

Some Historical Account of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of Its Inhabitants eBook

Some Historical Account of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of Its Inhabitants by Anthony Benezet

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INTRODUCTION.

The slavery of the Negroes having, of late, drawn the attention of many serious minded people; several tracts have been published setting forth its inconsistency with every christian and moral virtue, which it is hoped will have weight with the judicious; especially at a time when the liberties of mankind are become so much the subject of general attention. For the satisfaction of the serious enquirer who may not have the opportunity of seeing those tracts, and such others who are sincerely desirous that the iniquity of this practice may become effectually apparent, to those in whose power, it may be to put a stop to any farther progress therein; it is proposed, hereby, to republish the most material parts of said tracts; and in order to enable the reader to form a true judgment of this matter, which, tho' so very important, is generally disregarded, or so artfully misrepresented by those whose interest leads them to vindicate it, as to bias the opinions of people otherwise upright; some account will be here given of the different parts of Africa, from which the Negroes are brought to America; with an impartial relation from what motives the Europeans were first induced to undertake, and have since continued this iniquitous traffic. And here it will not be improper to premise, that tho' wars, arising from the common depravity of human nature, have happened, as well among the Negroes as other nations, and the weak sometimes been made captives to the strong; yet nothing appears, in the various relations of the intercourse and trade for a long time carried on by the Europeans on that coast, which would induce us to believe, that there is any real foundation for that argument, so commonly advanced in vindication of that trade, viz. *"That the slavery of the Negroes took its rise from a desire, in the purchasers, to save the lives of such of them as were taken captives in war, who would otherwise have been sacrificed to the implacable revenge of their conquerors."* A plea which when compared with the history of those times, will appear to be destitute of Truth; and to have been advanced, and urged, principally by such as were concerned in reaping the gain of this infamous traffic, as a palliation of that, against which their own reason and conscience must have raised fearful objections.

SOME

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF

GUINEA.

* * * * *

[Price 2s. 6d. stitched.]

CHAP. I.

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Guinea affords an easy living to its inhabitants, with but little toil. The climate agrees well with the natives, but extremely unhealthful to the Europeans. Produces provisions in the greatest plenty. Simplicity of their householdry. The coast of Guinea described from the river Senegal to the kingdom of Angola. The fruitfulness of that part lying on and between the two great rivers Senegal and Gambia. Account of the different nations settled there. Order of government amongst the Jalofs. Good account of some of the Fulis. The Mandingos; their management, government, &c. Their worship. M. Adanson's account of those countries. Surprising vegetation. Pleasant appearance of the country. He found the natives very sociable and obliging.

When the Negroes are considered barely in their present abject state of slavery, broken-spirited and dejected; and too easy credit is given to the accounts we frequently hear or read of their barbarous and savage way of living in their own country; we shall be naturally induced to look upon them as incapable of improvement, destitute, miserable, and insensible of the benefits of life; and that our permitting them to live amongst us, even on the most oppressive terms, is to them a favour. But, on impartial enquiry, the case will appear to be far otherwise; we shall find that there is scarce a country in the whole world, that is better calculated for affording the necessary comforts of life to its inhabitants, with less solicitude and toil, than Guinea. And that notwithstanding the long converse of many of its inhabitants with (often) the worst of the Europeans, they still retain a great deal of innocent simplicity; and, when not stirred up to revenge from the frequent abuses they have received from the Europeans in general, manifest themselves to be a humane, sociable people, whose faculties are as capable of improvement as those of other Men; and that their oeconomy and government is, in many respects, commendable. Hence it appears they might have lived happy, if not disturbed by the Europeans; more especially, if these last had used such endeavours as their christian profession requires, to communicate to the ignorant Africans that superior knowledge which Providence had favoured them with. In order to set this matter in its true light, and for the information of those well-minded people who are desirous of being fully acquainted with the merits of a cause, which is of the utmost consequence; as therein the lives and happiness of thousands, and hundreds of thousands, of our fellow *Men* have fallen, and are daily falling, a sacrifice to selfish avarice and usurped power, I will here give some account of the several divisions of those parts of Africa from whence the Negroes are brought, with a summary of their produce; the disposition of their respective inhabitants; their improvements, &c. &c. extracted from authors of credit; mostly such as have been principal officers in the English, French and Dutch factories, and who resided

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many years in those countries. But first it is necessary to premise, as a remark generally applicable to the whole coast of Guinea, "*That the Almighty, who has determined and appointed the bounds of the habitation of men on the face of the earth*" in the manner that is most conducive to the well-being of their different natures and dispositions, has so ordered it, that altho' Guinea is extremely unhealthy[A] to the Europeans, of whom many thousands have met there with a miserable and untimely end, yet it is not so with the Negroes, who enjoy a good state of health[B] and are able to procure to themselves a comfortable subsistence, with much less care and toil than is necessary in our more northern climate; which last advantage arises not only from the warmth of the climate, but also from the overflowing of the rivers, whereby the land is regularly moistened and rendered extremely fertile; and being in many places improved by culture, abounds with grain and fruits, cattle, poultry, &c. The earth yields all the year a fresh supply of food: Few clothes are requisite, and little art necessary in making them, or in the construction of their houses, which are very simple, principally calculated to defend them from the tempestuous seasons and wild beasts; a few dry reeds covered with matts serve for their beds. The other furniture, except what belongs to cookery, gives the women but little trouble; the moveables of the greatest among them amounting only to a few earthen pots, some wooden utensils, and gourds or calabashes; from these last, which grow almost naturally over their huts, to which they afford an agreeable shade, they are abundantly stocked with good clean vessels for most household uses, being of different sizes, from half a pint to several gallons.

[Footnote A: *Gentleman's Magazine, Supplement, 1763. Extract of a letter wrote from the island of Senegal, by Mr. Boone, practitioner of physic there, to Dr. Brocklesby of London.*

"To form just idea of the unhealthiness of the climate, it will be necessary to conceive a country extending three hundred leagues East, and more to the North and South. Through this country several large rivers empty themselves into the sea; particularly the Sanaga, Gambia and Sherbro; these, during the rainy months, which begin in July and continue till October, overflow their banks, and lay the whole flat country under water; and indeed, the very sudden rise of these rivers is incredible to persons who have never been within the tropicks, and are unacquainted with the violent rains that fall there. At Galem, nine hundred miles from the mouth of the Sanaga, I am informed that the waters rise one hundred and fifty feet perpendicular, from the bed of the river. This information I received from a gentleman, who was surgeon's mate to a party sent there, and the only survivor of three captains command, each consisting of one captain, two lieutenants, one ensign, a surgeon's

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mate, three serjeants, three corporals, and fifty privates. "When the rains are at an end, which usually happens in October, the intense heat of the sun soon dries up the waters which lie on the higher parts of the earth, and the remainder forms lakes of stagnated waters, in which are found all sorts of dead animals. These waters every day decrease, till at last they are quite exhaled, and then the effluvia that arises is almost insupportable. At this season, the winds blow so very hot from off the land, that I can compare them to nothing but the heat proceeding from the mouth of an oven. This occasions the Europeans to be sorely vexed with bilious and putrid fevers. From this account you will not be surprized, that the total loss of British subjects in this island only, amounted to above two thousand five hundred, in the space of three years that I was there, in such a putrid moist air as I have described."

]

[Footnote B: James Barbot, agent general to the French African company, in his account of Africa, page 105, says, "The natives are seldom troubled with any distempers, being little affected with the unhealthy air. In tempestuous times they keep much within doors; and when exposed to the weather, their skins being suppled, and pores closed by daily anointing with palm oil, the weather can make but little impression on them."]

That part of Africa from which the Negroes are sold to be carried into slavery, commonly known by the name of Guinea, extends along the coast three or four thousand miles. Beginning at the river Senegal, situate about the 17th degree of North latitude, being the nearest part of Guinea, as well to Europe as to North America; from thence to the river Gambia, and in a southerly course to Cape Sierra Leona, comprehends a coast of about seven hundred miles; being the same tract for which Queen Elizabeth granted charters to the first traders to that coast: from Sierra Leona, the land of Guinea takes a turn to the eastward, extending that course about fifteen hundred miles, including those several civilians known by name of *the Grain Coast, the Ivory Coast, the Gold Coast, and the Slave Coast, with the large kingdom of Benin*. From thence the land runs southward along the coast about twelve hundred miles, which contains the *kingdoms of Congo and Angola*; there the trade for slaves ends. From which to the southernmost Cape of Africa, called the Cape of Good Hope, the country is settled by Caffres and Hottentots, who have never been concerned in the making or selling slaves.

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Of the parts which are above described, the first which presents itself to view, is that situate on the great river Senegal, which is said to be navigable more than a thousand miles, and is by travellers described to be very agreeable and fruitful. Andrew Brue, principal factor for the French African company, who lived sixteen years in that country, after describing its fruitfulness and plenty, near the sea, adds,[A] "The farther you go from the sea, the country on the river seems the more fruitful and well improved; abounding with Indian corn, pulse, fruit, &c. Here are vast meadows, which feed large herds of great and small cattle, and poultry numerous: The villages that lie thick on the river, shew the country is well peopled." The same author, in the account of a voyage he made up the river Gambia, the mouth of which lies about three hundred miles South of the Senegal, and is navigable about six hundred miles up the country, says,[B] "That he was surprized to see the land so well cultivated; scarce a spot lay unimproved; the low lands, divided by small canals, were all formed with rice, &c. the higher ground planted with millet, Indian corn, and pease of different sorts; their beef excellent; poultry plenty, and very cheap, as well as all other necessaries of life." Francis Moor, who was sent from England about the year 1735, in the service of the African company, and resided at James Fort, on the river Gambia, or in other factories on that river, about five years, confirms the above account of the fruitfulness of the country. William Smith, who was sent in the year 1726, by the African company, to survey their settlements throughout the whole coast of Guinea[C] says, "The country about the Gambia is pleasant and fruitful; provisions of all kinds being plenty and exceeding cheap." The country on and between the two above-mentioned rivers is large and extensive, inhabited principally by those three Negro nations known by the name of Jalofs, Fulis, and Mandingos. The Jalofs possess the middle of the country. The Fulis principal settlement is on both sides of the Senegal; great numbers of these people are also mixed with the Mandingos; which last are mostly settled on both sides the Gambia. The government of the Jalofs is represented as under a better regulation than can be expected from the common opinion we entertain of the Negroes. We are told in the Collection,[D] "That the King has under him several ministers of state, who assist him in the exercise of justice. *The grand Jerafo* is the chief justice thro' all the King's dominions, and goes in circuit from time to time to hear complaints, and determine controversies. *The King's treasurer* exercises the same employment, and has under him Alkairs, who are governors of towns or villages. That the *Kondi*, or *Viceroy*, goes the circuit with the chief justice, both to hear causes, and inspect into the behaviour of the *Alkadi*, or chief magistrate of every village in their several

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districts[E].” *Vasconcelas*, an author mentioned in the collection, says, “The ancientest are preferred to be the *Prince’s counsellors*, who keep always about his person; and the men of most judgment and experience are the judges.” *The Fulis* are settled on both sides of the river *Senegal*: Their country, which is very fruitful and populous, extends near four hundred miles from East to West. They are generally of a deep tawny complexion, appearing to bear some affinity with the Moors, whose country they join on the North. They are good farmers, and make great harvest of corn, cotton, tobacco, &c. and breed great numbers of cattle of all kinds. *Bartholomew Stibbs*, (mentioned by *Fr. Moor*) in his account of that country says,[F] “*They were a cleanly, decent, industrious people, and very affable.*” But the most particular account we have, of these people, is from *Francis Moor* himself, who says,[G] “Some of these Fuli blacks who dwell on both sides the river *Gambia*, are in subjection to the *Mandingos*, amongst whom they dwell, having been probably driven out of their country by war or famine. They have chiefs of their own, who rule with much moderation. Few of them will drink brandy, or any thing stronger than water and sugar, being strict *Mahometans*. Their form of government goes on easy, because the people are of a good quiet disposition, and so well instructed in what is right, that a man who does ill, is the abomination of all, and, none will support him against the chief. In these countries, the natives are not covetous of land, desiring no more than what they use; and as they do not plough with horses and cattle, they can use but very little, therefore the *Kings* are willing to give the *Fulis* leave to live in their country, and cultivate their lands. If any of their people are known to be made slaves, all the *Fulis* will join to redeem them; they also support the old, the blind, and lame, amongst themselves; and as far as their abilities go, they supply the necessities of the *Mandingos*, great numbers of whom they have maintained in famine.” *The author*, from his own observations, says, “They were rarely angry, and that he never heard them abuse one another.”

[Footnote A: Astley’s collect. vol. 2. page 46.]

[Footnote B: Astley’s collection of voyages, vol. 2, page 86.]

[Footnote C: William Smith’s voyage to Guinea, page 31, 34.]

[Footnote D: Astley’s collection, vol. 2, page 358.]

[Footnote E: *Idem.* 259.]

[Footnote F: *Moor’s travels into distant parts of Africa*, page 198.]

[Footnote G: *Ibid*, page 21.]

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The Mandingos are said by A. Brue before mentioned, "To be the most numerous nation on the Gambia, besides which, numbers of them are dispersed over all these countries; being the most rigid Mahometans amongst the Negroes, they drink neither wine nor brandy, and are politer than the other Negroes. The chief of the trade goes through their hands. Many are industrious and laborious, keeping their ground well cultivated, and breeding a good stock of cattle.[A] Every town has an *Alkadi*, or *Governor*, who has great power; for most of them having two common fields of clear ground, one for corn, and the other for rice, *the Alkadi* appoints the labour of all the people. The men work the corn ground, and the women and girls the rice ground; and as they all equally labour, so he equally divides the corn amongst them; and in case they are in want, the others supply them. This *Alkadi* decides all quarrels, and has the first voice in all conferences in town affairs." Some of these Mandingos who are settled at Galem, far up the river Senegal, can read and write Arabic tolerably, and are a good hospitable people, who carry on a trade with the inland nations." [B] They are extremely populous in those parts, their women being fruitful, and they not suffering any person amongst them, but such as are guilty of crimes, to be made slaves." We are told from Jobson, "[C] That the Mahometan Negroes say their prayers thrice a day. Each village has a priest who calls them to their duty. It is surprizing (says the author) as well as commendable, to see the modesty, attention, and reverence they observe during their worship. He asked some of their priests the purport of their prayers and ceremonies; their answer always was, *That they adored God by prostrating themselves before him; that by humbling themselves, they acknowledged their own insignificancy, and farther intreated him to forgive their faults, and to grant them all good and necessary things as well as deliverance from evil.*" Jobson takes notice of several good qualities in these Negroe priests, particularly their great sobriety. They gain their livelihood by keeping school for the education of the children. The boys are taught to read and write. They not only teach school, but rove about the country, teaching and instructing, for which the whole country is open to them; and they have a free course through all places, though the Kings may be at war with one another.

[Footnote A: Astley's collect. vol. 2, page 269.]

[Footnote B: Astley's collect. vol. 2, page 73.]

[Footnote C: Ibid, 296.]

The three fore-mentioned nations practise several trades, as smiths, potters, sadlers, and weavers. Their smiths particularly work neatly in gold and silver, and make knives, hatchets, reaping hooks, spades and shares to cut iron, &c. &c. Their potters make neat tobacco pipes, and pots to boil their food. Some authors say that weaving is their principal trade; this is done by the women and girls, who spin and weave very fine cotton cloth, which they dye blue or black.[A] F. Moor says, the Jalofs particularly make great quantities of the cotton cloth; their pieces are generally twenty-seven yards long,

and about nine inches broad, their looms being very narrow; these they sew neatly together, so as to supply the use of broad cloth.

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[Footnote A: F. Moor, 28.]

It was in these parts of Guinea, that M. Adanson, correspondent of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, mentioned in some former publications, was employed from the year 1749, to the year 1753, wholly in making *natural* and *philosophical* observations on the country about the rivers Senegal and Gambia. Speaking of the great heats in Senegal, he says,[A] "It is to them that they are partly indebted for the fertility of their lands; which is so great, that, with little labour and care, there is no fruit nor grain but grow in great plenty."

[Footnote A: M. Adanson's voyage to Senegal, &c, page 308.]

Of the soil on the Gambia, he says,[A] "It is rich and deep, and amazingly fertile; it produces spontaneously, and almost without cultivation, all the necessaries of life, grain, fruit, herbs, and roots. Every thing matures to perfection, and is excellent in its kind." [B] One thing, which always surprized him, was the prodigious rapidity with which the sap of trees repairs any loss they may happen to sustain in that country: "And I was never," says he, "more astonished, than when landing four days after the locusts had devoured all the fruits and leaves, and even the buds of the trees, to find the trees covered with new leaves, and they did not seem to me to have suffered much." [C] "It was then," says the same author; "the fish season; you might see them in shoals approaching towards land. Some of those shoals were fifty fathom square, and the fish crowded together in such a manner, as to roll upon one another, without being able to swim. As soon as the Negroes perceive them coming towards land, they jump into the water with a basket in one hand, and swim with the other. They need only to plunge and to lift up their basket, and they are sure to return loaded with fish." Speaking of the appearance of the country, and of the disposition of the people, he says,[D] "Which way soever I turned mine eyes on this pleasant spot, I beheld a perfect image of pure nature; an agreeable solitude, bounded on every side by charming landscapes; the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; the ease and indolence of the Negroes, reclined under the shade of their spreading foliage; the simplicity of their dress and manners; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state. They are, generally speaking, very good-natured, sociable, and obliging. I was not a little pleased with this my first reception; it convinced me, that there ought to be a considerable abatement made in the accounts I had read and heard every where of the savage character of the Africans. I observed both in Negroes and Moors, great humanity and sociableness, which gave me strong hopes that I should be very safe amongst them, and meet with the success I desired in my enquiries after the curiosities of the country." [E] He was agreeably

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amused with the conversation of the Negroes, their *ables*, *dialogues*, and *witty stories* with which they entertain each other alternately, according to their custom. Speaking of the remarks which the natives made to him, with relation to the *stars* and *planets*, he says, "It is amazing, that such a rude and illiterate people, should reason so pertinently in regard to those heavenly bodies; there is no manner of doubt, but that with proper instruments, and a good will, they would become *excellent astronomers*."

[Footnote A: Idem, page 164.]

[Footnote B: M. Adanson, page 161.]

[Footnote C: Idem, page 171.]

[Footnote D: Ibid, page 54.]

[Footnote E: Adanson, page 252, *ibid*.]

CHAP. II

The Ivory Coast; its soil and produce. The character of the *natives* misrepresented by some authors. These misrepresentations occasioned by *the Europeans* having treacherously carried off many of their people. *John Smith*, surveyor to the African company, his observations thereon. *John Snock's* remarks. *The Gold Coast* and *Slave Coast*, these have the most *European factories*, and furnish the greatest number of slaves to *the Europeans*. Exceeding fertile. The country of *Axim*, and of *Ante*. Good account of the *inland people* Great fishery. Extraordinary trade for slaves. *The Slave Coast*. *The kingdom of Whidah*. Fruitful and pleasant. The natives kind and obliging. Very populous. Keep regular markets and fairs. Good order therein. Murder, adultery, and theft severely punished. The King's revenues. The principal people have an idea of the true God. Commendable care of the poor. Several small governments depend on *plunder* and the *slave trade*.

That part of Guinea known by the name of the *Grain*, and *Ivory Coast*, comes next in course. This coast extends about five hundred miles. The soil appears by account, to be in general fertile, producing abundance of rice and roots; indigo and cotton thrive without cultivation, and tobacco would be excellent, if carefully manufactured; they have fish in plenty; their flocks greatly increase, and their trees are loaded with fruit. They make a cotton cloth, which sells well on the Coast. In a word, the country is rich, and the commerce advantageous, and might be greatly augmented by such as would cultivate the friendship of the natives. These are represented by some writers as a rude, *treacherous people*, whilst several other *authors* of credit give them a very

different character, representing them as *sensible, courteous and the fairest traders on the coast of Guinea*. In the Collection, they are said[A] to be averse to drinking to excess, and such as do, are severely punished by the King's order: On enquiry why there is such a disagreement

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in the character given of these people, it appears, that though they are naturally inclined to be *kind to strangers*, with whom they are *fond of trading*, yet the *frequent injuries* done them by Europeans, have occasioned their being *suspicious and shy*. The same cause has been the occasion of the ill treatment they have sometimes given to innocent strangers, who have attempted to trade with them. As the Europeans have no settlement on this part of Guinea, the trade is carried on by signals from the ships, on the appearance of which the natives usually come on board in their canoes, bringing their gold-dust, ivory, &c. which has given opportunity to some villainous Europeans to carry them off with their effects, or retain them on board till a ransom is paid. It is noted by some, that since the European voyagers have carried away several of these people, their mistrust is so great, that it is very difficult to prevail on them to come on board. *William Smith* remarks,[B] "As we past along this coast, we very often lay before a town, and fired a gun for the natives to come off, but no soul came near us; at length we learnt by some ships that were trading down the coast, that the natives came seldom on board an English ship, for fear of being detained or carried off; yet last some ventured on board, but if those chanced to spy any arms, they would all immediately take to their canoes, and make the best of their way home. They had then in their possession one *Benjamin Cross* the mate of an English vessel, who was detained by them to make reprisals for some of their men, who had formerly been carried away by some English vessel." In the Collection we are told,[C]_This villainous custom is too often practised, chiefly by the Bristol and Liverpool ships, and is a great detriment to the slave trade on the windward coast. John Snock, mentioned in *Bosman*_[D] when on that coast, wrote, "We cast anchor, but not one Negro coming on board, I went on shore, and after having staid a while on the strand, some Negroes came to me; and being desirous to be informed why they did not come on board, I was answered that about two months before, the English had been there with two large vessels, and had ravaged the country, destroyed all their canoes, plundered their houses, and carried off some of their people, upon which the remainder fled to the inland country, where most of them were that time; so that there being not much to be done by us, we were obliged to return on board.[E] When I enquired after their wars with other countries, they told me they were not often troubled with them; but if any difference happened, they chose rather to end the dispute amicably, than to come to arms."[F] He found the inhabitants civil and good-natured. Speaking of the *King of Rio Seftre* lower down the coast, he says, "He was a very agreeable, obliging man, and that all his subjects are civil, as well as very laborious in agriculture,

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and the pursuits of trade," *Marchais* says,[G] "That though the country is very populous, yet none of the natives (except criminals) are sold for slaves." *Vaillant* never heard of any settlement being made by the Europeans on this part of *Guinea*; and *Smith* remarks,[H] "That these coasts, which are divided into several little kingdoms, and have seldom any wars, is the reason the slave trade is not so good here as on *the Gold and Slave Coast*, where the Europeans have several forts and factories." A plain evidence this, that it is the intercourse with the Europeans, and their settlements on the coast, which gives life to the slave trade.

