolished?" Facts the most incontrovertible and unquestionable, and almost innumerable, not only furnish an unqualified answer in the negative, but most clearly prove that the Slave-Trade is carried on at this day to a greater extent than it ever was; and, still further, that it is attended with more horrible cruelties, and with a greater amount of mortality, than it was sixty years ago, when the attention of Great Britain was first directed to its abolition. These are lamentable facts, and furnish a proof demonstrative of the magnitude of the evil, while they vouch for the correctness of Clarkson's metaphor, when he compared the Slave-Trade "to the fabulous hydra, having a hundred heads, every one of which it was necessary to cut off before it could be subdued."

It is matter of congratulation, however, that our own country no longer participates in the guilt of buying and selling men, women, and children, like cattle in a market; that our ships, whose canvass whitens every sea, and whose flag flutters in every breeze, are not crowded above and below with living cargoes; and that our merchandise, which is carried to every

port, is now a legitimate trade, one article being given in exchange for another. English merchants do not now send a few trinkets of finery, or a piece or two of blue baft, in barter for a human being. Powder and shot and fire-arms are not now furnished by them to some petty chief, who employs and expends that powder and shot in procuring for the European some of his own subjects in payment for those very articles. No: though it is to be feared that British capital has in some instances found its way into this corrupted and contraband channel, thank God, the British Slave-Trade *is* abolished, and British Slavery too! It is also to the honour of Great Britain, that she has used her diplomatic influence in rousing the government of other countries to the importance of this subject, and that her influence has been felt, and her example followed, by most of the foreign powers; two of whom proceeded to make the traffic piracy, punishable with death, as England had done. These two were the United States and Brazil. The rest did not go quite so far; but all of them made the traffic illegal, and, with the exception of the United States, have consented to what is called "the mutual Right of Search:" that is, each nation has agreed to permit its ships to be searched at sea by the ships of the other contracting parties, so as to detect any slaves who may be on board. And for some years past a line of British cruisers has been stationed along the African coast, and others on the opposite side of the Atlantic, near South America and the West Indies, to chase and capture slave-vessels.

The people of England, indeed, have taken a more lively and intense interest in this than, perhaps, in any other foreign subject: and the Government, whether in the hands of one party or another, cannot be accused of having, for a long series of years, been wanting either in zeal or in exertion for the suppression of the Slave-traffic. Towards the end of the last century, the cruelty and the carnage which raged in Africa were exposed; and, as already stated, after twenty years' struggle, Great Britain in 1807 prohibited her subjects from engaging in the Slave-Trade: in 1833 she borrowed twenty millions of pounds sterling to purchase the freedom of the slaves in her West-India and other colonies; and on the First of August, 1834, British Slavery became extinct; and the British Government, in abolishing Slavery, then laid down the principle that no human being has a right to enslave another; and all or most of the great powers of Europe have been induced by Great Britain to unite in expressing their abhorrence of this

traffic, and with all of them treaties more or less stringent have been made for its extinction.

Eight years ago, England had expended in payment to foreign powers on account of the Slave-Trade, in bounties, and in the maintenance of courts established for the adjudication of captured slavers, upwards of fifteen millions sterling. If we add this to our twenty millions, and the large sum still annually expended in supporting a considerable force of cruisers to intercept and destroy the traffic, and the five or six millions which, it is calculated, the people of the United Kingdom annually lose—or did lose, up to 1846—in the purchase of sugar, coffee, &c., from the West Indies, by way of encouraging free labour, instead of buying them from Brazil and other slave-holding countries, whence these articles can be had much cheaper; the amount is enormous. And to this we must add the immense loss of British life which is necessarily occasioned in pursuing the object. But what is the result of all this? The question again presents itself, “Is the Slave-Trade suppressed? Does Brazil, does Cuba, does Porto Rico, does Buenos Ayres, does Texas, do the United States, import no Negroes now? Are there no slave-ships packed with Negroes crossing the Atlantic at this moment? Are they only wax, teak-wood, and elephants’ teeth that form the cargoes for which vessels now visit the Guinea coast? Are there no slave-warehouses now on the line of shore between Cape Verd and Biafra? Are the inhabitants of Timbuctoo and the banks of Lake Tchad wondering what strange thing has befallen the Whites, that there is now no demand for Negroes? And do they now find it useless to kidnap one another as they did formerly? Do no droves of slaves come westward now? Has the stream of traffic, disappointed of its western outlet, turned northward in the direction of the Barbary States and the Isthmus of Suez? Have the labours of our Sharps and Clarksons and Wilberforces, of our philanthropists and statesmen, and the struggles and negotiations of forty years, been crowned with success?”* In one word: after the millions of money that have been expended, and the multitudes of lives that have been sacrificed, once more we ask, “Is the Slave-Trade at an end?”

Startling as the assertion is, The Slave-Trade is not extinguished, the Slave-Trade is not diminished, the Slave-Trade is really abolished only in reference to Great Britain. Nay, more, the number of Negroes imported into America is twice as great

* CHAMBERS’S “Miscellany,” No. 19.