[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 2, page 560.]

[Footnote B: W. Smith, page 111.]

[Footnote C: Astley's collection, vol. 2, page 475.]

[Footnote D: W. Bosman's description of Guinea, page 440.]

[Footnote E: W. Bosman's description of Guinea, page 429.]

[Footnote F: Ibid, 441.]

[Footnote G: Astley's collection, Vol. 2, page 565.]

[Footnote H: Smith's voyage to Guinea, page 112.]

Next adjoining to the *Ivory Coast*, are those called the *Gold Coast*, and the *Slave Coast*; authors are not agreed about their bounds, but their extent together along the coast may be about five hundred miles. And as the policy, produce, and oeconomy of these two kingdoms of Guinea are much the same, I shall describe them together.

Here the Europeans have the greatest number of forts and factories, from whence, by means of the Negro sailors, a trade is carried on above seven hundred miles back in the inland country; whereby great numbers of slaves are procured, as well by means of the wars which arise amongst the Negroes, or are fomented by the Europeans, as those brought from the back country. Here we find the natives *more reconciled to the European manners and trade*; but, at the same time, *much more inured to war*, and ready to assist the European traders in procuring loadings for the great number of vessels which come yearly on those coasts for slaves. This part of Guinea is agreed by historians to be, in general, *extraordinary fruitful and agreeable*; producing (according to the difference of the soil) vast quantities of rice and other grain; plenty of fruit and roots; palm wine and oil, and fish in great abundance, with much tame and wild cattle. Bosman, principal factor for the Dutch at D'Elmina, speaking of the country of Axim, which is situate towards the beginning of the Gold Coast, says,[A] "The Negro

inhabitants are generally very rich, driving a great trade with the Europeans for gold. That they are industriously employed either in trade, fishing, or agriculture; but chiefly in the culture of rice, which grows here in an incredible abundance, and is transported hence all over the Gold Coast. The inhabitants, in lieu, returning full fraught with millet, jamms, potatoes,

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and palm oil.” The same author speaking of the country of Ante, says,[B] “This country, as well as the Gold Coast, abounds with hills, enriched with extraordinary high and beautiful trees; its valleys, betwixt the hills, are wide and extensive, producing in great abundance very good rice, millet, jamms, potatoes, and other fruits, all good in their kind.” He adds, “In short, it is a land that yields its manurers as plentiful a crop as they can wish, with great quantities of palm wine and oil, besides being well furnished with all sorts of tame, as well as wild beasts; but that the last fatal wars had reduced it to a miserable condition, and stripped it of most of its inhabitants.” The adjoining country of Fetu, he says,[C] “was formerly so powerful and populous, that it struck terror into all the neighbouring nations; but it is at present so drained by continual wars, that it is entirely ruined; there does not remain inhabitants sufficient to till the country, tho’ it is so fruitful and pleasant that it may be compared to the country of Ante just before described; frequently, says that author, when walking through it before the last war, I have seen it abound with fine well built and populous towns, agreeably enriched with vast quantities of corn, cattle, palm wine, and oil. The inhabitants all applying themselves without any distinction to agriculture; some sow corn, others press oil, and draw wine from palm trees, with both which it is plentifully stored.”

[Footnote A: Bosman’s description of the coast of Guinea, p, 5.]

[Footnote B: Idem, page 14.]

[Footnote C: Bosman, page 41.]

William Smith gives much the same account of the before-mentioned parts of the Gold Coast, and adds, “The country about D’Elmina and Cape Coast, is much the same for beauty and goodness, but more populous; and the nearer we come towards the Slave Coast, the more delightful and rich all the countries are, producing all sorts of trees, fruits, roots, and herbs, that grow within the Torrid Zone.” J. Barbot also remarks,[A] with respect to the countries of Ante and Adom, “That the soil is very good and fruitful in corn and other produce, which it affords in such plenty, that besides what serves for their own use, they always export great quantities for sale; they have a competent number of cattle, both tame and wild, and the rivers abundantly stored with fish, so that nothing is wanting for the support of life, and to make it easy.” In the Collection it is said,[B] “That the inland people on that part of the coast, employ themselves in tillage and trade, and supply the market with corn, fruit, and palm wine; the country producing such vast plenty of Indian corn, that abundance is daily exported, as well by Europeans as Blacks resorting thither from other parts.” “These inland people are said to live in great union and friendship, being generally well tempered, civil, and tractable; not apt to shed human blood, except when much provoked, and ready to assist one another.”

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[Footnote A: John Barbot's description of Guinea, page 154.]

[Footnote B: Astley's collect. vol. 2. page 535.]

In the Collection[A] it is said, "That the fishing business is esteemed on the Gold Coast next to trading; that those who profess it are more numerous than those of other employments. That the greatest number of these are at Kommendo, Mina, and Kormantin. From each of which places, there go out every morning, (Tuesday excepted, which is the Fetish day, or day of rest) five, six, and sometimes eight hundred canoes, from thirteen to fourteen feet long, which spread themselves two leagues at sea, each fisherman carrying in his canoe a sword, with bread, water, and a little fire on a large stone to roast fish. Thus they labour till noon, when the sea breeze blowing fresh, they return on the shore, generally laden with fish; a quantity of which the inland inhabitants come down to buy, which they sell again at the country markets."

[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 2, page 640.]

William Smith says,[A] "The country about Acra, where the English and Dutch have each a strong fort, is very delightful, and the natives courteous and civil to strangers." He adds, "That this place seldom fails of an extraordinary good trade from the inland country, especially for slaves, whereof several are supposed to come from very remote parts, because it is not uncommon to find a Malayan or two amongst a parcel of other slaves. The Malaya, people are generally natives of Malacca, in the East Indies, situate several thousand miles from the Gold Coast." They differ very much from the Guinea Negroes, being of a tawny complexion, with long black hair.

[Footnote A: William Smith, page 145.]

Most parts of the Slave Coasts are represented as equally fertile and pleasant with the Gold Coast. The kingdom of Whidah has been particularly noted by travellers.[A] William Smith and Bosman agree, "That it is one of the most delightful countries in the world. The great number and variety of tall, beautiful, and shady trees, which seem planted in groves, the verdant fields every where cultivated, and no otherwise divided than by those groves, and in some places a small foot-path, together with a great number of villages, contribute to afford the most delightful prospect; the whole country being a fine easy, and almost imperceptible ascent, for the space of forty or fifty miles from the sea. That the farther you go from the sea, the more beautiful and populous the country appears. That the natives were kind and obliging, and so industrious, that no place which was thought fertile, could escape being planted, even within the hedges which inclose their villages. And that the next day after they had reaped, they sowed again."

[Footnote A: Smith, page 194. Bosman, page 319.]

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Snelgrave also says, "The country appears full of towns and villages; and being a rich soil, and well cultivated, looks like an entire garden." In the Collection,[A] the husbandry of the Negroes is described to be carried on with great regularity: "The rainy season approaching, they go into the fields and woods, to fix on a proper place for sowing; and as here is no property in ground, the King's licence being obtained, the people go out in troops, and first clear the ground from bushes and weeds, which they burn. The field thus cleared, they dig it up a foot deep, and so let it remain for eight or ten days, till the rest of their neighbours have disposed their ground in the same manner. They then consult about sowing, and for that end assemble at the King's Court the next Fetish day. The King's grain must be sown first. They then go again to the field, and give the ground a second digging, and sow their seed. Whilst the King or Governor's land is sowing; he sends out wine and flesh ready dressed; enough to serve the labourers. Afterwards, they in like manner sow the ground, allotted for their neighbours, as diligently as that of the King's, by whom they are also feasted; and so continue to work in a body for the public benefit, till every man's ground is tilled and sowed. None but the King, and a few great men, are exempted from this labour. Their grain soon sprouts out of the ground. When it is about a man's height, and begins to ear, they raise a wooden house in the centre of the field, covered with straw, in which they set their children to watch their corn, and fright away the birds."

[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 2, page 651.]

Bosman[A] speaks in commendation of the civility, kindness, and great industry of the natives of Whidah; this is confirmed by Smith,[B] who says, "The natives here seem to be the most gentleman-like Negroes in Guinea, abounding with good manners and ceremony to each other. The inferior pay the utmost deference and, respect to the superior, as do wives to their husbands, and children to their parents. All here are naturally industrious, and find constant employment; the men in agriculture, and the women in spinning and weaving cotton. The men, whose chief talent lies in husbandry, are unacquainted with arms; otherwise, being a numerous people, they could have made a better defence against the King of Dahome, who subdued them without much trouble.[C] Throughout the Gold Coast, there are regular markets in all villages, furnished with provisions and merchandize, held every day in the week, except Tuesday, whence they supply not only the inhabitants, but the European ships. The *Negro women* are very expert in buying and selling, and extremely industrious; for they will repair daily to market from a considerable distance, loaded like pack-horses, with a child, perhaps, at their back, and a heavy burden on their heads. After selling their wares, they buy fish and other necessaries, and return home loaded as they came.

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[Footnote A: Bosman, page 317.]

[Footnote B: Smith, page 195.]

[Footnote C: Collect, vol. 2, p. 657.]

“There is a market held at Sabi every, fourth day,[A] also a weekly one in the province of Aplogua, which is so resorted to, that there are usually five or six thousand merchants. Their markets are so well regulated and governed, that seldom any disorder happens; each species of merchandize and merchants have a place allotted them by themselves. The buyers may haggle as much as they will, but it must be without noise or fraud. To keep order, the King appoints a judge, who, with four officers well armed, inspects the markets, hears all complaints, and, in a summary way, decides all differences; he has power to seize, and sell as slaves, all who are caught in stealing, or disturbing the peace. In these markets are to be sold men, women, children, oxen, sheep, goats, and fowls of all kinds; European cloths, linen and woollen; printed calicoes, silk, grocery ware, china, gold dust, iron in bars, &c. in a word, most sorts of European goods, as well as the produce of Africa and Asia. They have other markets, resembling our fairs, once or twice a year, to which all the country repair; for they take care to order the day so in different governments, as not to interfere with each other.”

[Footnote A: Collect. vol. 3, p. 11.]

With respect to government, William Smith says,[A] “That the Gold Coast and Slave Coast are divided into different districts, some of which are governed by their Chiefs, or Kings; the others, being more of the nature of a commonwealth are governed by some of the principal men, called Caboceros, who, Bosman says, are properly denominated civil fathers, whose province is to take care of the welfare of the city or village, and to appease tumults.” But this order of government has been much broken since the coming of the Europeans. Both Bosman and Barbot mention *murther and adultery to be severely punished on the Coast, frequently by death; and robbery by a fine proportionable to the goods stolen.*

[Footnote A: Smith, page 193.]

The income of some of the Kings is large, Bosman says, “That the King of Whidah’s revenues and duties on things bought and sold are considerable; he having the tithe of all things sold in the market, or imported in the country.”[A] Both the abovementioned authors say, *The tax on slaves shipped off in this King’s dominions, in some years, amounts to near twenty thousand pounds.*

[Footnote A: Bosman, page 337. Barbot, page 335.]

Bosman tells us, "The Whidah Negroes have a faint idea of a true God, ascribing to him the attributes of almighty power and omnipresence; but God, they say, is too high to condescend to think of mankind; wherefore he commits the government of the world to those inferior deities which they worship." Some authors say, the wisest of these Negroes are sensible of their mistake in this opinion, but dare

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not forsake their own religion, for fear of the populace rising and killing them. This is confirmed by William Smith, who says, "That all the natives of this coast believe there is one true God, the author of them and all things; that they have some apprehension of a future state; and that almost every village has a grove, or public place of worship, to which the principal inhabitants, on a set day, resort to make their offerings."

In the Collection[A] it is remarked as an excellency in the Guinea government, "That however poor they may be in general, yet there are no beggars to be found amongst them; which is owing to the care of their chief men, whose province it is to take care of the welfare of the city or village; it being part of their office, to see that such people may earn their bread by their labour; some are set to blow the smith's bellows, others to press palm oil, or grind colours for their matts, and sell provision in the markets. The young men are listed to serve as soldiers, so that they suffer no common beggar."

[Footnote A: Astley's collection, vol. 2, page 619.]

Bosman ascribes a further reason for this good order, viz. "That when a Negroe finds he cannot subsist, he binds himself for a certain sum of money, and the master to whom he is bound is obliged to find him necessaries; that the master sets him a sort of task, which is not in the least slavish, being chiefly to defend his master on occasions; or in sowing time to work as much as he himself pleases."[A]

[Footnote A: Bosman, page 119.]

Adjoining to the kingdom of Whidah, are several small governments, as Coto, great and small Popo, Ardrah, &c. all situate on the Slave Coast, where the chief trade for slaves is carried on. These are governed by their respective Kings, and follow much the same customs with those of Whidah, except that their principal living is on plunder, and the slave trade.

CHAP. III.

The kingdom of Benin; its extent. Esteemed the most potent in Guinea. Fruitfulness of the soil. Good disposition of the people. Order of government. Punishment of crimes. Large extent of the town of Great Benin. Order maintained. The natives honest and charitable. Their religion. The kingdoms of Kongo and Angola. Many of the natives profess christianity. The country fruitful. Disposition of the people. The administration of justice. The town of Leango. Slave trade carried on by the Portuguese. Here the slave trade ends.

Next adjoining to the Slave Coast, is the kingdom of Benin, which, though it extends but about 170 miles on the sea, yet spreads so far inland, as to be esteemed the most potent kingdom in Guinea. By accounts, the soil and produce appear to be in a great measure like those before described; and the natives are represented as a reasonable good-natured people. Artus says,[A] "They are a sincere, inoffensive people, and do no injustice either to one another, or to strangers." William Smith[B] confirms this account, and says, "That the inhabitants are generally very good-natured, and exceeding courteous and civil. When the Europeans make them presents, which in their coming thither to trade they always do, they endeavour to return them doubly."

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[Footnote A: Collection. vol. 3, page 228.]

[Footnote B: Smith, page 228.]

Bosman tells us,[A] “That his countrymen the Dutch, who were often obliged to trust them till they returned the next year, were sure to be honestly paid their whole debts.”

[Footnote A: W. Bosman, page 405.]

There is in Benin a considerable order in government. Theft, murder, and adultery, being severely punished. Barbot says,[A] “If a man and a woman of any quality be surprized in adultery, they are both put to death, and their bodies are thrown on a dunghill, and left there a prey to wild beasts.” He adds, “The severity of the laws in Benin against adultery,[B] amongst all orders of people, deters them from venturing, so that it is but very seldom any persons are punished for that crime.” Smith says, “Their towns are governed by officers appointed by the King, who have power to decide in civil cases, and to raise the public taxes; but in criminal cases, they must send to the King’s court, which is held at the town of Oedo, or Great Benin. This town, which covers a large extent of ground, is about sixty mile from the sea.”[C] Barbot tells us, “That it contains thirty streets, twenty fathom wide, and almost two miles long, commonly, extending in a straight line from one gate to another; that the gates are guarded by soldiers; that in these streets markets are held every day, for cattle, ivory, cotton, and many sorts of European goods. This large town is divided into several wards, or districts, each governed by its respective King of a street, as they call them; to administer justice, and to keep good order. The inhabitants are very civil and good natured, condescending to what the Europeans require of them in a civil way.” The same author confirms what has been said by others of their justice in the payment of their debts; and adds, “That they, above all other Guineans, are very honest and just in their dealings; and they have such an aversion for theft, that by the law of the country it is punished with death.” We are told by the same author,[D] “That the King of Benin is able upon occasion to maintain an army of a hundred thousand men; but that, for the most part, he does not keep thirty thousand.” William Smith says, “The natives are all free men; none but foreigners can be bought and sold there.[E] They are very charitable, the King as well as his subjects.” Bosman confirms this,[F] and says, “The King and great Lords subsist several poor at their place of residence on charity, employing those who are fit for any work, and the rest they keep for God’s sake; so that here are no beggars.”

[Footnote A: Barbot, page 237.]

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[Footnote B: By this account of the punishment inflicted on adulterers in this and other parts of Guinea, it appears the Negroes are not insensible of the sinfulness of such practices. How strange must it then appear to the serious minded amongst these people, (nay, how inconsistent is it with every divine and moral law amongst ourselves) that those christian laws which prohibit fornication and adultery, are in none of the English governments extended to them, but that they are allowed to cohabit and separate at pleasure? And that even their masters think so lightly of their marriage engagements, that, when it suits with their interest, they will separate man from wife, and children from both, to be sold into different, and even distant parts, without regard to their sometimes grievous lamentations; whence it has happened, that such of those people who are truly united in their marriage covenant, and in affection to one another, have been driven to such desperation, as either violently to destroy themselves, or gradually to pine away, and die with mere grief. It is amazing, that whilst the clergy of the established church are publicly expressing a concern, that these oppressed people should be made acquainted with the christian religion, they should be thus suffered, and even forced, so flagrantly to infringe one of the principal injunctions of our holy religion!]

[Footnote C: J. Barbot, page 358, 359.]

[Footnote D: Barbot, page 369.]

[Footnote E: W. Smith, page 369.]

[Footnote F: Bosman, page 409.]

As to religion, these people believe there is a God, the efficient cause of all things; but, like the rest of the Guineans, they are superstitiously and idolatrously inclined.

The last division of Guinea from which slaves are imported, are the kingdoms of Kongo and Angola: these lie to the South of Benin, extending with the intermediate land about twelve hundred miles on the coast. Great numbers of the natives of both these kingdoms profess the christian religion, which was long since introduced by the Portugueze, who made early settlements in that country.

In the Collection it is said, that both in Kongo and Angola, the soil is in general fruitful, producing great plenty of grain, Indian corn, and such quantities of rice, that it hardly bears any price, with fruits, roots, and palm oil in plenty.

The natives are generally a quiet people, who discover a good understanding, and behave in a friendly manner to strangers, being of a mild conversation, affable, and easily overcome with reason.

In the government of Kongo, the King appoints a judge in every particular division, to hear and determine disputes and civil causes; the judges imprison and release, or

impose fines, according to the rule of custom; but in weighty matters, every one may appeal to the King, before whom all criminal causes are brought, in which he giveth sentence; but seldom condemneth to death.

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The town of Leango stands in the midst of four Lordships, which abound in corn, fruit, &c. Here they make great quantities of cloth of divers kinds, very fine and curious; the inhabitants are seldom idle; they even make needle-work caps as they walk in the streets.

The slave trade is here principally managed by the Portugeze, who carry it far up into the inland countries. They are said to send off from these parts fifteen thousand slaves each year.

At Angola, about the 10th degree of South latitude, ends the trade for slaves.

CHAP. IV.

The antientest accounts of the Negroes is from the Nubian Geography, and the writings of Leo the African. Some account of those authors. The Arabians pass into Guinea. The innocency and simplicity of the natives. They are subdued by the Moors. Heli Ischia shakes off the Moorish yoke. The Portugeze make the first descent in Guinea. From whence they carry off some of the natives. More incursions of the like kind. The Portugeze erect the first fort at D'Elmina. They begin the slave trade. Cada Mosto's testimony. Anderson's account to the same purport. De la Casa's concern for the relief of the oppressed Indians. Goes over into Spain to plead their cause. His speech before Charles the Fifth.

The most antient account we have of the country of the Negroes, particularly that part situate on and between the two great rivers of Senegal and Gambia, is from the writings of two antient authors, one an Arabian, and the other a Moor. The first[A] wrote in Arabic, about the twelfth century. His works, printed in that language at Rome, were afterwards translated into Latin, and printed at Paris, under the patronage of the famous Thuanus, chancellor of France, with the title of *Geographica Nubiensis*, containing an account of all the nations lying on the Senegal and Gambia. The other wrote by John Leo,[B] a Moor, born at Granada, in Spain, before the Moors were totally expelled from that kingdom. He resided in Africa; but being on a voyage from Tripoli to Tunis, was taken by some Italian Corsairs, who finding him possessed of several Arabian books, besides his own manuscripts, apprehended him to be a man of learning, and as such presented him to Pope Leo the Tenth. This Pope encouraging him, he embraced the Romish religion, and his description of Africa was published in Italian. From these writings we gather, that after the Mahometan religion had extended to the kingdom of Morocco, some of the promoters of it crossing the sandy deserts of Numidia, which separate that country from Guinea, found it inhabited by men, who, though under no regular government, and destitute of that knowledge the Arabians were favoured with, lived in content and peace. The first author particularly remarks, "That they never made war, or travelled abroad, but employed themselves in tending their herds, or labouring in the ground."

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J. Leo says, page 65. "That they lived in common, having no property in land, no tyrant nor superior lord, but supported themselves in an equal state, upon the natural produce of the country, which afforded plenty of roots, game, and honey. That ambition or avarice never drove them into foreign countries to subdue or cheat their neighbours. Thus they lived without toil or superfluities." "The antient inhabitants of Morocco, who wore coats of mail, and used swords and spears headed with iron, coming amongst these harmless and naked people, soon brought them under subjection, and divided that part of Guinea which lies on the rivers Senegal and Gambia into fifteen parts; those were the fifteen kingdoms of the Negroes, over which the Moors presided, and the common people were Negroes. These Moors taught the Negroes the Mahometan religion, and arts of life; particularly the use of iron, before unknown to them. About the 14th century, a native Negro, called Heli Ischia, expelled the Moorish conquerors; but tho' the Negroes threw off the yoke of a foreign nation, they only changed a Libyan for a Negroe master. Heli Ischia himself becoming King, led the Negroes on to foreign wars, and established himself in power over a very large extent of country." Since Leo's time, the Europeans have had very little knowledge of those parts of Africa, nor do they know what became of his great empire. It is highly probable that it broke into pieces, and that the natives again resumed many of their antient customs; for in the account published by William Moor, in his travels on the river Gambia, we find a mixture of the Moorish and Mahometan customs, joined with the original simplicity of the Negroes. It appears by accounts of antient voyages, collected by Hackluit, Purchas, and others, that it was about fifty years before the discovery of America, that the Portuguese attempted to sail round Cape Bojador, which lies between their country and Guinea; this, after divers repulses occasioned by the violent currents, they effected; when landing on the western coasts of Africa, they soon began to make incursions into the country, and to seize and carry off the native inhabitants. As early as the year 1434, Alonzo Gonzales, the first who is recorded to have met with the natives, being on that coast, pursued and attacked a number of them, when some were wounded, as was also one of the Portuguese; which the author records as the first blood spilt by christians in those parts. Six years after, the same Gonzales again attacked the natives, and took twelve prisoners, with whom he returned to his vessels; he afterwards put a woman on shore, in order to induce the natives to redeem the prisoners; but the next day 150 of the inhabitants appeared on horses and camels, provoking the Portuguese to land; which they not daring to venture, the natives discharged a volley of stones at them, and went off. After this, the Portuguese still continued to send vessels on the coast of Africa;

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particularly we read of their falling on a village, whence the inhabitants fled, and, being pursued, twenty-five were taken: "*He that ran best*," says the author, "*taking the most*. In their way home they killed some of the natives, and took fifty-five more prisoners.[C] Afterwards Dinisanes Dagrama, with two other vessels, landed on the island Arguin, where they took fifty-four Moors; then running along the coast eighty leagues farther, they at several times took fifty slaves; but here seven of the Portuguese were killed. Then being joined by several other vessels, Dinisanes proposed to destroy the island, to revenge the loss of the seven Portuguese; of which the Moors being apprized, fled, so that no more than twelve were found, whereof only four could be taken, the rest being killed, as also one of the Portuguese." Many more captures of this kind on the coast of Barbary and Guinea, are recorded to have been made in those early times by the Portuguese; who, in the year 1481, erected their first fort at D'Elmina on that coast, from whence they soon opened a trade for slaves with the inland parts of Guinea.

[Footnote A: See Travels into different parts of Africa, by Francis Moor, with a letter to the publisher.]

[Footnote B: Ibid.]

[Footnote C: Collection, vol. 1, page 13.]

From the foregoing accounts, it is undoubted, that the practice of making slaves of the Negroes, owes its origin to the early incursions of the Portuguese on the coast of Africa, solely from an inordinate desire of gain. This is clearly evidenced from their own historians, particularly *Cada Mosto*, about the year 1455, who writes,[A] "That before the trade was settled for purchasing slaves from the Moors at Arguin, sometimes four, and sometimes more Portuguese vessels, were used to come to that gulph, well armed; and landing by night, would surprize some fishermen's villages: that they even entered into the country, and carried off Arabs of both sexes, whom they sold in Portugal." And also, "That the Portuguese and Spaniards, settled on four of the Canary islands, would go to the other island by night, and seize some of the natives of both sexes, whom they sent to be sold in Spain."

[Footnote A: Collection vol. 1, page 576.]

After the settlement of America, those devastations, and the captivating the miserable Africans, greatly increased.

Anderson, in his history of trade and commerce, at page 336, speaking of what passed in the year 1508, writes, "That the Spaniards had by this time found that the miserable Indian natives, whom they had made to work in their mines and fields, were not so robust and proper for those purposes as Negroes brought from Africa; wherefore they,

about that time, began to import Negroes for that end into Hispaniola, from the Portugueze settlements on the Guinea coasts; and also afterwards for their sugar works." This oppression of the Indians had, even before this

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time, roused the zeal, as well as it did the compassion, of some of the truly pious of that day; particularly that of Bartholomew De las Casas, bishop of Chapia; whom a desire of being instrumental towards the conversion of the Indians, had invited into America. It is generally agreed by the writers of that age, that he was a man of perfect disinterestedness, and ardent charity; being affected with this sad spectacle, he returned to the court of Spain, and there made a true report of the matter; but not without being strongly opposed by those mercenary wretches, who had enslaved the Indians; yet being strong and indefatigable, he went to and fro between Europe and America, firmly determined not to give over his pursuit but with his life. After long solicitation, and innumerable repulses, he obtained leave to lay the matter before the Emperor Charles the Fifth, then King of Spain. As the contents of the speech he made before the King in council, are very applicable to the case of the enslaved Africans, and a lively evidence that the spirit of true piety speaks the same language in the hearts of faithful men in all ages, for the relief of their fellow creatures from oppression of every kind, I think it may not be improper here to transcribe the most interesting parts of it. “I was,” says this pious bishop, “one of the first who went to America; neither curiosity nor interest prompted me to undertake so long and dangerous a voyage; the saving the souls of the heathen was my sole object. Why was I not permitted, even at the expence of my blood, to ransom so many thousand souls, who fell unhappy victims to avarice or lust? I have been an eye witness to such cruel treatment of the Indians, as is too horrid to be mentioned at this time.—It is said that barbarous executions were necessary to punish or check the rebellion of the Americans;—but to whom was this owing? Did not those people receive the Spaniards, who first came amongst them, with gentleness and humanity? Did they not shew more joy, in proportion, in lavishing treasure upon them, than the Spaniards did greediness in receiving it?—But our avarice was not yet satisfied;—tho’ they gave up to us their land and their riches, we would tear from them their wives, their children and their liberties.—To blacken these unhappy people, their enemies assert, that they are scarce human creatures?—but it is we that ought to blush, for having been less men, and more barbarous, than they.—What right have we to enslave a people who are born free, and whom we disturbed, tho’ they never offended us?—They are represented as a stupid people, addicted to vice?—but have they not contracted most of their vices from the example of the christians? And as to those vices peculiar to themselves, have not the christians quickly exceeded them therein? Nevertheless it must be granted, that the Indians still remain untainted with many vices usual amongst the Europeans; such as ambition, blasphemy, treachery, and many like monsters, which

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have not yet took place with them; they have scarce an idea of them; so that in effect, all the advantage we can claim, is to have more elevated notions of things, and our natural faculties more unfolded and more cultivated than theirs.—Do not let us flatter our corruptions, nor voluntarily blind ourselves; *all* nations are equally *free*; one nation has no right to infringe upon the freedom of any other; let us do towards these people as we would have them to have done towards us, if they had landed upon our shore, with the same superiority of strength. And indeed, why should not things be equal on both sides? How long has the right of the strongest been allowed to be the balance of justice? What part of the gospel gives a sanction to such a doctrine? In what part of the whole earth did the apostles and the first promulgators of the gospel ever claim a right over the lives, the freedom, or the substance of the Gentiles? What a strange method this is of propagating the gospel, that holy law of grace, which, from being, slaves to Satan, initiates us into the freedom of the children of God!—Will it be possible for us to inspire them with a love to its dictates, while they are so exasperated at being dispossessed of that invaluable blessing, *Liberty*? The apostles submitted to chains themselves, but loaded no man with them. Christ came to free, not to enslave us.—Submission to the faith he left us, ought to be a voluntary act, and should be propagated by persuasion, gentleness, and reason.”

“At my first arrival in Hispaniola, (added the bishop) it contained a million of inhabitants; and now (viz. in the space of about twenty years) there remains scarce the hundredth part of them; thousands have perished thro’ want, fatigue, merciless punishment, cruelty, and barbarity. If the blood of *one* man unjustly shed, calls loudly for vengeance; how strong must be the cry of that of so *many* unhappy creatures which is shedding daily?”—The good bishop concluded his speech, with imploring the King’s clemency for subjects so unjustly oppressed; and bravely declared, that heaven would one day call him to an account, for the numberless acts of cruelty which he might have prevented. The King applauded the bishop’s zeal; promised to second it; but so many of the great ones had an interest in continuing the oppression, that nothing was done; so that all the Indians in Hispaniola, except a few who had hid themselves in the most inaccessible mountains, were destroyed.

CHAP. V.

First account of the English trading to Guinea. Thomas Windham and several others go to that coast. Some of the Negroes carried off by the English. Queen Elizabeth’s charge to Captain Hawkins respecting the natives. Nevertheless he goes on the coast and carries off some of the Negroes. Patents are granted. The King of France objects to the Negroes being kept in slavery. As do the college of Cardinals at Rome. The natives, an inoffensive people; corrupted by the Europeans. The sentiments of the

natives concerning the slave-trade, from William Smith: Confirmed by Andrew Brue and James Barbot.

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It was about the year 1551, towards the latter end of the reign of King Edward the Sixth, when some London merchants sent out the first English ship, on a trading voyage to the coast of Guinea; this was soon followed by several others to the same parts; but the English not having then any plantations in the West Indies, and consequently no occasion for Negroes, such ships traded only for gold, elephants teeth, and Guinea pepper. This trade was carried on at the hazard of losing their ships and cargoes, if they had fallen into the hands of the Portuguese, who claimed an exclusive right of trade, on account of the several settlements they had made there.[A] In the year 1553, we find captain Thomas Windham trading along the coast with 140 men, in three ships, and sailing as far as Benin, which lies about 3000 miles down the coast, to take in a load of pepper.[B] Next year John Lock traded along the coast of Guinea, as far as D'Elmina, when he brought away considerable quantities of gold and ivory. He speaks well of the natives, and says,[C] "*That whoever will deal with them must behave civilly, for they will not traffic if ill used.*" In 1555, William Towerson traded in a peaceable manner with the natives, who made complaint to him of the Portuguese, who were then settled in their castle at D'Elmina, saying, "*They were bad men, who made them slaves if they could take them, putting irons on their legs.*"

[Footnote A: Astley's collection, vol. 1. page 139.]

[Footnote B: Collection vol. 1. p. 148.]

[Footnote C: Ibid. 257.]

This bad example of the Portuguese was soon followed by some evil disposed Englishmen; for the same captain Towerson relates,[A] "That in the course of his voyage, he perceived the natives, near D'Elmina, unwilling to come to him, and that he was at last attacked by them; which he understood was done in revenge for the wrong done them the year before, by one captain Gainsh, who had taken away the Negro captain's son, and three others, with their gold, &c. This caused them to join the Portuguese, notwithstanding their hatred of them, against the English." The next year captain Towerson brought these men back again; whereupon the Negroes shewed him much kindness.[B] Quickly after this, another instance of the same kind occurred, in the case of captain George Fenner, who being on the coast, with three vessels, was also attacked by the Negroes, who wounded several of his people, and violently carried three of his men to their town. The captain sent a messenger, offering any thing they desired for the ransom of his men: but they refused to deliver them, letting him know, "*That three weeks before, an English ship, which came in the road, had carried off three of their people; and that till they were brought again, they would not restore his men, even tho' they should give their three ships to release them.*" It was probably the evil conduct of these, and some other Englishmen,

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which was the occasion of what is mentioned in Hill's naval history, viz. "That when captain Hawkins returned from his first voyage to Africa, Queen Elizabeth sent for him, when she expressed her concern, lest any of the African Negroes should be carried off without their free consent; which she declared would be detestable, and would call down the vengeance of heaven upon the undertakers." Hawkins made great promises, which nevertheless he did not perform; for his next voyage to the coast appears to have been principally calculated to procure Negro slaves, in order to sell them to the Spaniards in the West Indies; which occasioned the same author to use these remarkable words: *"Here began the horrid practice of forcing the Africans into slavery: an injustice and barbarity, which, so sure as there is vengeance in heaven for the worst of crimes, will some time be the destruction of all who act or who encourage it."* This captain Hawkins, afterwards sir John Hawkins, seems to have been the first Englishman who gave public countenance to this wicked traffic: For Anderson, before mentioned, at page 401, says, "That in the year 1562, captain Hawkins, assisted by subscription of sundry gentlemen, now fitted out three ships; and having learnt that Negroes were a very good commodity in Hispaniola, he sailed to the coast of Guinea, took in Negroes, and sailed with them for Hispaniola, where he sold them, and his English commodities, and loaded his three vessels with hides, sugar and ginger, &c. with which he returned home anno 1563, making a prosperous voyage." As it proved a lucrative business, the trade was continued both by Hawkins and others, as appears from the naval chronicle, page 55, where it is said, "That on the 18th of October, 1564, captain John Hawkins, with two ships of 700 and 140 tuns, sailed for Africa; that on the 8th of December they anchored to the South of Cape Verd, where the captain manned the boat, and sent eighty men in armour into the country, to see if they could take some Negroes; but the natives flying from them, they returned to their ships, and proceeded farther down the coast. Here they staid certain days, sending their men ashore, in order (as the author says) to burn and spoil their towns and take the inhabitants. The land they observed to be well cultivated, there being plenty of grain, and fruit of several sorts, and the towns prettily laid out. On the 25th, being informed by the Portugueze of a town of Negroes called Bymba, where there was not only a quantity of gold, but an hundred and forty inhabitants, they resolved to attack it, having the Portugueze for their guide; but by mismanagement they took but ten Negroes, having seven of their own men killed, and twenty-seven wounded. They then went farther down the coast; when, having procured a number of Negroes, they proceeded to the West Indies, where they sold them to the Spaniards." And in the same naval chronicle, at page 76, it is said, "That in the year 1567, Francis Drake,

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before performing his voyage round the world, went with Sir John Hawkins in his expedition to the coast of Guinea, where taking in a cargo of slaves, they determined to steer for the Caribbee islands." How Queen Elizabeth suffered so grievous an infringement of the rights of mankind to be perpetrated by her subjects, and how she was persuaded, about the 30th year of her reign, to grant patents for carrying on a trade from the North part of the river Senegal, to an hundred leagues beyond Sierra Leona, which gave rise to the present African company, is hard to account for, any otherwise than that it arose from the misrepresentation made to her of the situation of the Negroes, and of the advantages it was pretended they would reap from being made acquainted with the christian religion. This was the case of Lewis the XIIIth, King of France, who, Labat, in his account of the isles of America, tells us, "Was extremely uneasy at a law by which the Negroes of his colonies were to be made slaves; but it being strongly urged to him as the readiest means for their conversion to christianity, he acquiesced therewith." Nevertheless, some of the christian powers did not so easily give way in this matter; for we find,[C] "That cardinal Cibo, one of the Pope's principal ministers of state, wrote a letter on behalf of the college of cardinals, or great council at Rome, to the missionaries in Congo, complaining that the pernicious and abominable abuse of selling slaves was yet continued, requiring them to remedy the same, if possible; but this the missionaries saw little hopes of accomplishing, by reason that the trade of the country lay wholly in slaves and ivory."

[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 1. p. 148.]

[Footnote B: Ibid. 157.]

[Footnote C: Collection, vol. 3, page 164.]

From the foregoing accounts, as well as other authentic publications of this kind, it appears that it was the unwarrantable lust of gain, which first stimulated the Portuguese, and afterwards other Europeans, to engage in this horrid traffic. By the most authentic relations of those early times, the natives were an inoffensive people, who, when civilly used, traded amicably with the Europeans. It is recorded of those of Benin, the largest kingdom in Guinea,[A]_That they were a gentle, loving people_; and Reynold says,[B] *"They found more sincere proofs of love and good will from the natives, than they could find from the Spaniards and Portuguese, even tho' they had relieved them from the greatest misery."* And from the same relations there is no reason to think otherwise, but that they generally lived in peace amongst themselves; for I don't find, in the numerous publications I have perused on this subject, relating to these early times, of there being wars on that coast, nor of any sale of captives taken in battle, who would have been otherwise sacrificed by the victors:[C] Notwithstanding some modern authors, in their publications relating to the West Indies, desirous of throwing a veil over the iniquity of

the slave trade, have been hardy enough, upon meer supposition or report, to assert the contrary.

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[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 1, page 202.]

[Footnote B: Idem, page 245.]

[Footnote C: Note, This plea falls of itself, for if the Negroes apprehended they should be cruelly put to death, if they were not sent away, why do they manifest such reluctance and dread as they generally do, at being brought from their native country? William Smith, at page 28, says, "*The Gambians abhor slavery, and will attempt any thing, tho' never so desperate, to avoid it,*" and Thomas Philips, in his account of a voyage he performed to the coast of Guinea, writes, "*They, the Negroes, are so loth to leave their own country, that they have often leaped out of the canoe, boat, or ship, into the sea, and kept under water till they were drowned, to avoid being taken up.*"]

It was long after the Portuguese had made a practice of violently forcing the natives of Africa into slavery, that we read of the different Negroe nations making war upon each other, and selling their captives. And probably this was not the case, till those bordering on the coast, who had been used to supply the vessels with necessaries, had become corrupted by their intercourse with the Europeans, and were excited by drunkenness and avarice to join them in carrying on those wicked schemes, by which those unnatural wars were perpetrated; the inhabitants kept in continual alarms; the country laid waste; and, as William Moor expresses it, *Infinite numbers sold into slavery*. But that the Europeans are the principal cause of these devastations, is particularly evidenced by one, whose connexion with the trade would rather induce him to represent it in the fairest colours, to wit, William Smith, the person sent in the year 1726 by the African company to survey their settlements, who, from the information he received of one of the factors, who had resided ten years in that country, says,[A] "*That the discerning natives account it their greatest unhappiness, that they were ever visited by the Europeans.*"—"That we christians introduced the traffick of slaves; and that before our coming they lived in peace."

[Footnote A: William Smith, page 266.]

In the accounts relating to the African trade, we find this melancholy truth farther asserted by some of the principal directors in the different factories; particularly A. Brue says,[A] "*That the Europeans were far from desiring to act as peace-makers amongst the Negroes; which would be acting contrary to their interest, since the greater the wars, the more slaves were procured,*" And William Bosman also remarks,[B] "*That one of the former commanders gave large sums of money to the Negroes of one nation, to induce them to attack some of the neighbouring nations, which occasioned a battle which was more bloody than the wars of the Negroes usually are.*" This is confirmed by J. Barbot, who says, "*That the country of D'Elmina, which was formerly very powerful and populous, was in his time so much drained of its inhabitants by the intestine wars fomented amongst the Negroes by the Dutch, that there did not remain inhabitants enough to till the country.*"

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[Footnote A: Collection, vol. 2, page 98.]

[Footnote B: Bosman, page 31.]

CHAP. VI.

The conduct of the Europeans and Africans compared. Slavery more tolerable amongst the antients than in our colonies. As christianity prevailed amongst the barbarous nations, the inconsistency of slavery became more apparent. The charters of manumission, granted in the early times of christianity, founded on an apprehension of duty to God. The antient Britons, and other European nations, in their original state, no less barbarous than the Negroes. Slaves in Guinea used with much greater lenity than the Negroes are in the colonies.—Note. How the slaves are treated in Algiers, as also in Turkey.

Such is the woeful corruption of human nature, that every practice which flatters our pride and covetousness, will find its advocates! This is manifestly the case in the matter before us; the savageness of the Negroes in some of their customs, and particularly their deviating so far from the feelings of humanity, as to join in captivating and selling each other, gives their interested oppressors a pretence for representing them as unworthy of liberty, and the natural rights of mankind. But these sophisters turn the argument full upon themselves, when they instigate the poor creatures to such shocking impiety, by every means that fantastic subtilty can suggest; thereby shewing in their own conduct, a more glaring proof of the same depravity, and, if there was any reason in the argument, a greater unfitness for the same precious enjoyment: for though some of the ignorant Africans may be thus corrupted by their intercourse with the baser of the European natives, and the use of strong liquors, this is no excuse for high-professing christians; bred in a civilized country, with so many advantages unknown to the Africans, and pretending to a superior degree of gospel light. Nor can it justify them in raising up fortunes to themselves from the misery of others, and calmly projecting voyages for the seizure of men naturally as free as themselves; and who, they know, are no otherwise to be procured than by such barbarous means, as none but those hardened wretches, who are lost to every sense of christian compassion, can make use of. Let us diligently compare, and impartially weigh, the situation of those ignorant Negroes, and these enlightened christians; then lift up the scale and say, which of the two are the greater savages.

Slavery has been of a long time in practice in many parts of Asia; it was also in usage among the Romans when that empire flourished; but, except in some particular instances, it was rather a reasonable servitude, no ways comparable to the unreasonable and unnatural service extorted from the Negroes in our colonies. A late learned author,[A] speaking of those times which succeeded the dissolution of that empire, acquaints us, that as christianity prevailed, it very much removed those

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wrong prejudices and practices, which had taken root in darker times: after the irruption of the Northern nations, and the introduction of the feudal or military government, whereby the most extensive power was lodged in a few members of society, to the depression of the rest, the common people were little better than slaves, and many were indeed such; but as christianity gained ground, the gentle spirit of that religion, together with the doctrines it teaches, concerning the original equality of mankind, as well as the impartial eye with which the Almighty regards men of every condition, and admits them to a participation of his benefits; so far manifested the inconsistency of slavery with christianity, that to set their fellow christians at liberty was deemed an act of piety, highly meritorious and acceptable to God.[B] Accordingly a great part of the charters granted for the manumission or freedom of slaves about that time, are granted *pro amore Dei, for the love of God, pro mercede animae, to obtain mercy to the soul*. Manumission was frequently granted on death-beds, or by latter wills. As the minds of men are at that time awakened to sentiments of humanity and piety, these deeds proceeded from religious motives. The same author remarks, That there are several forms of those manumissions still extant, all of them founded *on religious considerations, and in order to procure the favour of God*. Since that time, the practice of keeping men in slavery gradually ceased amongst christians, till it was renewed in the case before us. And as the prevalency of the spirit of christianity caused men to emerge from the darkness they then lay under, in this respect; so it is much to be feared that so great a deviation therefrom, by the encouragement given to the slavery of the Negroes in our colonies, if continued, will, by degrees, reduce those countries which support and encourage it but more immediately those parts of America which are in the practice of it, to the ignorance and barbarity of the darkest ages.

[Footnote A: See Robertson's history of Charles the 5th.]

[Footnote B: In the years 1315 and 1318, Louis X. and his brother Philip, Kings of France, issued ordonnances, declaring, "That as all men were by nature free-born, and as their kingdom was called the kingdom of Franks, they determined that it should be so in reality, as well as in name; therefore they appointed that enfranchisements should be granted throughout the whole kingdom, upon just and reasonable conditions." "These edicts were carried into immediate execution within the royal domain."—"In England, as the spirit of liberty gained ground, the very name and idea of personal servitude, without any formal interposition of the legislature to prohibit it, was totally banished." "The effects of such a remarkable change in the condition of so great a part of the people, could not fail of being considerable and extensive. The husbandman, master

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of his own industry, and secure of reaping for himself the fruits of his labour, became farmer of the same field where he had formerly been compelled to toil for the benefit of another. The odious name of master and of slave, the most mortifying and depressing of all distinctions to human nature, were abolished. New prospects opened, and new incitements to ingenuity and enterprise presented themselves, to those who were emancipated. The expectation of bettering their fortune, as well as that of raising themselves to a more honourable condition, concurred in calling forth their activity and genius; and a numerous class of men, who formerly had no political existence, and were employed merely as instruments of labour, became useful citizens, and contributed towards augmenting the force or riches of the society, which adopted them as members." William Robertson's history of Charles the 5th, vol. 1, P. 35.]

If instead of making slaves of the Negroes, the nations who assume the name and character of christians, would use their endeavours to make the nations of Africa acquainted with the nature of the christian religion, to give them a better sense of the true use of the blessings of life, the more beneficial arts and customs would, by degrees, be introduced amongst them; this care probably would produce the same effect upon them, which it has had on the inhabitants of Europe, formerly as savage and barbarous as the natives of Africa. Those cruel wars amongst the blacks would be likely to cease, and a fair and honorable commerce, in time, take place throughout that vast country. It was by these means that the inhabitants of Europe, though formerly a barbarous people, became civilized. Indeed the account Julius Caesar gives of the ancient Britons in their state of ignorance, is not such as should make us proud of ourselves, or lead us to despise the unpolished nations of the earth; for he informs us, "That they lived in many respects like our Indians, being clad with skins, painting their bodies, &c." He also adds, "That they, brother with brother, and parents with children, had wives in common." A greater barbarity than any heard of amongst the Negroes. Nor doth Tacitus give a more honourable account of the Germans, from whom the Saxons, our immediate ancestors, sprung. The Danes, who succeeded them (who may also be numbered among our progenitors) were full as bad, if not worse.

It is usual for people to advance as a palliation in favour of keeping the Negroes in bondage, that there are slaves in Guinea, and that those amongst us might be so in their own country; but let such consider the inconsistency of our giving any countenance to slavery, because the Africans, whom we esteem a barbarous and savage people, allow of it, and perhaps the more from our example. Had the professors of christianity acted indeed as such, they might have been instrumental to convince the Negroes of their error in this respect; but even this, when inquired into, will be to us an

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occasion of blushing, if we are not hardened to every sense of shame, rather than a *palliation* of our iniquitous conduct; as it will appear that the slavery endured in Guinea, and other parts of Africa, and in Asia,[A] is by no means so grievous as that in our colonies. William Moor, speaking of the natives living on the river Gambia,[B] says, “Tho’ some of the Negroes have many house slaves, which are their greatest glory; that those slaves live so well and easy, that it is sometimes a hard matter to know the slaves from their masters or mistresses. And that though in some parts of Africa they sell their slaves born in the family, yet on the river Gambia they think it a very wicked thing.” The author adds, “He never heard of but one that ever sold a family slave, except for such crimes as they would have been sold for if they had been free.” And in Astley’s collection, speaking of the customs of the Negroes in that large extent of country further down the coast, particularly denominated the coast of Guinea, it is said,[C] “They have not many slaves on the coast; none but the King or nobles are permitted to buy or sell any; so that they are allowed only what are necessary for their families, or tilling the ground.” The same author adds, “*That they generally use their slaves well, and seldom correct them.*”

[Footnote A: In the history of the piratical states of Barbary, printed in 1750, *said to be* wrote by a person who resided at Algiers, in a public character, at page 265 the author says, “The world exclaims against the Algerines for their cruel treatment of their slaves, and their employing even tortures to convert them to mahometism: but this is a vulgar error, artfully propagated for selfish views. So far are their slaves from being ill used, that they must have committed some very great fault to suffer any punishment. Neither are they forced to work beyond their strength, but rather spared, lest they should fall sick. Some are so pleased with their situation, that they will not purchase their ransom, though they are able.” It is the same generally through the Mahometan countries, except in some particular instances, as that of Muley Ishmael, late Emperor of Morocco, who being naturally barbarous, frequently used both his subjects and slaves with cruelty. Yet even under him the usage the slaves met with was, in general, much more tolerable than that of the Negroe slaves in the West Indies. Captain Braithwaite, an author of credit, who accompanied consul general Russel in a congratulatory embassy to Muley Ishmael’s successor, upon his accession to the throne, says, “The situation of the christian slaves in Morocco was not near so bad as represented.—That it was true they were kept at labour by the late Emperor, but not harder than our daily labourers go through.—Masters of ships were never obliged to work, nor such as had but a small matter of money to give the Alcaide.—When sick, they had a religious house appointed for them

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to go to, where they were well attended: and whatever money in charity was sent them by their friends in Europe, was their own." Braithwaite's revolutions of Morocco. Lady Montague, wife of the English ambassador at Constantinople, in her letters, vol. 3. page 20, writes, "I know you expect I should say something particular of the slaves; and you will imagine me half a Turk, when I do not speak of it with the same horror other christians have done before me; but I cannot forbear applauding the humanity of the Turks to these creatures; they are not ill used; and their slavery, in my opinion, is no worse than servitude all over the world. It is true they have no wages, but they give them yearly cloaths to a higher value than our salaries to our ordinary servants."]

[Footnote B: W. Moor, p. 30]

[Footnote C: Collection vol. 2. p. 647.]

CHAP. VII.

Montesquieu's sentiments on slavery. Moderation enjoined by the Mosaic law in the punishment of offenders. Morgan Godwyn's account of the contempt and grievous rigour exercised upon the Negroes in his time. Account from Jamaica, relating to the inhuman treatment of them there. Bad effects attendant on slave-keeping, as well to the masters as the slaves. Extracts from several laws relating to Negroes. Richard Baxter's sentiments on slave-keeping.

That celebrated civilian Montesquieu, in his treatise *on the spirit of laws*, on the article of slavery says, "*It is neither useful to the master nor slave; to the slave, because he can do nothing through principle (or virtue); to the master, because he contracts with his slave all sorts of bad habits, insensibly accustoms himself to want all moral virtues; becomes haughty, hasty, hard-hearted, passionate, voluptuous, and cruel.*" The lamentable truth of this assertion was quickly verified in the English plantations. When the practice of slave-keeping was introduced, it soon produced its natural effects; it reconciled men, of otherwise good dispositions, to the most hard and cruel measures. It quickly proved, what, under the law of Moses, was apprehended would be the consequence of unmerciful chastisements. Deut. xxv. 2. "*And it shall be if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number; forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed.*" And the reason rendered, is out of respect to human nature, viz. "*Lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.*" As this effect soon followed the cause, the cruelest measures were adopted, in order to make the most of the poor *wretches* labour; and in the minds of the masters such an idea was excited of inferiority, in the nature of these their unhappy fellow creatures, that they soon esteemed and treated them as beasts

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of burden: pretending to doubt, and some of them even presuming to deny, that the efficacy of the death of Christ extended to them. Which is particularly noted in a book, intitl'd *The Negroes and Indians advocate*, dedicated to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote so long since as in the year 1680, by Morgan Godwyn, thought to be a clergyman of the church of England.[A] The same spirit of sympathy and zeal which stirred up the good Bishop of Chapia to plead with so much energy the kindred cause of the Indians of America, an hundred and fifty years before, was equally operating about a century past on the minds of some of the well disposed of that day; amongst others this worthy clergyman, having been an eye witness of the oppression and cruelty exercised upon the Negro and Indian slaves, endeavoured to raise the attention of those, in whose power it might be to procure them relief; amongst other matters, in his address to the Archbishop, he remarks in substance, "That the people of the island of Barbadoes were not content with exercising the greatest hardness and barbarity upon the Negroes, in making the most of their labour, without any regard to the calls of humanity, but that they had suffered such a slight and undervaluement to prevail in their minds towards these their oppressed fellow creatures, as to discourage any step being taken, whereby they might be made acquainted with the christian religion. That their conduct towards their slaves was such as gave him reason to believe, that either they had suffered a spirit of infidelity, a spirit quite contrary to the nature of the gospel, to prevail in them, or that it must be their established opinion that the Negroes had no more souls than beasts; that hence they concluded them to be neither susceptible of religious impressions, nor fit objects for the redeeming grace of God to operate upon. That under this persuasion, and from a disposition of cruelty, they treated them with far less humanity than they did their cattle; for, says he, they do not starve their horses, which they expect should both carry and credit them on the road; nor pinch the cow, by whose milk they are sustained; which yet, to their eternal shame, is too frequently the lot and condition of those poor people, from whose labour their wealth and livelihood doth wholly arise; not only in their diet, but in their cloathing, and overworking some of them even to death (which is particularly the calamity of the most innocent and laborious) but also in tormenting and whipping them almost, and sometimes quite, to death, upon even small miscarriages. He apprehends it was from this prejudice against the Negroes, that arose those supercilious checks and frowns he frequently met with, when using innocent arguments and persuasions, in the way of his duty as a minister of the gospel, to labour for the convincement and conversion of the Negroes; being repeatedly told, with spiteful scoffings, (even by some esteemed religious) that the Negroes were no more susceptible of receiving

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benefit, by becoming members of the church, than their dogs and bitches. The usual answer he received, when exhorting their masters to do their duty in that respect, being, *What! these black dogs be made christians! what! they be made like us! with abundance more of the same.* Nevertheless, he remarks that the Negroes were capable, not only of being taught to read and write, &c. but divers of them eminent in the management of business. He declares them to have an equal right with us to the merits of Christ; of which if through neglect or avarice they are deprived, that judgment which was denounced against wicked Ahab, must befall us: *Our life shall go for theirs.* The loss of their souls will be required at our hands, to whom God hath given so blessed an opportunity of being instrumental to their salvation."

[Footnote A: "There is a principle which is pure, placed in the human mind, which in different places or ages hath had different names; it is, however, pure, and proceeds from God.—It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of religion, nor excluded from any, where the heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren in the best sense of the expression. Using ourselves to take ways which appear most easy to us, when inconsistent with that purity which is without beginning, we thereby set up a government of our own, and deny obedience to Him whose service is true liberty. He that has a servant, made so wrongfully, and knows it to be so, when he treats him otherwise than a free man, when he reaps the benefit of his labour, without paying him such wages as are reasonably due to free men for the like service; these things, though done in calmness, without any shew of disorder, do yet deprave the mind, in like manner, and with as great certainty, as prevailing cold congeals water. These steps taken by masters, and their conduct striking the minds of their children, whilst young, leave less room for that which is good to work upon them. The customs of their parents, their neighbours, and the people with whom they converse, working upon their minds, and they from thence conceiving wrong ideas of things, and modes of conduct, the entrance into their hearts becomes in a great measure shut up against the gentle movings of uncreated purity.

"From one age to another the gloom grows thicker and darker, till error gets established by general opinion; but whoever attends to perfect goodness, and remains under the melting influence of it, finds a path unknown to many, and sees the necessity to lean upon the arm of divine strength, and dwell alone, or with a few in the right, committing their cause to him who is a refuge to his people. Negroes are our fellow creatures, and their present condition among us requires our serious consideration. We know not the time, when those scales, in which mountains are weighed, may turn. The parent of mankind is gracious, his care is over his smallest

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creatures, and a multitude of men escape not his notice; and though many of them are trodden down and despised, yet he remembers them. He seeth their affliction, and looketh upon the spreading increasing exaltation of the oppressor. He turns the channel of power, humbles the most haughty people, and gives deliverance to the oppressed, at such periods as are consistent with his infinite justice and goodness. And wherever gain is preferred to equity, and wrong things publicly encouraged, to that degree that wickedness takes root and spreads wide amongst the inhabitants of a country, there is a real cause for sorrow, to all such whose love to mankind stands on a true principle, and wisely consider the end and event of things." Consideration on keeping Negroes, by John Woolman, part 2. p. 50.]

He complains, "That they were suffered to live with their women in no better way than direct fornication; no care being taken to oblige them to continue together when married; but that they were suffered at their will to leave their wives, and take to other women." I shall conclude this sympathizing clergyman's observations, with an instance he gives, to shew, "that not only discouragements and scoffs at that time prevailed in Barbadoes, to establish an opinion that the Negroes were not capable of religious impressions, but that even violence and great abuses were used to prevent any thing of the kind taking place. It was in the case of a poor Negro, who having, at his own request, prevailed on a clergyman to administer baptism to him, on his return home the brutish overseer took him to task, giving him to understand, that that was no Sunday's work for those of his complexion; that he had other business for him, the neglect whereof would cost him an afternoon's baptism in blood, as he in the morning had received a baptism with water, (these, says the clergyman, were his own words) which he accordingly made good; of which the Negro complained to him, and he to the governor; nevertheless, the poor miserable creature was ever after so unmercifully treated by that inhuman wretch, the overseer, that, to avoid his cruelty, betaking himself to the woods, he there perished." This instance is applicable to none but the cruel perpetrator; and yet it is an instance of what, in a greater or less degree, may frequently happen, when those poor wretches are left to the will of such brutish inconsiderate creatures as those overseers often are. This is confirmed in a *History of Jamaica*, wrote in thirteen letters, about the year 1740, by a person then residing in that island, who writes as follows, "I shall not now enter upon the question, whether the slavery of the Negroes be agreeable to the laws of nature or not; though it seems extremely hard they should be reduced to serve and toil for the benefit of others, without the least advantage to themselves. Happy Britannia, where slavery is never known! where liberty and freedom cheers every misfortune. Here (says

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the author) we can boast of no such blessing; we have at least ten slaves to one freeman. I incline to touch the hardships which these poor creatures suffer, in the tenderest manner, from a particular regard which I have to many of their masters, but I cannot conceal their sad circumstances intirely: the most trivial error is punished with terrible whipping. I have seen some of them treated in that cruel manner, for no other reason but to satisfy the brutish pleasure of an overseer, who has their punishment mostly at his discretion. I have seen their bodies all in a gore of blood, the skin torn off their backs with the cruel whip; beaten pepper and salt rubbed in the wounds, and a large stick of sealing wax dropped leisurely upon them. It is no wonder, if the horrid pain of such inhuman tortures incline them to rebel. Most of these slaves are brought from the coast of Guinea. When they first arrive, it is observed, they are simple and very innocent creatures; but soon turn to be roguish enough. And when they come to be whipt, urge the example of the whites for an excuse of their faults."

These accounts of the deep depravity of mind attendant on the practice of slavery, verify the truth of Montesquieu's remark of its pernicious effects. And altho' the same degree of opposition to instructing the Negroes may not now appear in the islands as formerly, especially since the Society appointed for propagating the Gospel have possessed a number of Negroes in one of them; nevertheless the situation of these oppressed people is yet dreadful, as well to themselves as in its consequence to their hard task-masters, and their offspring, as must be evident to every impartial person who is acquainted with the treatment they generally receive, or with the laws which from time to time have been made in the colonies, with respect to the Negroes; some of them being absolutely inconsistent with reason, and shocking to humanity. By the 329th act of the assembly of Barbadoes, page 125, it is enacted,

"That if any Negroe or other slave under punishment by his master, or his order, for running away, or any other crime or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately shall suffer in life or member, (which seldom happens) no person whatsoever shall be liable to any fine therefore. But if any man shall, *of wantonness, or only of bloody-mindedness or cruel intention, wilfully kill a Negroe, or other slave of his own, he shall pay into the public treasury, fifteen pounds sterling.*" Now that the life of a man should be so lightly valued, as that fifteen pounds should be judged a sufficient indemnification of the murder of one, even when it is avowedly done *wilfully, wantonly, cruelly, or of bloody-mindedness*, is a tyranny hardly to be paralleled: nevertheless human laws cannot make void the righteous law of God, or prevent the inquisition of that awful judgment day, when, "*at the hand of every man's brother the life of man shall be required.*"

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By the law of South Carolina, the person that killeth a Negroe is only subject to a fine, or twelve months imprisonment. It is the same in most, if not all the West-Indies. And by an act of the assembly of Virginia, (4 Ann. Ch. 49. sect. 27. p. 227.) after proclamation is issued against slaves, “that run away and lie out, *it is lawful for any person whatsoever to kill and destroy such slaves, by such ways and means as he, she, or they shall think fit, without accusation or impeachment of any crime for the same.*”—And lest private interest should incline the planter to mercy, it is provided, “*That every slave so killed, in pursuance of this act, shall be paid for by the public.*”

It was doubtless a like sense of sympathy with that expressed by Morgan Godwyn before mentioned, for the oppressed Negroes, and like zeal for the cause of religion, so manifestly trampled upon in the case of the Negroes, which induced Richard Baxter, an eminent preacher amongst the Dissenters in the last century, in his *christian directory*, to express himself as follows, viz. “Do you mark how God hath followed you with plagues; and may not conscience tell you, that it is for your inhumanity to the souls and bodies of men?”—“To go as pirates; and catch up poor Negroes, or people of another land, that never forfeited life or liberty, and to make them slaves, and sell them, is one of the worst kinds of thievery in the world; and such persons are to be taken for the common enemies of mankind; and they that buy them and use them as beasts for their mere commodity, and betray, or destroy, or neglect their souls, are fitter to be called devils incarnate than christians: It is an heinous sin to buy them, unless it be in charity to deliver them. Undoubtedly they are presently bound to deliver them, because by right the man is his own, therefore no man else can have a just title to him.”

CHAP. VIII.

Griffith Hughes’s account of the number of Negroes in Barbadoes. Cannot keep up their usual number without a yearly recruit. Excessive hardships wear the Negroes down in a surprising manner. A servitude without a condition, inconsistent with reason and natural justice. The general usage the Negroes meet with in the West Indies. Inhuman calculations of the strength and lives of the Negroes. Dreadful consequences which may be expected from the cruelty exercised upon this oppressed part of mankind.

We are told by Griffith Hughes, rector of St. Lucy in Barbadoes, in his natural history of that island, printed in the year 1750, “That there were between sixty-five and seventy thousand Negroes, at that time, in the island, tho’ formerly they had a greater number. That in order to keep up a necessary number, they were obliged to have a yearly supply from Africa. That the hard labour, and often want of necessaries, which these unhappy creatures are obliged to undergo, destroy a greater number than

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are bred there.” He adds, “That the capacities of their minds in common affairs of life are but little inferior, if at all, to those of the Europeans. If they fail in some arts, he says, it may be owing more to their want of education, and the depression of their spirits by slavery, than to any want of natural abilities.” This destruction of the human species, thro’ unnatural hardships, and want of necessary supplies, in the case of the Negroes, is farther confirmed in *an account of the European settlements in America*, printed London, 1757, where it is said, par. 6. chap. 11th, “The Negroes in our colonies endure a slavery more compleat, and attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time: Proofs of this are not wanting. The prodigious waste which we experience in this unhappy part of our species, is a full and melancholy evidence of this truth. The island of Barbadoes, (the Negroes upon which do not amount to eighty thousand) notwithstanding all the means which they use to increase them by propagation, and that the climate is in every respect (except that of being more wholesome) exactly resembling the climate from whence they come; notwithstanding all this, Barbadoes lies under a necessity of an annual recruit of five thousand slaves, to keep up the stock at the number I have mentioned. This prodigious failure, which is at least in the same proportion in all our islands, shews demonstratively that some uncommon and unsupportable hardship lies upon the Negroes, which wears them down in such a surprising manner.”

In an account of part of North America, published by Thomas Jeffery, 1761, the author, speaking of the usage the Negroes receive in the West India islands, says, “It is impossible for a human heart to reflect upon the servitude of these dregs of mankind, without in some measure feeling for their misery, which ends but with their lives.— Nothing can be more wretched than the condition of this people. One would imagine, they were framed to be the disgrace of the human species; banished from their country, and deprived of that blessing, liberty, on which all other nations set the greatest value, they are in a measure reduced to the condition of beasts of burden. In general, a few roots, potatoes especially, are their food, and two rags, which neither screen them from the heat of the day, nor the extraordinary coolness of the night, all their covering; their sleep very short; their labour almost continual; they receive no wages, but have twenty lashes for the smallest fault.” A *thoughtful* person, who had an opportunity of observing the miserable condition of the Negroes in one of our West India islands, writes thus, “I met with daily exercise to see the treatment which those miserable wretches met with from their masters; with but few exceptions. They whip them most unmercifully on small occasions: you will see

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their bodies all wheeled and scarred; in short, they seem to set no other value on their lives, than as they cost them so much money; and are restrained from killing them, when angry, by no worthier consideration, than that they lose so much. They act as though they did not look upon them as a race of human creatures, who have reason, and remembrance of misfortunes, but as beasts; like oxen, who are stubborn, hardy, and senseless, fit for burdens, and designed to bear them: they won't allow them to have any claim to human privileges, or scarce indeed to be regarded as the work of God. Though it was consistent with the justice of our Maker to pronounce the sentence on our common parent, and through him on all succeeding generations, *That he and they should eat their bread by the sweat of their brows*: yet does it not stand recorded by the same eternal truth, *That the labourer is worthy of his hire*? It cannot be allowed, in natural justice, that there should be a servitude without condition; a cruel, endless servitude. It cannot be reconcileable to natural justice, that whole nations, nay, whole continents of men, should be devoted to do the drudgery of life for others, be dragged away from their attachments of relations and societies, and be made to serve the appetite and pleasure of a race of men, whose superiority has been obtained by illegal force."

Sir Hans Sloane, in the introduction to his natural history of Jamaica, in the account he gives of the treatment the Negroes met with there, speaking of the punishments inflicted on them, says, page 56. "For rebellion, the punishment is burning them, by nailing them down to the ground with crooked sticks on every limb, and then applying the fire, by degrees, from the feet and hands, burning them gradually up to the head, whereby *their pains are extravagant*. For crimes of a less nature, gelding or chopping off half the foot with an axe.—For negligence, they are usually whipped by the overseers with lance-wood switches.—After they are whipped till they are raw, some put on their skins pepper and salt, to make them smart; at other times, their masters will drop melted wax on their skins, and use several *very exquisite torments*." In that island, the owners of the Negroe slaves set aside to each a parcel of ground, and allow them half a day at the latter end of the week, which, with the day appointed by the divine injunction to be a day of rest and service to God, and which ought to be kept as such, is the only time allowed them to manure their ground. This, with a few herrings, or other salt fish, is what is given for their support. Their allowance for cloathing in the island, is seldom more than six yards of oznabrigs each year. And in the more northern colonies, where the piercing westerly winds are long and sensibly felt, these poor Africans suffer much for want of sufficient cloathing; indeed some have none till they are able to pay for it by their

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labour. The time that the Negroes work in the West Indies, is from day-break till noon; then again from two o'clock till dark (during which time, they are attended by overseers, who severely scourge those who appear to them dilatory); and before they are suffered to go to their quarters, they have still something to do, as collecting herbage for the horses, gathering fuel for the boilers, &c. so that it is often past twelve before they can get home, when they have scarce time to grind and boil their Indian corn; whereby, if their food was not prepared the evening before, it sometimes happens that they are called again to labour before they can satisfy their hunger. And here no delay or excuse will avail; for if they are not in the field immediately upon the usual notice, they must expect to feel the overseer's lash. In crop time (which lasts many months) they are obliged, by turns, to work most of the night in the boiling house. Thus their owners, from a desire of making the greatest gain by the labour of their slaves, lay heavy burdens on them, and yet feed and cloath them very sparingly, and some scarce feed or cloath them at all; so that the poor creatures are obliged to shift for their living in the best manner they can, which occasions their being often killed in the neighbouring lands, stealing potatoes, or other food, to satisfy their hunger. And if they take any thing from the plantation they belong to, though under such pressing want, their owners will correct them severely for taking a little of what they have so hardly laboured for; whilst many of themselves riot in the greatest luxury and excess. It is matter of astonishment how a people, who, as a nation, are looked upon as generous and humane, and so much value themselves for their uncommon sense of the benefit of liberty, can live in the practice of such extreme oppression and inhumanity, without seeing the inconsistency of such conduct, and feeling great remorse. Nor is it less amazing to hear these men calmly making calculations about the strength and lives of their fellow men. In Jamaica, if six in ten of the new imported Negroes survive the seasoning, it is looked upon as a gaining purchase. And in most of the other plantations, if the Negroes live eight or nine years, their labour is reckoned a sufficient compensation for their cost. If calculations of this sort were made upon the strength and labour of beasts of burden, it would not appear so strange; but even then, a merciful man would certainly use his beast with more mercy than is usually shewn to the poor Negroes. Will not the groans, the dying groans, of this deeply afflicted and oppressed people reach heaven? and when the cup of iniquity is full, must not the inevitable consequence be, the pouring forth of the judgments of God upon their oppressors? But alas! is it not too manifest that this oppression has already long been the object of the divine displeasure? For what heavier judgment, what greater calamity, can befall any people, than to become subject to that hardness of heart, that forgetfulness of God, and insensibility to every religious impression, as well as that general depravation of manners, which so much prevails in these colonies, in proportion as they have more or less enriched themselves at the expence of the blood and bondage of the Negroes.

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It is a dreadful consideration, as a late author remarks, that out of the stock of eighty thousand Negroes in Barbadoes, there die every year five thousand more than are born in that island; which failure is probably in the same proportion in the other islands. *In effect, this people is under a necessity of being entirely renewed every sixteen years.* And what must we think of the management of a people, who, far from increasing greatly, as those who have no loss by war ought to do, must, in so short a time as sixteen years, without foreign recruits, be entirely consumed to a man! Is it not a christian doctrine, *that the labourer is worthy of his hire?* And hath not the Lord, by the mouth of his prophet, pronounced, *"Wo unto that man who buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; who uses his neighbour's service without wages, and giveth him nought for his work?"* And yet the poor Negro slaves are constrained, like the beasts, by beating, to work hard without hire or recompence, and receive nothing from the hand of their unmerciful masters, but such a wretched provision as will scarce support them under their fatigues. The intolerable hardships many of the slaves undergo, are sufficiently proved by the shortness of their lives.—And who are these miserable creatures, that receive such barbarous treatment from the planter? Can we restrain our just indignation, when we consider that they are undoubtedly *his brethren! his neighbours! the children of the same Father, and some of those for whom Christ died, as truly as for the planter himself.* Let the opulent planter, or merchant, prove that his Negro slave is not his brother, or that he is not his neighbour, in the scripture sense of these appellations; and if he is not able so to do, how will he justify the buying and selling of his brethren, as if they were of no more consideration than his cattle? The wearing them out with continual labour, before they have lived out half their days? The severe whipping and torturing them, even to death, if they resist his unsupportable tyranny? Let the hardest slave-holder look forward to that tremendous day, when he must give an account to God of his stewardship; and let him seriously consider, whether, at such a time, he thinks he shall be able to satisfy himself, that any act of buying and selling, or the fate of war, or the birth of children in his house, plantation, or territories, or any other circumstance whatever, can give him such an absolute property in the persons of men, as will justify his retaining them as slaves, and treating them as beasts? Let him diligently consider whether there will not always remain to the slave a *superior* property or right to the fruit of his own labour; and more especially to his own person; that being which was given him by God, and which none but the Giver can justly claim?

CHAP. IX.

The advantage which would have accrued to the natives of Guinea, if the Europeans had acted towards them agreeable to the dictates of humanity and christianity. *An inordinate* desire of gain in the Europeans, the true occasion of the slave trade. Notice of the misrepresentations of the Negroes by most authors, in order to palliate the iniquity of the slave trade. Those misrepresentations refuted, particularly with respect to *the Hottentot Negroes.*

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From the foregoing accounts of the natural disposition of the Negroes, and the fruitfulness of most parts of Guinea, which are confirmed by authors of candour, who have wrote from their own knowledge, it may well be concluded, that the Negroes acquaintance with the Europeans might have been a happiness to them, if these last had not only bore the name, but had also acted the part, of Christians, and used their endeavours by example, as well as precept, to make them acquainted with the glad tidings of the gospel, which breathes peace and good will to man, and with that change of heart, that redemption from sin, which christianity proposeth; innocence and love might then have prevailed, nothing would have been wanting to complete the happiness of the simple Africans: but the reverse has happened; the Europeans, forgetful of their duty as men and christians, have conducted themselves in so iniquitous a manner, as must necessarily raise in the minds of the thoughtful and well-disposed Negroes, the utmost scorn and detestation of the very name of christians. All other considerations have given way to an infallible desire of gain, which has been the principal and moving cause of the most *iniquitous and dreadful scene* that was, perhaps, ever acted upon the face of the earth; instead of making use of that superior knowledge with which the Almighty, the common Parent of mankind, had favoured them, to strengthen the principle of peace and good will in the breasts of the incautious Negroes, the Europeans have, by their bad example, led them into excess of drunkenness, debauchery, and avarice; whereby every passion of corrupt nature being inflamed, they have been easily prevailed upon to make war, and captivate one another; as well to furnish means for the excesses they had been habituated to, as to satisfy the greedy desire of gain in their profligate employers, who to this intent have furnished them with prodigious quantities of arms and ammunition. Thus they have been hurried into confusion, distress, and all the extremities of temporal misery; every thing, even the power of their Kings, has been made subservient to this wicked purpose; for instead of being protectors of their subjects, some of those rulers, corrupted by the excessive love of spirituous liquors, and the tempting baits laid before them by the factors, have invaded the liberties of their unhappy subjects, and are become their oppressors.

Here it may be necessary to observe, that the accounts we have of the inhabitants of Guinea, are chiefly given by persons engaged in the trade, who, from self-interested views, have described them in such colours as were least likely to excite compassion and respect, and endeavoured to reconcile so manifest a violation of the rights of mankind to the minds of the purchasers; yet they cannot but allow the Negroes to be possessed of some good qualities, though they contrive as much as possible to cast a shade over them. A particular

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instance of this appears in Astley's collection, vol. 2. p. 73, where the author, speaking of the Mandingos settled at Galem, which is situated 900 miles up the Senegal, after saying that they carry on a commerce to all the neighbouring kingdoms, and amass riches, adds, "That excepting *the vices peculiar to the Blacks*, they are a good sort of people, honest, hospitable, just to their word, laborious, industrious, and very ready to learn arts and sciences." Here it is difficult to imagine what vices can be peculiarly attendant on a people so well disposed as the author describes these to be. With respect to the charge some authors have brought against them, as being void of all natural affection, it is frequently contradicted by others. In vol. 2. of the Collection, p. 275, and 629, the Negroes of North Guinea, and the Gold Coast, are said *to be fond of their children, whom they love with tenderness*. And Bosman says, p. 340, "Not a few in his country (viz. Holland) fondly imagine, that parents here sell their children, men their wives, and one brother the other: but those who think so deceive themselves; for this never happens on any other account but that of necessity, or some great crime." The same is repeated by J. Barbot, page 326, and also confirmed by Sir Hans Sloane, in the introduction to his natural history of Jamaica; where speaking of the Negroes, he says, "They are usually thought to be haters of their own children, and therefore it is believed that they sell and dispose of them to strangers for money: but this is not true; for the Negroes of Guinea being divided into several captainships, as well as the Indians of America, have wars; and besides those slain in battle, many prisoners are taken, who are sold as slaves, and brought thither: but the parents here, although their children are slaves for ever, yet have so great love for them, that no master dares sell, or give away, one of their little ones, unless they care not whether their parents hang themselves or no." J. Barbot, speaking of the occasion of the natives of Guinea being represented as a treacherous people, ascribes it to the Hollanders (and doubtless other Europeans) usurping authority, and fomenting divisions between the Negroes. At page 110, he says, "It is well known that many of the European nations trading amongst these people, have very unjustly and inhumanly, without any provocation, stolen away, from time to time, abundance of the people, not only on this coast, but almost every where in Guinea, who have come on board their ships in a harmless and confiding manner: these they have in great numbers carried away, and sold in the plantations, with other slaves which they had purchased." And although some of the Negroes may be justly charged with indolence and supineness, yet many others are frequently mentioned by authors *as a careful, industrious, and even laborious* people. But nothing shews more clearly how unsafe it is to form a judgment of distant people

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from the accounts given of them by travellers, who have taken but a transient view of things, than the case of the Hottentots, viz. those several nations of Negroes who inhabit the most southern part of Africa: *these people* are represented by several authors, who appear to have very much copied their relations one from the other, as so savage and barbarous as to have little of human, but the shape: but these accounts are strongly contradicted by others, particularly Peter Kolben, who has given a circumstantial relation of the disposition and manners of those people.[A] He was a man of learning, sent from the court of Prussia solely to make astronomical and natural observations there; and having no interest in the slavery of the Negroes, had not the same inducement as most other relators had, to misrepresent the natives of Africa. He resided eight years at and about the Cape of Good Hope, during which time he examined with great care into the customs, manners, and opinions of the Hottentots; whence he sets these people in a quite different light from what they appeared in former authors, whom he corrects, and blames for the falsehoods they have wantonly told of them. At p. 61, he says, "The details we have in several authors, are for the most part made up of inventions and hearsays, which generally prove false." Nevertheless, he allows they are justly to be blamed for their sloth.—*The love of liberty and indolence is their all; compulsion is death to them. While necessity obliges them to work, they are very tractable, obedient, and faithful; but when they have got enough to satisfy the present want, they are deaf to all further intreaty.* He also faults them for their nastiness, the effect of sloth; and for their love of drink, and the practice of some unnatural customs, which long use has established amongst them; which, nevertheless, from the general good disposition of these people, there is great reason to believe they might be persuaded to refrain from, if a truly christian care had been extended towards them. He says, "They are eminently distinguished by many virtues, as their mutual benevolence, friendship, and hospitality; they breathe kindness and good will to one another, and seek all opportunities of obliging. Is a Hottentot's assistance required by one of his countrymen? he runs to give it. Is his advice asked? he gives it with sincerity. Is his countryman in want? he relieves him to the utmost of his power." Their hospitality extends even to European strangers: in travelling thro' the Cape countries, you meet with a chearful and open reception, in whatsoever village you come to. In short, he says, page 339, "The integrity of the Hottentots, their strictness and celerity in the execution of justice, and their charity, are equalled by few nations. *In alliances, their word is sacred; there being hardly any thing they look upon as a fouler crime than breach of engagements. Theft and adultery they punish with death.*" They firmly

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believe there is a God, the author of all things, whom they call the God of gods; but it does not appear that they have an institution of worship directly regarding this supreme Deity. When pressed on this article, they excuse themselves by a tradition, "*That their first parents so grievously offended this great God, that he cursed them and their posterity with hardness of heart; so that they know little about him, and have less inclination to serve him.*" As has been already remarked, these Hottentots are the only Negroe nations bordering on the sea, we read of, who are not concerned in making or keeping slaves. Those slaves made use of by the Hollanders at the Cape, are brought from other parts of Guinea. Numbers of these people told the author, "That the vices they saw prevail amongst christians; their avarice, their envy and hatred of one another; their restless discontented tempers; their lasciviousness and injustice, were the things that principally kept the Hottentots from hearkening to christianity."

[Footnote A: See Kolban's account of the Cape of Good Hope.]

Father Tachard, a French Jesuit, famous for his travels in the East Indies, in his account of these people, says, "The Hottentots have more honesty, love, and liberality for one another, than are almost anywhere seen amongst christians."

CHAP. X.

Man-stealing esteemed highly criminal, and punishable by the laws of Guinea: No Negroes allowed to be sold for slaves there, but those deemed prisoners of war, or in punishment for crimes. *Some* of the Negroe rulers, corrupted by the Europeans, violently infringe the laws of Guinea. The King of Barsailay noted in that respect.

By an inquiry into the laws and customs formerly in use, and still in force amongst the Negroes, particularly on the Gold Coast, it will be found, that provision was made for the general peace, and for the safety of individuals; even in W. Bosman's time, long after the Europeans had established the slave-trade, the natives were not publicly enslaved, any otherwise than in punishment for crimes, when prisoners of war, or by a violent exertion of the power of their corrupted Kings. Where any of the natives were stolen, in order to be sold to the Europeans, it was done secretly, or at least, only connived at by those in power: this appears From Barbot and Bosman's account of the matter, both agreeing that man-stealing was not allowed on the Gold Coast. The first[A] says, "*Kidnapping or stealing of human creatures is punished there, and even sometimes with death.*" And, W. Bosman, whose long residence on the coast, enabled him to speak with certainty, says,[B] "*That the laws were severe against murder, thievery, and adultery.*" And adds, "*That man-stealing was punished on the Gold Coast with rigid severity and sometimes with death itself.*" Hence it may be concluded, that the sale of the greatest part of the Negroes to the Europeans is supported by violence, in defiance of the laws,



through the knavery of their principal men,[C] who, (as is too often the case with those in European countries) under pretence of encouraging trade, and increasing the public revenue, disregard the dictates of justice, and trample upon those liberties which they are appointed to preserve.

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[Footnote A: Barbot, p. 303.]

[Footnote B: Bosman, p. 143.]

[Footnote C: Note. Barbot, page 270, says, the trade of slaves is in a more peculiar manner the business of Kings, rich men, and prime merchants, exclusive of the inferior sort of blacks.]

Fr. Moor also mentions man-stealing as being discountenanced by the Negroe Governments on the river Gambia, and speaks of the enslaving the peaceable inhabitants, as a violence which only happens under a corrupt administration of justice; he says,[A] "The Kings of that country generally advise with their head men, scarcely doing any thing of consequence, without consulting them first, except the King of Barsailay, who being subject to hard drinking, is very absolute. It is to this King's insatiable thirst for brandy, that his subjects freedoms and families are in so precarious a situation.[B] Whenever this King wants goods or brandy, he sends a messenger to the English Governor at James Fort, to desire he would send a sloop there with a cargo: *this news, being not at all unwelcome*, the Governor sends accordingly; against the arrival of the sloop, the King goes and ransacks some of his enemies towns, seizing the people, and selling them for such commodities as he is in want of, which commonly are brandy, guns, powder, balls, pistols, and cutlasses, for his attendants and soldiers; and coral and silver for his wives and concubines. In case he is not at war with any neighbouring King, he then falls upon one of his own towns, which are numerous, and uses them in the same manner." "He often goes with some of his troops by a town in the day time, and returning in the night, sets fire to three parts of it, and putting guards at the fourth, there seizes the people as they run out from the fire; he ties their arms behind them, and marches them either to Joar or Cohone, where he sells them to the Europeans."

[Footnote A: Moor, page 61.]

[Footnote B: Idem, p. 46.]

A. Brue, the French director, gives much the same account, and says,[A] "That having received goods, he wrote to the King, that if he had a sufficient number of slaves, he was ready to trade with him. This Prince, as well as the other Negroe monarchs, has always a sure way of supplying his deficiencies, by selling his own subjects, for which they seldom want a pretence. The King had recourse to this method, by seizing three hundred of his own people, and sent word to the director, that he had the slaves ready to deliver for the goods." It seems, the King wanted double the quantity of goods which the factor would give him for these three hundred slaves; but the factor refusing to trust him, as he was already in the company's debt, and perceiving that this refusal had put the King much out of temper, he proposed that he should give him a licence for taking

so many more of his people, as the goods he still wanted were worth but this the King refused, saying "*It* might occasion a disturbance

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amongst his subjects.”[B] Except in the above instance, and some others, where the power of the Negroe Kings is unlawfully exerted over their subjects, the slave-trade is carried on in Guinea with some regard to the laws of the country, which allow of none to be sold, but prisoners taken in their national wars, or people adjudged to slavery in punishment for crimes; but the largeness of the country, the number of kingdoms or commonwealths, and the great encouragement given by the Europeans, afford frequent pretences and opportunities to the bold designing profligates of one kingdom, to surprize and seize upon not only those of a neighbouring government, but also the weak and helpless of their own;[C] and the unhappy people, taken on those occasions, are, with impunity, sold to the Europeans. These practices are doubtless disapproved of by the most considerate amongst the Negroes, for Bosman acquaints us, that even their national wars are not agreeable to such. He says,[D] “If the person who occasioned the beginning of the war be taken, they will not easily admit him to ransom, though his weight in gold should be offered, for fear he should in future form some new design against their repose.”

[Footnote A: Collection vol. 2. p. 29.]

[Footnote B: Note, This Negroe King thus refusing to comply with the factor’s wicked proposal, shews, he was sensible his own conduct was not justifiable; and it likewise appears, the factor’s only concern was to procure the greatest number of slaves, without any regard to the injustice of the method by which they were procured. This Andrew Brue, was, for a long time, principal director of the French African factory in those parts; in the management of which, he is in the collection said to have had extraordinary success. The part he ought to have acted as a christian towards the ignorant Africans seems quite out of the question; the profit of his employers appears to have been his sole concern. At page 62, speaking of the country on the Senegal river, he says, “It was very populous, the soil rich; and if the people were industrious, they might, of their own produce, carry on a very advantageous trade with strangers; there being but few things in which they could be excelled; *but* (he adds) *it is to be hoped, the Europeans will never let them into the secret.*” A remark unbecoming humanity, much more christianity!]

[Footnote C: This inhuman practice is particularly described by Brue, in collect. vol. 2. page 98, where he says, “That some of the natives are, on all occasions, endeavouring to surprize and carry off their country people. They land (says he) without noise, and if they find a lone cottage, without defence, they surround it, and carry off all the people and effects to their boat, and immediately reimbarc.” This seems to be mostly practised by some Negroes who dwell on the sea coast.]

[Footnote D: Bosman, p. 155.]

CHAP. XI.

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An account of the shocking inhumanity, used in the carrying on of the slave-trade, as described by factors of different nations, viz. by Francis Moor, on the river Gambia; and by John Barbot, A. Brue, and William Bosman, through the coast of Guinea. *Note.* Of the large revenues arising to the Kings of Guinea from the slave-trade.

First, Francis Moor, factor for the English African company, on the river Gambia,[A] writes, "That there are a number of Negro traders, called joncoes, or merchants, who follow the slave-trade as a business; their place of residence is so high up in the country as to be six weeks travel from James Fort, which is situate at the mouth of that river. These merchants bring down elephants teeth, and in some years two thousand slaves, most of which, they say, are prisoners taken in war. They buy them from the different Princes who take them; many of them are Bumbrongs and Petcharies; nations, who each of them have different languages, and are brought from a vast way inland. Their way of bringing them is tying them by the neck with leather thongs, at about a yard distant from each other, thirty or forty in a string, having generally a bundle of corn or elephants teeth upon each of their heads. In their way from the mountains, they travel thro' very great woods, where they cannot for some days get water; so they carry in skin bags enough to support them for a time. I cannot (adds Moor) be certain of the number of merchants who follow this trade, but there may, perhaps, be about an hundred, who go up into the inland country, with the goods which they buy from the white men, and with them purchase, in various countries, gold, slaves, and elephants teeth. Besides the slaves, which the merchants bring down, there are many bought along the river: These are either taken in war, as the former are, or men condemned for crimes; *or else people stolen, which is very frequent.*—Since the slave-trade has been used, all punishments are changed into slavery; there being an advantage on such condemnation, *they strain for crimes very hard, in order to get the benefit of selling the criminal.*"

[Footnote A: Moor, page 28.]

John Barbot, the French factor, in his account of the manner by which the slaves are procured, says,[A] "The slaves sold by the Negroes, are for the most part prisoners of war, or taken in the incursions they make in their enemies territories; others are stolen away by their neighbours, when found abroad on the road, or in the woods; or else in the corn fields, at the time of the year when their parents keep them there all the day to scare away the devouring small birds." Speaking of the transactions on that part of Guinea called the Slave Coast, where the Europeans have the most factories, and from whence they bring away much the greatest number of slaves, the same author, and also Bosman[B] says, "The inhabitants of Coto do much mischief, in stealing those

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slaves they sell to the Europeans, from the upland country.—That the inhabitants of Popo excell the former; being endowed with a much larger share of courage, they rob more successfully, by which means they increase their riches and trade,” The author particularly remarks, “*That they are encouraged in this practice by the Europeans*; sometimes it happens, according to the success of their inland excursions, that they are able to furnish two hundred slaves or more, in a few days.” And he says,[C] “The blacks of Fida, or Whidah, are so expeditious in trading for slaves, that they can deliver a thousand every month.”—“If there happens to be no stock of slaves there, the factor must trust the blacks with his goods, to the value of one hundred and fifty, or two hundred pounds; which goods they carry up into the inland country, to buy slaves at all markets,[D] for above six hundred miles up the country, where they are kept like cattle in Europe; the slaves sold there being generally prisoners of war, taken from their enemies like other booty, and perhaps some few sold by their own countrymen, in extreme want, or upon a famine, as also some as a punishment of heinous crimes.” So far Barbot’s account; that given by William Bosman is as follows:[E] “When the slaves which are brought from the inland countries come to Whidah, they are put in prison together; when we treat concerning buying them, they are all brought out together in a large plain, where, by our surgeons, they are thoroughly examined, and that naked, both men and women, without the least distinction or modesty.[F] Those which are approved as good, are set on one side; in the mean while a burning iron, with the arms or name of the company, lies in the fire, with which ours are marked on the breast. When we have agreed with the owners of the slaves, they are returned to their prisons, where, from that time forward, they are kept at our charge, and cost us two pence a day each slave, which serves to subsist them like criminals on bread and water; so that to save charges, we send them on board our ships the very first opportunity; before which, their masters strip them of all they have on their backs, so that they come on board stark naked, as well women as men. In which condition they are obliged to continue, if the master of the ship is not so charitable (which he commonly is) as to bestow something on them to cover their nakedness. Six or seven hundred are sometimes put on board a vessel, where they lie as close together as it is possible for them to be crowded.”

[Footnote A: John Barbot, page 47.]

[Footnote B: Bosman, page 310.]

[Footnote C: Barbot, page 326.]

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[Footnote D: When the great income which arises to the Negroe Kings on the Slave-Coast, from the slaves brought thro' their several governments, to be shipped on board the European vessels, is considered, we have no cause to wonder that they give so great a countenance to that trade: William Bosman says, page 337, "*That each ship which comes to Whidah to trade, reckoning one with another, either by toll, trade, or custom, pays about four hundred pounds, and sometimes fifty ships come hither in a year.*" Barbot confirms the same, and adds, page 350, "*That in the neighbouring kingdom of Ardah, the duty to the King is the value of seventy or eighty slaves for each trading ship.*" Which is near half as much more as at Whidah; nor can the Europeans, concerned in the trade, with any degree of propriety, blame the African Kings for countenancing it, while they continue to send vessels, on purpose to take in the slaves which are thus stolen, and that they are permitted, under the sanction of national laws, to sell them to the colonies.]

[Footnote E: Bosman, page 340.]

[Footnote F: Note, from the above account of the indecent and shocking manner in which the unhappy Negroes are treated, it is reasonable for persons unacquainted with these people, to conclude them to be void of that natural modesty, so becoming a reasonable creature; but those who have had intercourse with the Blacks in these northern colonies, know that this would be a wrong conclusion, for they are indeed as susceptible of modesty and shame as other people. It is the unparallel'd brutality, to which the Europeans have, by long custom, been inured, which urgeth them, without blushing, to act so shameful a part. Such usage is certainly grievous to the poor Negroes, particularly the women; but they are slaves, and must submit to this, or any other abuse that is offered them by their cruel task-masters, or expect to be inhumanly tormented into acquiescence. That the Blacks are unaccustomed to such brutality, appears from an instance mentioned in Ashley's collection, vol. 2. page 201, viz. "At an audience which Casseneuve had of the King of Congo, where he was used with a great deal of civility by the Blacks, some slaves were delivered to him. The King observing Casseneuve (according to the custom of the Europeans) to handle the limbs of the slaves, burst out a laughing, as did the great men about him: the factor asking the interpreter the occasion of their mirth, was told it proceeded from his so nicely examining the slaves. Nevertheless, *the King was so ashamed of it, that he desired him, for decency's sake, to do it in a more private manner.*"]

CHAP. XII.

Extracts of several Journals of Voyages to the coast of Guinea for slaves, whereby the extreme inhumanity of that traffick is described. *Melancholy* account of a ship blown up on that coast, with a great number of Negroes on board, *Instances* of shocking barbarity perpetrated by masters of vessels towards their slaves. *Inquiry* why these scandalous infringements, both of divine and human laws, are overlooked by the government.

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The misery and bloodshed attendant on the slave-trade, are set forth by the following extracts of two voyages to the coast of Guinea for slaves. The first in a vessel from Liverpool, taken *verbatim* from the original manuscript of the Surgeon's Journal, viz.

"Sestro, December the 29th, 1724, No trade to day, though many traders came on board; they informed us, that the people are gone to war within land, and will bring prisoners enough in two or three days, in hopes of which we stay."

The 30th. "No trade yet, but our traders came on board to day, and informed us the people had burnt four towns of their enemies, so that to-morrow we expect slaves off: another large ship is come in. Yesterday came in a large Londoner."

The 31st. "Fair weather, but no trade yet; we see each night towns burning, but we hear the Sestro men are many of them killed by the inland Negroes, so that we fear this war will be unsuccessful."

The 2d of January. "Last night we saw a prodigious fire break out about eleven o'clock, and this morning see the town of Sestro burnt down to the ground; (it contained some hundreds of houses) So that we find their enemies are too hard for them at present, and consequently our trade spoiled here; therefore, about seven o'clock, we weighed anchor, as did likewise the three other vessels, to proceed lower down."

The second relation, also taken from the original manuscript Journal of a person of credit, who went surgeon on the same trade, in a vessel from New-York, about twenty years past, is as follows; viz. "Being on the coast, the Commander of the vessel, according to custom, sent a person on shore with a present to the King, acquainting him with his arrival, and letting him know, they wanted a cargo of slaves. The King promised to furnish them with the slaves; and, in order to do it, set out to go to war against his enemies; designing to surprise some town, and take all the people prisoners. Some time after, the King sent them word, he had not yet met with the desired success; having been twice repulsed, in attempting to break up two towns, but that he still hoped to procure a number of slaves for them; and in this design he persisted, till he met his enemies in the field, where a battle was fought, which lasted three days, during which time the engagement was so bloody that four thousand five hundred men were slain on the spot." The person who wrote the account, beheld the bodies, as they lay on the field of battle. "Think (says he in his Journal) what a pitiable sight it was, to see the widows weeping over their lost husbands, orphans deploring the loss of their fathers, &c. &c." In the 6th vol. of Churchill's collection of Voyages, page 219, we have the relation of a voyage performed by Captain Philips, in a ship of 450 tuns, along the coast of Guinea, for elephants teeth, gold, and Negroe slaves, intended for Barbadoes; in which he says, that

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they took “seven hundred slaves on board, the men being all put in irons two by two, shackled together to prevent their mutinying or swimming ashore. That the Negroes are so loth to leave their own country, that they often leap out of the canoe, boat, or ship, into the sea, and keep under water till they are drowned, to avoid being taken up, and saved by the boats which pursue them.”—They had about twelve Negroes who willingly drowned themselves; others starved themselves to death.—Philips was advised to cut off the legs and arms of some to terrify the rest, (as other Captains had done) but this he refused to do. From the time of his taking the Negroes on board, to his arrival at Barbadoes, no less than three hundred and twenty died of various diseases.[A]

[Footnote A: *The following relation is inserted at the request of the author.*

That I may contribute all in my power towards the good of mankind, by inspiring any individuals with a suitable abhorrence of that detestable practice of trading in our fellow-creatures, and in some measure atone for my neglect of duty as a Christian, in engaging in that wicked traffic, I offer to their serious consideration some few occurrences, of which I was an eye-witness; that being struck with the wretched and affecting scene, they may foster that humane principle, which is the noble and distinguished characteristic of man, and improve it to the benefit of their children's children.

About the year 1749, I sailed from Liverpool to the coast of Guinea. Some time after our arrival, I was ordered to go up the country a considerable distance, upon having notice from one of the Negroe Kings, that he had a parcel of slaves to dispose of. I received my instructions, and went, carrying with me an account of such goods as we had on board, to exchange for the slaves we intended to purchase. Upon being introduced, I presented him with a small case of English spirits, a gun, and some trifles; which having accepted, and understood by an interpreter what goods we had, the next day was appointed for viewing the slaves; we found about two hundred confined in one place. But here how shall I relate the affecting sight I there beheld! How can I sufficiently describe the silent sorrow which appeared in the countenance of the afflicted father, and the painful anguish of the tender mother, expecting to be for ever separated from their tender offspring; the distressed maid, wringing her hands in presage of her future wretchedness, and the general cry of the innocent from a dreadful apprehension of the perpetual slavery to which they were doomed! Under a sense of my offence to God, in the persons of his creatures, I acknowledge I purchased eleven, whom I conducted tied two and two to the ship. Being but a small ship, (ninety ton) we soon purchased our cargo, consisting of one hundred and seventy slaves, whom thou mayest, reader, range in thy view, as they were shackled two and two together, pent up within

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the narrow confines of the main deck, with the complicated distress of sickness, chains, and contempt; deprived of every fond and social tie, and, in a great measure, reduced to a state of desperation. We had not been a fortnight at sea, before the fatal consequence of this despair appeared; they formed a design of recovering their natural right, LIBERTY, by rising and murdering every man on board; but the goodness of the Almighty rendered their scheme abortive, and his mercy spared us to have time to repent. The plot was discovered; the ring-leader, tied by the two thumbs over the barricade door, at sun-rise received a number of lashes: in this situation he remained till sun-set, exposed to the insults and barbarity of the brutal crew of sailors, with full leave to exercise their cruelty at pleasure. The consequence of this was, that next morning the miserable sufferer was found dead, flayed from the shoulders to the waist. The next victim was a youth, who, from too strong a sense of his misery, refused nourishment, and died disregarded and unnoticed, till the hogs had fed on part of his flesh. Will not christianity blush at this impious sacrilege? May the relation of it serve to call back the struggling remains of humanity in the hearts of those, who, from a love of wealth, partake in any degree of this oppressive gain; and have such an effect on the minds of the sincere, as may be productive of peace, the happy effect of true repentance for past transgressions, and a resolution to renounce all connexion with it for the time to come.]

Reader, bring the matter home to thy own heart, and consider whether any situation can be more completely miserable than that of these distressed captives. When we reflect that each individual of this number had probably some tender attachment, which was broken by this cruel separation; some parent or wife, who had not an opportunity of mingling tears in a parting embrace; perhaps some infants, or aged parents, whom his labour was to feed, and vigilance protect; themselves under the most dreadful apprehension of an unknown perpetual slavery; confined within the narrow limits of a vessel, where often several hundreds lie as close as possible. Under these aggravated distresses, they are often reduced to a state of despair, in which many have been frequently killed, and some deliberately put to death under the greatest torture, when they have attempted to rise, in order to free themselves from present misery, and the slavery designed them. Many accounts of this nature might be mentioned; indeed from the vast number of vessels employed in the trade, and the repeated relations in the public prints of Negroes rising on board the vessels from Guinea, it is more than probable, that many such instances occur every year. I shall only mention one example of this kind, by which the reader may judge of the rest; it is in Astley's collection, vol. 2. p. 449, related by John Atkins, surgeon on board admiral Ogle's

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squadron, of one "Harding, master of a vessel in which several of the men-slaves and women-slaves had attempted to rise, in order to recover their liberty; some of whom the master, of his own authority, sentenced to cruel death, making them first eat the heart and liver of one of those he had killed. The woman he hoisted by the thumbs, whipped, and slashed with knives before the other slaves, till she died." [A] As detestable and shocking as this may appear to such whose hearts are not yet hardened by the practice of that cruelty, which the love of wealth by degrees introduceth into the human mind, it will not be strange to those who have been concerned or employed in the trade.

[Footnote A: A memorable instance of some of the dreadful effects of the slave-trade, happened about five years past, on a ship from this port, then at anchor about three miles from shore, near Acra Fort, on the coast of Guinea. They had purchased between four and five hundred Negroes, and were ready to sail for the West Indies. It is customary on board those vessels, to keep the men shackled two by two, each by one leg to a small iron bar; these are every day brought on the deck for the benefit of air; and lest they should attempt to recover their freedom, they are made fast to two common chains, which are extended on each side the main deck; the women and children are loose. This was the situation of the slaves on board this vessel, when it took fire by means of a person who was drawing spirits by the light of a lamp; the cask bursting, the fire spread with so much violence, that in about ten minutes, the sailors, apprehending it impossible to extinguish it before it could reach a large quantity of powder they had on board, concluded it necessary to cast themselves into the sea, as the only chance of saving their lives; and first they endeavoured to loose the chains by which the Negroe men were fastened to the deck; but in the confusion the key being missing, they had but just time to loose one of the chains by wrenching the staple; when the vehemence of the fire so increased, that they all but one man jumped over board, when immediately the fire having gained the powder, the vessel blew up with all the slaves who remained fastened to the one chain, and such others as had not followed the sailors examples. There happened to be three Portuguese vessels in sight, who, with others from the shore, putting out their boats, took up about two hundred and fifty of those poor souls who remained alive; of which number, about fifty died on shore, being mostly of those who were fettered together by iron shackles, which, as they jumped into the sea, had broke their legs, and these fractures being inflamed by so long a struggle in the sea, probably mortified, which occasioned the death of every one that was so wounded. The two hundred remaining alive, were soon disposed of, for account of the owners to other purchasers.]

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Now here arises a necessary query to those who hold the balance of justice, and who must be accountable to God for the use they have made of it, That as the principles on which the British constitution is founded, are so favourable to the common rights of mankind, how it has happened that the laws which countenance this iniquitous traffic, have obtained the sanction of the legislature? and that the executive part of the government should so long shut their ears to continual reports of the barbarities perpetrated against this unhappy people, and leave the trading subjects at liberty to trample on the most precious rights of others, even without a rebuke? Why are the masters of vessels thus suffered to be the sovereign arbiters of the lives of the miserable Negroes, and allowed with impunity thus to destroy (may I not properly say, *to murder*) their fellow-creatures; and that by means so cruel, as cannot be even related but with shame and horror?

CHAP. XIII.

Usage of the Negroes, when they arrive in the West Indies. An hundred thousand Negroes brought from Guinea every year to the English colonies. The number of Negroes who die in the passage and seasoning. These are, properly speaking, murdered by the prosecution of this infamous traffic. Remarks on its dreadful *effects and tendency*.

When the vessels arrive at their destined port in the colonies, the poor Negroes are to be disposed of to the planters; and here they are again exposed naked, without any distinction of sexes, to the brutal examination of their purchasers; and this, it may well be judged, is, to many, another occasion of deep distress. Add to this, that near connexions must now again be separated, to go with their several purchasers; this must be deeply affecting to all, but such whose hearts are seared by the love of gain. Mothers are seen hanging over their daughters, bedewing their naked breasts with tears, and daughters clinging to their parents, not knowing what new stage of distress must follow their separation, or whether they shall ever meet again. And here what sympathy, what commiseration, do they meet with? Why, indeed, if they will not separate as readily as their owners think proper, the whipper is called for, and the lash exercised upon their naked bodies, till obliged to part. Can any human heart, which is not become callous by the practice of such cruelties, be unconcerned, even at the relation of such grievous affliction, to which this oppressed part of our species are subjected.

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In a book, printed in Liverpool, called *The Liverpool Memorandum*, which contains, amongst other things, an account of the trade of that port, there is an exact list of the vessels employed in the Guinea trade, and of the number of slaves imported in each vessel; by which it appears that in the year 1753, the number imported to America by one hundred and one vessels belonging to that port, amounted to upwards of thirty thousand; and from the number of vessels employed by the African company in London and Bristol, we may, with some degree of certainty, conclude, there are one hundred thousand Negroes purchased and brought on board our ships yearly from the coast of Africa. This is confirmed in Anderson's history of Trade and Commerce, lately printed; where it is said,[A] "That England supplies her American colonies with Negroe slaves, amounting in number to above one hundred thousand every year." When the vessels are full freighted with slaves, they sail for our plantations in America, and may be two or three months in the voyage; during which time, from the filth and stench that is among them, distempers frequently break out, which carry off commonly a fifth, a fourth, yea sometimes a third or more of them: so that taking all the slaves together, that are brought on board our ships yearly, one may reasonably suppose, that at least ten thousand of them die on the voyage. And in a printed account of the state of the Negroes in our plantations, it is supposed that a fourth part, more or less, die at the different islands, in what is called the seasoning. Hence it may be presumed, that at a moderate computation of the slaves who are purchased by our African merchants in a year, near thirty thousand die upon the voyage, and in the seasoning. Add to this, the prodigious number who are killed in the incursions and intestine wars, by which the Negroes procure the number of slaves wanted to load the vessels. How dreadful then is this slave-trade, whereby so many thousands of our fellow creatures, free by nature, endued with the same rational faculties, and called to be heirs of the same salvation with us, lose their lives, and are, truly and properly speaking, murdered every year! For it is not necessary, in order to convict a man of murder, to make it appear that he had an *intention* to commit murder; whoever does, by unjust force or violence, deprive another of his liberty, and, while he hath him in his power, continues so to oppress him by cruel treatment, as eventually to occasion his death, is actually guilty of murder. It is enough to make a thoughtful person tremble, to think what a load of guilt lies upon our nation on this account; and that the blood of thousands of poor innocent creatures, murdered every year in the prosecution of this wicked trade, cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance. Were we to hear or read of a nation that destroyed every year, in some other way, as many human creatures as perish in this trade, we should certainly consider

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them as a very bloody, barbarous people; if it be alledged, that the legislature hath encouraged, and still does encourage this trade, It is answered, that no legislature on earth can alter the nature of things, so as to make that to be right which is contrary to the law of God, (the supreme Legislator and Governor of the world) and opposeth the promulgation of the Gospel of *peace on earth, and good will to man*. Injustice may be methodized and established by law, but still it will be injustice, as much as it was before; though its being so established may render men more insensible of the guilt, and more bold and secure in the perpetration of it.

[Footnote A: Appendix to Anderson's history, p. 68.]

CHAP. XIV.

Observations on the disposition and capacity of the Negroes: Why thought inferior to that of the Whites. Affecting instances of the slavery of the Negroes. Reflections thereon.

Doubts may arise in the minds of some, whether the foregoing accounts, relating to the natural capacity and good disposition of the inhabitants of Guinea, and of the violent manner in which they are said to be torn from their native land, are to be depended upon; as those Negroes who are brought to us, are not heard to complain, and do but seldom manifest such a docility and quickness of parts, as is agreeable thereto. But those who make these objections, are desired to note the many discouragements the poor Africans labour under, when brought from their native land. Let them consider, that those afflicted strangers, though in an *enlightened Christian country*, have yet but little opportunity or encouragement to exert and improve their natural talents: They are constantly employed in servile labour; and the abject condition in which we see them, naturally raises an idea of a superiority in ourselves; whence we are apt to look upon them as an ignorant and contemptible part of mankind. Add to this, that they meet with very little encouragement of freely conversing with such of the Whites, as might impart instruction to them. It is a fondness for wealth, for authority, or honour, which prompts most men in their endeavours to excell; but these motives can have little influence upon the minds of the Negroes; few of them having any reasonable prospect of any other than a state of slavery; so that, though their natural capacities were ever so good, they have neither inducement or opportunity to exert them to advantage: This naturally tends to depress their minds, and sink their spirits into habits of idleness and sloth, which they would, in all likelihood, have been free from, had they stood upon an equal footing with the white people. They are suffered, with impunity, to cohabit together, without being married; and to part, when solemnly engaged to one another as man and wife; notwithstanding the moral and religious laws of the land, strictly prohibiting such practices. This naturally tends

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to beget apprehensions in the most thoughtful of those people, that we look upon them as a lower race, not worthy of the same care, nor liable to the same rewards and punishments as ourselves. Nevertheless it may with truth be said, that both amongst those who have obtained their freedom, and those who remain in servitude, some have manifested a strong sagacity and an exemplary uprightness of heart. If this hath not been generally the case with them, is it a matter of surprize? Have we not reason to make the same complaint of many white servants, when discharged from our service, though many of them have had much greater opportunities of knowledge and improvement than the blacks; who, even when free, labour under the same difficulties as before: having but little access to, and intercourse with, the most reputable white people, they remain confined within their former limits of conversation. And if they seldom complain of the unjust and cruel usage they have received, in being forced from their native country, &c. it is not to be wondered at; it being a considerable time after their arrival amongst us, before they can speak our language; and, by the time they are able to express themselves, they have great reason to believe, that little or no notice would be taken of their complaints: yet let any person enquire of those who were capable of reflection, before they were brought from their native land, and he will hear such affecting relations, as, if not lost to the common feelings of humanity, will sensibly affect his heart. The case of a poor Negroe, not long since brought from Guinea, is a recent instance of this kind. From his first arrival, he appeared thoughtful and dejected, frequently dropping tears when taking notice of his master's children, the cause of which was not known till he was able to speak English, when the account he gave of himself was, "That he had a wife and children in his own country; that some of these being sick and thirsty, he went in the night time, to fetch water at a spring, where he was violently seized and carried away by persons who lay in wait to catch men, from whence he was transported to America. The remembrance of his family, friends, and other connections, left behind, which he never expected to see any more, were the principal cause of his dejection and grief." Many cases, equally affecting, might be here mentioned; but one more instance, which fell under the notice of a person of credit, will suffice. One of these wretched creatures, then about 50 years of age, informed him, "That being violently torn from a wife and several children in Guinea, he was sold in Jamaica, where never expecting to see his native land or family any more, he joined himself to a Negroe woman, by whom he had two children: after some years, it suiting the interest of his owner to remove him, he was separated from his second wife and children, and brought to South Carolina, where, expecting to spend the remainder of his days, he engaged with a third

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wife, by whom he had another child; but here the same consequence of one man being subject to the will and pleasure of another man occurring, he was separated from this last wife and child, and brought into this country, where he remained a slave." Can any, whose mind is not rendered quite obdurate by the love of wealth, hear these relations, without being deeply touched with sympathy and sorrow? And doubtless the case of many, very many of these afflicted people, upon enquiry, would be found to be attended with circumstances equally tragical and aggravating. And if we enquire of those Negroes, who were brought away from their native country when children, we shall find most of them to have been stolen away, when abroad from their parents, on the roads, in the woods, or watching their corn-fields. Now, you that have studied the book of conscience, and you that are learned in the law, what will you say to such deplorable cases? When, and how, have these oppressed people forfeited their liberty? Does not justice loudly call for its being restored to them? Have they not the same right to demand it, as any of us should have, if we had been violently snatched by pirates from our native land? Is it not the duty of every dispenser of justice, who is not forgetful of his own humanity, to remember that these are men, and to declare them free? Where instances of such cruelty frequently occur, and are neither enquired into, nor redressed, by those whose duty it is *to seek judgment, and relieve the oppressed*, Isaiah i. 17. what can be expected, but that the groans and cries of these sufferers will reach Heaven; and what shall we do *when God riseth up? and when he visiteth*, what will ye answer him? *Did not he that made them, make us; and did not one fashion us in the womb?* Job xxxi. 14.

CHAP XIV.

The expediency of a general freedom being granted to the Negroes considered.
Reasons why it might be productive of advantage and safety to the Colonies.

It is scarce to be doubted, but that the foregoing accounts will beget in the heart of the considerate readers an earnest desire to see a stop put to this complicated evil, but the objection with many is, What shall be done with those Negroes already imported, and born in our families? Must they be sent to Africa? That would be to expose them, in a strange land, to greater difficulties than many of them labour under at present. To let them suddenly free here, would be perhaps attended with no less difficulty; for, undisciplined as they are in religion and virtue, they might give a loose to those evil habits, which the fear of a master would have restrained. These are objections, which weigh with many well disposed people, and it must be granted, these are difficulties in the way; nor can any general change be made, or reformation effected, without some; but the difficulties are not so great but that they may be surmounted.

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If the government was so considerate of the iniquity and danger attending on this practice, as to be willing to seek a remedy, doubtless the Almighty would bless this good intention, and such methods would be thought of, as would not only put an end to the unjust oppression of the Negroes, but might bring them under regulations, that would enable them to become profitable members of society; for the furtherance of which, the following proposals are offered to consideration: That all farther importation of slaves be absolutely prohibited; and as to those born among us, after serving so long as may appear to be equitable, let them by law be declared free. Let every one, thus set free, be enrolled in the county courts, and be obliged to be a resident, during a certain number of years, within the said county, under the care of the overseers of the poor. Thus being, in some sort, still under the direction of governors, and the notice of those who were formerly acquainted with them, they would be obliged to act the more circumspectly, and make proper use of their liberty, and their children would have an opportunity of obtaining such instructions, as are necessary to the common occasions of life; and thus both parents and children might gradually become useful members of the community. And further, where the nature of the country would permit, as certainly the uncultivated condition of our southern and most western colonies easily would, suppose a small tract of land were assigned to every Negroe family, and they obliged to live upon and improve it, (when not hired out to work for the white people) this would encourage them to exert their abilities, and become industrious subjects. Hence, both planters and tradesmen would be plentifully supplied with chearful and willing-minded labourers, much vacant land would be cultivated, the produce of the country be justly increased, the taxes for the support of government lessened to individuals, by the increase of taxables, and the Negroes, instead of being an object of terror,[A] as they certainly must be to the governments where their numbers are great, would become interested in their safety and welfare.

[Footnote A: The hard usage the Negroes meet with in the plantations, and the great disproportion between them and the white people, will always be a just cause of terror. In Jamaica, and some parts of South-Carolina, it is supposed that there are fifteen blacks to one white.]

CHAP. XV.

Answer to a mistaken opinion, that the warmth of the climate in the West-Indies, will not permit white people to labour there. No complaint of disability in the whites, in that respect, in the settlement of the islands. Idleness and diseases prevailed, as the use of slaves increased. *The great* advantage which might accrue to the British nation, if the slave trade was entirely laid aside, and a fair and friendly commerce established through the whole coast of Africa.

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It is frequently offered as an argument, in vindication of the use of Negroe slaves, that the warmth of the climate in the West Indies will not permit white people to labour in the culture of the land: but upon an acquaintance with the nature of the climate, and its effects upon such labouring white people, as are prudent and moderate in labour, and the use of spirituous liquors, this will be found to be a mistaken opinion. Those islands were, at first, wholly cultivated by white men; the encouragement they then met with, for a long course of years, was such as occasioned a great increase of people. Richard Ligon, in his history of Barbadoes, where he resided from the year 1647 to 1650, about 24 years after his first settlement, writes, "that there were then fifty thousand souls on that island, besides Negroes; and that though the weather was very hot, yet not so scalding but that servants, both christians and slaves, laboured ten hours a day." By other accounts we gather, that the white people have since decreased to less than one half the number which was there at that time; and by relations of the first settlements of the other islands, we do not meet with any complaints of unfitness in the white people for labour there, before slaves were introduced. The island of Hispaniola, which is one of the largest of those islands, was at first planted by the Buccaneers, a set of hardy laborious men, who continued so for a long course of years; till following the example of their neighbours, in the purchase and use of Negroe slaves, idleness and excess prevailing, debility and disease naturally succeeded, and have ever since continued. If, under proper regulations, liberty was proclaimed through the colonies, the Negroes, from dangerous, grudging, half-fed slaves, might become able, willing-minded labourers. And if there was not a sufficient number of these to do the necessary work, a competent number of labouring people might be procured from Europe, which affords numbers of poor distressed objects, who, if not overlooked, with proper usage, might, in several respects, better answer every good purpose in performing the necessary labour in the islands, than the slaves now do.

A farther considerable advantage might accrue to the British nation in general, if the slave trade was laid aside, by the cultivation of a fair, friendly, and humane commerce with the Africans; without which, it is not possible the inland trade of that country should ever be extended to the degree it is capable of; for while the spirit of butchery and making slaves of each other, is promoted by the Europeans amongst the Negroes, no mutual confidence can take place; nor will the Europeans be able to travel with safety into the heart of their country, to form and cement such commercial friendships and alliances, as might be necessary to introduce the arts and sciences amongst them, and engage their attention to instruction in the principles of the christian religion, which is

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the only sure foundation of every social virtue. Africa has about ten thousand miles of sea coast, and extends in depth near three thousand miles from east to west, and as much from north to south, stored with vast treasures of materials, necessary for the trade and manufactures of Great-Britain; and from its climate, and the fruitfulness of its soil, capable, under proper management, of producing in the greatest plenty, most of the commodities which are imported into Europe from those parts of America subject to the English government;[A] and as, in return, they would take our manufactures, the advantages of this trade would soon become so great, that it is evident this subject merits the regard and attention of the government.

[Footnote A: See note, page 109.]

EXTRACT

FROM A

REPRESENTATION

OF THE

INJUSTICE

AND

DANGEROUS TENDENCY

OF TOLERATING

SLAVERY;

OR

Admitting the least CLAIM of private Property in the Persons of Men in *England*.

By GRANVILLE SHARP.

FIRST PRINTED IN LONDON.

MDCCLXIX.

CONTENTS.

The occasion of this Treatise. All Persons during their residence in Great Britain are subjects; and as such, bound to the laws, and under the Kings protection. By the English laws, no man, of what condition soever, to be imprisoned, or any way deprived of his LIBERTY, without a legal process. The danger of Slavery taking place in England. Prevails in the Northern Colonies, notwithstanding the people's plea in favour of Liberty. Advertisements in the New-York Journal for the sale of SLAVES. Advertisements to the same purpose in the public prints in England. The danger of confining any person without a legal warrant. Instances of that nature. Note, Extract of several American laws, Reflexions thereon.

EXTRACT, &C.

Some persons respectable in the law, having given it as their opinion, "*That a slave, by coming from the West Indies to Great Britain or Ireland, either with or without his master, doth not become free, or that his master's property or right in him is not thereby determined or varied;—and that the master may legally compel him to return again to the plantations,*"—this causes our author to remark, that these lawyers, by thus stating the case merely on one side of the question, (I mean in favour of the master) have occasioned an unjust presumption and prejudice, plainly inconsistent with the laws of the realm, and against the other side of the question; as they have not signified that their opinion was only conditional, and not absolute, and must be understood on the part of the master, "*That he can produce an authentic agreement or contract in writing, by which it shall appear, that the said slave hath voluntarily bound himself, without compulsion or illegal duress.*"

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Page 5. Indeed there are many instances of persons being freed from slavery by the laws of England, but (God be thanked) there is neither law, nor even a precedent, (at least I have not been able to find one) of a legal determination to justify a master in claiming or detaining any person whatsoever as a slave in England, who has not voluntarily bound himself as such by a contract in writing.

Page 20. An English subject cannot be made a slave without his own free consent: but—a foreign slave is made a subject with or without his own consent: there needs no contract for this purpose, as in the other case; nor any other act or deed whatsoever, but that of his being landed in England; For according to statute 32d of Henry VIII. c. 16. Sect. 9. *“Every alien or stranger born out of the King’s obeisance, not being denizen, which now or hereafter shall come into this realm, or elsewhere within the King’s dominions, shall, after the said first of September next coming, be bounden by and unto the laws and statutes of this realm, and to all and singular the contents of the same.”*

Now it must be observed, that this law makes no distinction of *bond or free*, neither of colours or complexions, whether of *black, brown, or white*; for *“every alien or stranger (without exception) are bounden by and unto the law, &c.”*

This binding, or obligation, is properly expressed by the English word *ligeance*, (*a ligando*) which may be either perpetual or temporary. Wood, b. I. c. 3. p. 37. But one of these is indispensably due to the Sovereign from all ranks and conditions of people; their being bounden unto the laws, (upon which the Sovereign’s right is founded) expresses and implies this subjection to the laws; and therefore to alledge, that an alien is not a subject, because he is in bondage, is not only a plea without foundation, but a contradiction in terms; for every person who, in any respect, is in subjection to the laws, must undoubtedly be a subject.

I come now to the main point—*“That every man, woman, or child, that now is, or hereafter shall be, an inhabitant or resiant of this kingdom of England, dominion of Wales, or town of Berwick upon Tweed,”* is, in some respect or other, the *King’s subject*, and, as such, is absolutely secure in his or her *personal liberty*, by virtue of a statute, 31st Car. II. ch. 11. and particularly by the 12th Sect. of the same, wherein subjects of all conditions are plainly included.

This act is expressly intended for the better securing the liberty of the subject, and for prevention of imprisonment beyond the seas. It contains no distinction of *“natural born, naturalized, denizen, or alien subject; nor of white or black, freemen, or even of bond-men,”* (except in the case already mentioned of *a contract in writing*, by which it shall appear, *that the said slave has voluntarily bound himself, without compulsion or illegal*

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duress, allowed by the 13th Sect. and the exception likewise in the 14th Sect. concerning felons) but they are all included under the general titles of "*the subject, any of the said subjects, every such person*" &c. Now the definition of the word "*person*," in its relative or civil capacity (according to Wood. b. l. c. 11. p. 27.) *is either the King, or a subject*. These are the *only capital distinctions* that can be made, tho' the latter consists of a variety of denominations and degrees.

But if I were even to allow, that a *Negro slave* is not a subject, (though I think I have clearly proved that he is) yet it is plain that such an one ought not to be denied the benefit of the King's court, unless the slave-holder shall be able to prove likewise that he is not, a *Man*; because *every man* may be *free* to sue for, and *defend his right in our courts*, says a stat. 20th Edw. III. c. 4. and elsewhere, according to law. And *no man, of what estate or condition* that he be, (here can be no exception whatsoever) *shall be put out of land or tenement, nor taken, nor imprisoned, nor disinherited, nor put to death, without being brought in answer by due process of the law*. 28th Edw. III, c. 3, *No man* therefore, *of what estate or condition* that he be, can lawfully be detained in England as a *slave*; because we have no law whereby a man *may be* condemned to slavery without his own consent, (for even convicted felons must "*in open court pray to transported*.") (See Habeas Corpus act, Sect. 14.) and therefore there cannot be any "*due process of the law*" tending to so base a purpose. It follows therefore, that every man, who presumes to detain *any person* whatsoever as a slave, otherwise than by virtue of a written contract, acts manifestly without "*due process of the law*," and consequently is liable to the slave's "*action of false imprisonment*," because "*every man may be free to sue*," &c. so that the slave-holder cannot avail himself of his imaginary property, either by the assistance of the common law, or of a court of equity, (*except it appears that the said slave has voluntarily bound himself, without compulsion or illegal duress*) for in both his suit will certainly appear both unjust and indefensible. The former cannot assist him, because the statute law at present is so far from supposing any man in a state of slavery, that it cannot even permit such a state, except in the two cases mentioned in the 13th and 14th Section of the Habeas Corpus act; and the courts of equity likewise must necessarily decide against him, because his mere mercenary plea of *private property* cannot equitably, in a case between *man and man*, stand in competition with that *superior property* which every man must necessarily be allowed to have in his own *proper person*.

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How then is the slave-holder to secure what he esteems his *property*? Perhaps he will endeavour clandestinely to seize the supposed slave, in order to transport him (with or without *his consent*) to the colonies, where such property is allowed: but let him take care what he does, the very attempt is punishable; and even the making over his property to another for that purpose, renders him equally liable to the severe penalties of the law, for a bill of sale may certainly be included under the terms expressed in the Habeas Corpus act, 12th Sect. viz. “*Any warrant or writing for such commitment, detainer, imprisonment, or transportation,*” &c. It is also dangerous for a counsellor, or any other person to *advise* (see the act “shall be advising”) such proceedings, by saying, “*That a master may legally compel him (the slave) to return again to the plantations.*” Likewise an attorney, notary-public, or any other person, who shall presume to draw up, negotiate, or even to witness a bill of sale, or other instrument for such commitment, &c. offends equally against the law, because “*All, or any person or persons, that shall frame, contrive, write, seal, or countersign any warrant or writing for such commitment, detainer, imprisonment, or transportation; or shall be advising, aiding, or assisting in the same, or any of them,*” are liable to all the penalties of the act. “*And the plaintiff, in every such action, shall have judgment to recover his treble costs, besides damages; which damages so to be given shall not be less than five hundred pounds;*” so that the injured may have ample satisfaction for their sufferings: and even a judge may not direct or instruct a jury contrary to this statute, whatever his private opinion may be concerning property in slaves; because *no order or command, nor no injunction*, is allowed to interfere with this *golden act of liberty*.

—I have before observed, that the general term, “*every alien,*” includes *all strangers whatsoever*, and renders them *subject* to the King, and the laws, during their residence in this kingdom; and this is certainly true, whether the aliens be Turks, Moors, Arabians, Tartars, or even savages, from any part of the world.—Men are rendered obnoxious to the laws by their offences, and not by the particular denomination of their rank, order, parentage, colour, or country; and therefore, though we should suppose that any particular body of people whatsoever were not known, or had in consideration by the legislature at the different times when the severe penal laws were made, yet no man can reasonably conceive, that such men are exempted on this account from the penalties of the said laws, when legally convicted of having offended against them.

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Laws calculated for the moral purpose of preventing oppression, are likewise usually supposed to be everlasting, and to make up a part of our happy constitution; for which reason, though the kind of oppression to be guarded against, and the penalties for offenders, are minutely described therein, yet the persons to be protected are comprehended in terms as general as possible; that "*no person who now is, or hereafter shall be, an inhabitant or resiant in this kingdom,*" (see Habeas Corpus act, Sect. 12th) may seem to be excluded from protection. The general terms of the several statutes before cited, are so full and clear, that they admit of no exception whatsoever; for all persons (Negroes as well as others) must be included in the terms "the subject;"—"no subject of this realm that now is, or hereafter shall be, an inhabitant, &c. any subject; every such person;" see Habeas Corpus act. Also every man may be free to sue, &c. 20th Edward III. cap. 4. and no man, of what estate or condition that he be, shall be taken or imprisoned, &c. True justice makes no respect of persons, and can never deny, to any one that blessing to which all mankind have an undoubted right, their *natural liberty*: though the law makes no mention of Negroe slaves, yet this is no just argument for excluding them from the general protection of our happy constitution.

Neither can the objection, that Negroe slaves were not "had in consideration or contemplation," when these laws were made, prove any thing against them; but, on the contrary, much in their favour; for both these circumstances are strong presumptive proofs, that the practice of importing slaves into this kingdom, and retaining them as such, is an innovation entirely foreign to the spirit and intention of the laws now in force.

—Page 79. A toleration of slavery is, in effect, a toleration of inhumanity; for there are wretches in the world who make no scruple to gain, by wearing out their slaves with continual labour, and a scanty allowance, before they have lived out half their natural days. It is notorious, that this is too often the case in the unhappy countries where slavery is tolerated.

See the account of the European settlements in America, Part VI. Chap. 11. concerning the "*misery of the Negroes, great waste of them,*" &c. which informs us not only of a most scandalous profanation of the Lord's day, but also of another abomination, which must be infinitely more heinous in the sight of God, viz. oppression carried to such excess, as to be even destructive of the human species.

At present, the inhumanity of constrained labour in excess, extends no farther in England than to our beasts, as post and hackney-horses, sand-asses, &c.

But thanks to our laws, and not to the general good disposition of masters, that it is so; for the wretch who is bad enough to maltreat a helpless beast, would not spare his fellow man if he had him as much in his power.

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The maintenance of civil liberty is therefore absolutely necessary to prevent an increase of our national guilt, by the addition of the horrid crime of tyranny.—Notwithstanding that the plea of necessity cannot here be urged, yet this is no reason why an increase of the practice is not to be feared.

Our North American colonies afford us a melancholy instance to the contrary; for though the climate in general is so wholesome and temperate, that it will not authorise this plea of necessity for the employment of slaves, any more than our own, yet the pernicious practice of slave-holding is become almost general in those parts. At New-York, for instance, the infringement on civil or domestic liberty is become notorious, notwithstanding the political controversies of the inhabitants in praise of liberty; but no panegyric on this subject (howsoever elegant in itself) can be graceful or edifying from the mouth or pen of one of those provincials, because men who do not scruple to detain others in slavery, have but a very partial and unjust claim to the protection of the laws of liberty; and indeed it too plainly appears that they have no real regard for liberty, farther than their own private interests are concerned; and (consequently) that they have so little detestation of despotism and tyranny, that they do not scruple to exercise them whenever their caprice excites them, or their private interest seems to require an exertion of their power over their miserable slaves.

Every petty planter, who avails himself of the service of slaves, is an arbitrary monarch, or rather a lawless Bashaw in his own territories, notwithstanding that the imaginary freedom of the province wherein he resides, may seem to forbid the observation.

The boasted liberty of our American colonies, therefore, has so little right to that sacred name, that it seems to differ from the arbitrary power of despotic monarchs only in one circumstance, viz. that it is a *many-headed monster of tyranny*, which entirely subverts our most excellent constitution; because liberty and slavery are so opposite to each other, that they cannot subsist in the same community. “*Political liberty (in mild or well regulated governments) makes civil liberty valuable; and whosoever is deprived of the latter, is deprived also of the former.*” This observation of the learned Montesquieu, I hope sufficiently justifies my censure of the Americans for their notorious violation of civil liberty;—The New-York Journal, or, The General Advertiser, for Thursday, 22d October, 1767, gives notice by advertisement, of no less than eight different persons who have escaped from slavery, or are put up to public sale for that horrid purpose.

That I may demonstrate the indecency of such proceedings in a free country, I shall take the liberty of laying some of these advertisements before my readers, by way of example.

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"To be SOLD for want of Employment, A likely strong active Negroe man, of about 24 years of age, this country born, (N.B. A natural born subject) understands most of a baker's trade, and a good deal of farming business, and can do all sorts of house-work. —Also a healthy Negroe wench, of about 21 years old, is a tolerable cook, and capable of doing all sorts of house-work, can be well recommended for her honesty and sobriety: she has a female child of nigh three years old, which will be sold with the wench if required, &c." Here is not the least consideration, or scruple of conscience, for the inhumanity of parting the mother and young child. From the stile, one would suppose the advertisement to be of no more importance than if it related merely to the sale of a cow and her calf; and that the cow should be sold with or without her calf, according as the purchaser should require.—But not only Negroes, but even American Indians, are detained in the same abominable slavery in our colonies, though there cannot be any reasonable pretence whatsoever for holding one of these as private property; for even if a written contract should be produced as a voucher in such a case, there would still remain great suspicion, that some undue advantage had been taken of the Indian's ignorance concerning the nature of such a bond.

"Run away, on Monday the 21st instant, from J——n T——, Esq. of West-Chester county, in the province of New-York, An Indian slave, named Abraham, he may have changed his name, about 23 years of age, about five feet five inches."

Upon the whole, I think I may with justice conclude, that those advertisements discover a shameless prostitution and infringement on the common and natural rights of mankind —But hold! perhaps the Americans may be able, with too much justice, to retort this severe reflexion, and may refer us to news-papers published even in the free city of London, which contain advertisements not less dishonourable than their own. See advertisement in the Public Ledger of 31st December, 1761.

"For SALE, A healthy NEGROE GIRL, aged about fifteen years; speaks good English, works at her needle, washes well, does household work, and has had the small-pox. By J.W. &c."

Another advertisement, not long ago, offered a reward for stopping a female slave who had left her mistress in Hatton-garden. And in the Gazetteer of 18th April, 1769, appeared a very extraordinary advertisement with the following title;

"Horses, Tim Wisky, and black Boy, To be sold at the Bull and Gate Inn. Holborn, A very good Tim Wisky, little the worse for wear, &c." Afterwards, "A Chesnut Gelding;" then, "A very good grey Mare;" and last of all, (as if of the least consequence) "A well-made good-tempered black Boy, he has lately had the small-pox, and will be sold to any gentleman. Enquire as above."

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Another advertisement in the same paper, contains a very particular description of a Negroe man, called *Jeremiah*,—and concludes as follows:—"Whoever delivers him to Capt. M—— U——y, on board the *Elizabeth*, at Prince's Stairs, Rotherhithe, on or before the 31st instant, shall receive thirty guineas reward, or ten guineas for such intelligence as shall enable the Captain, or his master, effectually to secure him. The utmost secrecy may be depended on." It is not on account of shame, that men, who are capable of undertaking the desperate and wicked employment of kidnappers, are supposed to be tempted to such a business, by a promise "*of the utmost secrecy*;" but this must be from a sense of the unlawfulness of the act proposed to them, that they may have less reason to fear a prosecution. And as such a kind of people are supposed to undertake any thing for money, the reward of thirty guineas was tendered at the top of the advertisement, in capital letters. No man can be safe, be he white or black, if temptations to break the laws are so shamefully published in our news-papers.

A Creole Black boy is also offered to sale, in the *Daily Advertiser* of the same date.

Besides these instances, the Americans may, perhaps, taunt us with the shameful treatment of a poor Negroe servant, who not long ago was put up to sale by public auction, together with the effects of his bankrupt master.—Also, that the prisons of this free city have been frequently prostituted of late, by the tyrannical and dangerous practice of confining Negroes, under the pretence of slavery, though there have been no warrants whatsoever for their commitment.

This circumstance of confining a man without a warrant, has so great a resemblance to the proceedings of a Popish inquisition, that it is but too obvious what dangerous practices such scandalous innovations, if permitted to grow more into use, are liable to introduce. No person can be safe, if wicked and designing men have it in their power, under the pretence of private property as a slave, to throw a man clandestinely, without a warrant, into goal, and to conceal him there, until they can conveniently dispose of him.

A free man may be thus robbed of his liberty, and carried beyond the seas, without having the least opportunity of making his case known; which should teach us how jealous we ought to be of all imprisonments made without the authority, or previous examination, of a civil magistrate.

The distinction of colour will, in a short time, be no protection against such outrages, especially as not only Negroes, but Mulatoes, and even American Indians, (which appears by one of the advertisements before quoted) are retained in slavery in our American colonies; for there are many honest weather-beaten Englishmen, who have as little reason to boast of their complexion as the Indians. And indeed, the more northern Indians have no difference from us in

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complexion, but such as is occasioned by the climate, or different way of living. The plea of private property, therefore, cannot, by any means, justify a private commitment of any person whatsoever to prison, because of the apparent danger and tendency of such innovation. This dangerous practice of concealing in prison was attempted in the case of Jonathan Strong; for the door-keeper of the P——lt——y C——pt——r (or some person who acted for him) absolutely refused, for two days, to permit this poor injured Negro to be seen or spoke with, though a person went on purpose, both those days, to demand the same.—All laws ought to be founded upon the principle of “*doing as one would be done by*,” and indeed this principle seems to be the very basis of the English constitution; for what precaution could possibly be more effectual for that purpose, than the right we enjoy of being judged by our Peers, creditable persons of the vicinage; especially, as we may likewise claim the right of excepting against any particular jurymen, who might be suspected of partiality.

This law breathes the pure spirit of liberty, equity, and social love; being calculated to maintain that consideration and mutual regard which one person ought to have for another, howsoever unequal in rank or station.

But when any part of the community, under the pretence of private property, is deprived of this common privilege, it is a violation of civil liberty, which is entirely inconsistent with the social principles of a free state.

True liberty protects the labourer as well as his Lord; preserves the dignity of human nature, and seldom fails to render a province rich and populous; whereas, on the other hand, a toleration of slavery is the highest breach of social virtue, and not only tends to depopulation, but too often renders the minds of both masters and slaves utterly depraved and inhuman, by the hateful extremes of exaltation and depression.

If such a toleration should ever be generally admitted in England, (which God forbid) we shall no longer deserve to be esteemed a civilized people; because, when the customs of uncivilized nations, and the *uncivilized customs which disgrace our own colonies*, are become so familiar as to be permitted amongst us with impunity, we ourselves must insensibly degenerate to the same degree of baseness with those from whom such bad customs were derived; and may, too soon, have the mortification to see the *hateful extremes of tyranny and slavery fostered under every roof*.

Then must the happy medium of a well regulated liberty be necessarily compelled to find shelter in some more civilized country: where social virtue, and that divine precept, “*Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*,” are better understood.

An attempt to prove the dangerous tendency, injustice, and disgrace of tolerating slavery amongst Englishmen, would, in any former age, have been esteemed as

superfluous and ridiculous, as if a man should undertake, in a formal manner, to prove, that darkness is not light.

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Sorry am I, that the depravity of the present age has made a demonstration of this kind necessary.

Now, that I may sum up the amount of what has been said in a single sentence, I shall beg leave to conclude in the words of the great Sir Edward Coke, which, though spoken on a different occasion, are yet applicable to this; see Rushworth's Hist. Col. An. 1628. 4 Caroli. fol. 450.

"It would be no honour to a King or kingdom, to be a King of bondmen or slaves: the end of this would be both *dedecus*[A] and *damnum*[B] both to King and kingdom, that in former times have been so renowned."

[Footnote A: Disgrace.]

[Footnote B: Loss.]

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Note, at page 63; According to the laws of Jamaica, printed in London, in 1756, "If any slave having been one whole year in this island, (says an act, No 64, clause 5, p. 114) shall run away, and continue absent from his owner's service for the space of thirty days, upon complaint and proof, &c. before any two justices of the peace, and three freeholders, &c. it shall and may be lawful for such justices and freeholders to order such slave to be punished, by *cutting off one of the feet of such slave*, or inflict such other corporal punishment as they *shall think fit*." Now that I may inform my readers, what corporal punishments are sometimes thought fit to be inflicted, I will refer to the testimony of Sir Hans Sloane, (see voyage to the islands of Madeira, Barbadoes, &c. and Jamaica, with the natural history of the last of these islands, &c. London 1707. Introduction, p. 56, and 57.) "The punishment for crimes of slaves (says he) are usually, for *rebellions*, burning them, by nailing them down to the ground with crooked sticks on every limb, and then applying the fire, by degrees, from the feet and hands, and burning them gradually up to the head, whereby *the pains are extravagant*; for crimes of a lesser nature, *gelding*, or *chopping off half the foot* with an axe. These punishments are suffered by them with great constancy.—For negligence, they are usually whipped by the overseers with lance-wood switches, till they be bloody, and several of the switches broken, being first tied up by their hands in the mill houses.—After they are whipped till they are raw, some put on their skins pepper and salt, to make them smart; at other times, their masters will drop melted wax on their skins, and use several *very exquisite torments*." Sir Hans adds, "These punishments are sometimes merited by the Blacks, who are a very perverse generation of people; and though they appear very harsh, yet are scarce equal to some of their crimes, and inferior to what punishments other European nations inflict on their slaves in the East-Indies, as may be seen by Moquet, and other travellers." Thus Sir Hans Sloane endeavours to excuse those shocking cruelties, but certainly in vain, because no crimes

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whatsoever can merit such severe punishments, unless I except the crimes of those who devise and inflict them. Sir Hans Sloane, indeed, mentions *rebellion* as the principal crime; and certainly it is very justly esteemed a most heinous crime, in a land of liberty, where government is limited by equitable and just laws, if the same are tolerably well observed; but in countries where arbitrary power is exercised with such intolerable cruelty as is before described, if resistance be a crime, it is certainly the most natural of all others.

But the 19th clause of the 38th act, would indeed, on a slight perusal, induce us to conceive, that the punishment for rebellion is not so severe as it is represented by Sir Hans Sloane; because a slave, though *deemed rebellious*, is thereby condemned to no greater punishment than transportation. Nevertheless, if the clause be thoroughly considered, we shall find no reason to commend the mercy of the legislature; for it only proves, that the Jamaica law-makers will not scruple to charge the slightest and most natural offences with the most opprobrious epithets; and that a poor slave, who perhaps has no otherwise incurred his master's displeasure than by endeavouring (upon the just and warrantable principles of self-preservation,) to escape from his master's tyranny, without any criminal intention whatsoever, is liable to be *deemed rebellious*, and to be arraigned as a capital offender. "For every slave and slaves that shall run away, and continue but for the space of twelve months, except such slave or slaves as shall not have been three years in this island, shall be *deemed rebellious*," &c. (see act 38, clause 19. p. 60.) Thus we are enabled to define what a West Indian tyrant means by the word *rebellious*. But unjust as this clause may seem, yet it is abundantly more merciful and considerate than a subsequent act against the same poor miserable people, because the former assigns no other punishment for persons so *deemed rebellious*, than that they, "*Shall be transported* by order of two justices and three freeholders," &c. whereas the latter spares not the blood of these poor injured fugitives: For by the 66th act, a reward of 50 pounds is offered to those who "shall kill or bring in alive any *rebellious slaves*," that is, any of these unfortunate people whom the law has "*deemed rebellious*," as above; and this premium is not only tendered to commissioned parties (see 2d. clause) but even to any private "*hunter, slave, or other person*," (see 3d. clause.) Thus it is manifest, that the law treats these poor unhappy men with as little ceremony and consideration as if they were merely wild beasts. But the innocent blood that is shed in consequence of such a detestable law, must certainly call for vengeance on the murderous abettors and actors of such deliberate wickedness: And though many of the guilty wretches should even be so hardened and abandoned as never afterwards to

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be capable of sincere remorse, yet a time will undoubtedly come, when they will shudder with dreadful apprehensions, on account of the insufficiency of so wretched an excuse, as that their poor murdered brethren were by law "*deemed rebellious*" But bad as these laws are, yet in justice to the freeholders of Jamaica, I must acknowledge, that their laws are not near so cruel and inhuman as the laws of Barbadoes and Virginia, and seem at present to be much more reasonable than they have formerly been; many very oppressive laws being now expired, and others less severe enacted in their room.

But it is far otherwise in Barbadoes; for by the 329th act, p. 125. "If any Negro or other slave, under punishment by his master, or his order, for running away, or any other crimes or misdemeanors towards his said master, unfortunately shall suffer in life, or member, (which seldom happens) (but it is plain by this law that it does sometimes happen) *no person whatever shall be liable to any fine therefore; but if any man shall, of wantonness or only of bloody-mindedness, or cruel intention, wilfully kill a Negroe or other slave of his own;*"—now the reader, to be sure, will naturally expect, that some very severe punishment must in this case be ordained, to deter the *wanton, bloody-minded, and cruel* wretch, from *wilfully killing* his fellow creatures; but alas! the Barbadian law-makers have been so far from intending to curb such abandoned wickedness, that they have absolutely made this law on purpose to skreen these enormous crimes from the just indignation of any righteous person, who might think himself bound in duty to prosecute a bloody-minded villain; they have therefore presumptuously taken upon them to give a sanction, as it were, by law, to the horrid crime of wilful murder; and have accordingly ordained, that he who is guilty of it in Barbadoes, though the act should be attended with all the aggravating circumstances before-mentioned—"shall pay into the public treasury (no more than) *fifteen pounds sterling*," but if he shall kill another man's, he shall pay the owner of the Negroe double the value, and into the public treasury *twenty-five pounds sterling*; and he shall further, by the next justice of the peace, be bound to his good behaviour during the pleasure of the governor and council, *and not be liable to any other punishment or forfeiture for the same*.

The most consummate wickedness, I suppose, that any body of people, under the specious form of a legislature, were ever guilty of! This act contains several other clauses which are shocking to humanity, though too tedious to mention here.

According to an act of Virginia, (4 Anne, ch. 49. sec. 37. p. 227.) "after proclamation is issued against slaves that run away and lie out, it is lawful for any person whatsoever, *to kill and destroy such slaves, by such ways and means as he, she, or they, shall think fit*, without accusation or impeachment of any crime for the same," &c. And lest private interest should incline the planter to mercy, (to which we must suppose such people can have no other inducement) it is provided and enacted in the succeeding clause, (No 28.)

“That for *every slave killed*, in pursuance of this act, or *put to death by law*, the master or owner of such slave *shall be paid by the public.*”

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Also by an act of Virginia, (9 Geo. I. ch. 4. sect. 18. p. 343.) it is ordained, “That, where any slave shall hereafter be found notoriously guilty of going abroad in the night, or running away, and lying out, and cannot be reclaimed from *such* disorderly courses by the common method of punishment, it shall and may be lawful to and for the court of the county, upon complaint and proof thereof to them made by the owner of such slave, to order and direct every such slave to be punished by *dismembering, or any other way, not touching life, as the said county court shall think fit.*”

I have already given examples enough of the horrid cruelties which are sometimes *thought fit* on such occasions. But if the innocent and most natural act of “*running away*” from intolerable tyranny, deserves such relentless severity, what kind of punishment have these law-makers themselves to expect hereafter, on account of their own enormous offences! Alas! to look for mercy (without a timely repentance) will only be another instance of their gross injustice! “*Having their consciences seared with a hot iron,*” they seem to have lost all apprehensions that their slaves are men, for they scruple not to number them with beasts. See an act of Barbadoes, (No 333. p. 128.) intituled, “An act for the better regulating of *outcries* in open market:” here we read of “*Negroes, cattle, coppers, and stills, and other chattels, brought by execution to open market to be outcried, and these (as if all of equal importance) are ranged together in great lots or numbers to be sold.*”

—Page 70. In the 329th act of Barbadoes, (p. 122.) it is asserted, that “brutish slaves deserve not, for the baseness of their condition, to *be tried by a legal trial of twelve men of their peers, or neighbourhood*, which neither truly can be rightly done, as the subjects of England are;” (yet slaves also are subjects of England, whilst they remain within the British dominions, notwithstanding this insinuation to the contrary) “nor is execution to be delayed towards them, in case of such horrid crimes committed,” &c.

A similar doctrine is taught in an act of Virginia, (9 Geo. I. ch. 4. sect. 3. p. 339.) wherein it is ordained, “that every slave, committing such offence as by the laws ought to be punished by death, or loss of member, shall be forthwith committed to the common goal of the county, &c. And the sheriff of such county, upon such commitment, shall forthwith certify the same, with the cause thereof, to the governor or commander in chief, &c. who is thereupon desired and impowered to issue a commission of Oyer and Terminer, *To such persons as he shall think fit*; which persons, forthwith after the receipt of such commission, are impowered and required to cause the offender to be publicly arraigned and tried, &c. without the solemnity of a jury,” &c. Now let us consider the dangerous tendency of those laws. As Englishmen,

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we strenuously contend for this absolute and immutable necessity of trials by juries: but is not the spirit and equity of this old English doctrine entirely lost, if we partially confine that justice to ourselves alone, when we have it in our power to extend it to others? The natural right of all mankind, must principally justify our insisting upon this necessary privilege in favour of ourselves in particular; and therefore if we do not allow that the judgment of an impartial jury is indispensably necessary in all cases whatsoever, wherein the life of man is depending, we certainly undermine the equitable force and reason of those laws, by which *we ourselves are protected*, and consequently are unworthy to be esteemed either Christians or Englishmen.

Whatever right the members of a provincial assembly may have to enact *bye laws*, for particular exigences among themselves, yet in so doing they are certainly bound, in duty to their sovereign, to observe most strictly the fundamental principles of that constitution, which his Majesty is sworn to maintain; for wheresoever the bounds of the British empire are extended, there the common law of England must of course take place, and cannot be safely set aside by any *private law* whatsoever, because the introduction of an unnatural tyranny must necessarily endanger the King's dominions. The many alarming insurrections of slaves in the several colonies, are sufficient proofs of this. The common law of England ought therefore to be so established in every province, as to include the respective *bye laws* of each province; instead of being by them *excluded*, which latter has been too much the case.

Every inhabitant of the British colonies, black as well as white, bond as well as free, are undoubtedly the *King's subjects*, during their residence within the limits of the King's dominions; and as such, are entitled to personal protection, however bound in service to their respective masters; therefore, when any of these are put to death, "*without the solemnity of a jury*," I fear that there is too much reason to attribute *the guilt of murder* to every person concerned in ordering, the same, or in consenting thereto; and all such persons are certainly responsible *to the King and his laws, for the loss of a subject*. The horrid iniquity, injustice, and dangerous tendency of the several plantation laws which I have quoted, are so apparent, that it is unnecessary for me to apologize for the freedom with which I have treated them. If such laws are not absolutely necessary for the government of slaves, the law-makers must unavoidably allow themselves to be the most cruel and abandoned tyrants upon earth; or, perhaps, that ever were on earth. On the other hand, if it be said, that it is impossible to govern slaves without such inhuman severity, and detestable injustice, the same will certainly be an invincible argument against the least toleration of slavery amongst christians, because the temporal profit of the planter or master, however lucrative, cannot compensate the forfeiture of his everlasting welfare, or (at least I may be allowed to say) the apparent danger of such a forfeiture.

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Oppression is a most grievous crime, and the cries of these much injured people, (though they are only poor ignorant heathens) will certainly reach heaven! The scriptures (*which are the only true foundation of all laws*) denounce a tremendous judgment against the man who should offend even one little-one; "*It were better for him* (even the merciful Saviour of the world hath himself declared) *that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.*" Luke xvii. 2. Who then shall attempt to vindicate those inhuman establishments of government, under which, even our own countrymen so grievously offend and oppress (not merely one, or a few little ones, but) an immense multitude of men, women, children, and the children of their children, from generation to generation? May it not be said with like justice, it were better for the English nation that these American dominions had never existed, or even that they should have been sunk into the sea, than that the kingdom of Great Britain should be loaded with the horrid guilt of tolerating such abominable wickedness! In short, if the *King's prerogative* is not speedily exerted for the relief of his Majesty's oppressed and much injured subjects in the British colonies, (because to *relieve the subject* from the oppression of petty tyrants is the principal use of the royal prerogative, as well as the principal and most natural means of maintaining the same) and for the extension of the British constitution to the most distant colonies, whether in the East or West Indies, it must inevitably be allowed, that great share of this enormous guilt will certainly rest on this side the water.

I hope this hint will be taken notice of by those whom it may concern; and that the freedom of it will be excused, as from a *loyal and disinterested* adviser.

Extracts from the writings

of several *noted authors*,

on the subject of the, *slavery of the Negroes*,

viz.

George Wallace,

Francis Hutcheson,

James Foster.

George Wallace, in his *System of the Principles of the Laws of Scotland*, speaking of the slavery of the Negroes in our colonies, says, "We all know that they (the Negroes) are purchased from their Princes, who pretend to have a right to dispose of them, and that they are, like other commodities, transported, by the merchants who have bought them, into America, in order to be exposed to sale. If this trade admits of a moral or a rational justification, every crime, even the most atrocious, may be justified.

Government was instituted for the good of mankind; kings, princes, governors, are not proprietors of those who are subject to their authority; they have not a right to make them miserable. On the contrary,

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their authority is vested in them, that they may, by the just exercise of it, promote the happiness of their people. Of course, they have not a right to dispose of their liberty, and to sell them for slaves. Besides no man has a right to acquire, or to purchase them; men and their liberty are not *in commercio*; they are not either saleable or purchaseable. One, therefore, has no body but himself to blame, in case he shall find himself deprived of a man, whom he thought he had, by buying for a price, made his own; for he dealt in a trade which was illicit, and was prohibited by the most obvious dictates of humanity. For these reasons, every one of those unfortunate men who are pretended to be slaves, has a right to be declared to be free, for he never lost his liberty; he could not lose it; his Prince had no power to dispose of him. Of course, the sale was *ipso jure* void. This right he carries about with him, and is entitled every where to get it declared. As soon, therefore, as he comes into a country in which the judges are not forgetful of their own humanity, it is their duty to remember that he is a man, and to declare him to be free. I know it has been said, that questions concerning the state of persons ought to be determined by the law of the country to which they belong; and that, therefore, one who would be declared to be a slave in America, ought, in case he should happen to be imported into Britain, to be adjudged, according to the law of America, to be a slave; a doctrine than which nothing can be more barbarous. Ought the judges of any country, out of respect to the law of another, to shew no respect to their kind, and to humanity? out of respect to a law, which is in no sort obligatory upon them, ought they to disregard the law of nature, which is obligatory on all men, at all times, and in all places? Are any laws so binding as the eternal laws of justice? Is it doubtful, whether a judge ought to pay greater regard to them, than to those arbitrary and inhuman usages which prevail in a distant land? Aye, but our colonies would be ruined if slavery was abolished. Be it so; would it not from thence follow, that the bulk of mankind ought to be abused, that our pockets may be filled with money, or our mouths with delicacies? The purses of highwaymen would be empty, in case robberies were totally abolished; but have men a right to acquire money by going out to the highway? Have men a right to acquire it by rendering their fellow-creatures miserable? Is it lawful to abuse mankind, that the avarice, the vanity, or the passions of a few may be gratified? No! There is such a thing as justice to which the most sacred regard is due. It ought to be inviolably observed. Have not these unhappy men a better right to their liberty, and to their happiness, than our American merchants have to the profits which they make by torturing their kind? Let, therefore, our colonies be ruined, but let us not render so many men miserable. Would not any of us, who should—be snatched by pirates from his native land, think himself cruelly abused, and at all times entitled to be free? Have not these unfortunate Africans, who meet with the same cruel fate, the same right? Are they not men as well as we, and have they not the same sensibility? Let us not, therefore, defend or support a usage which is contrary to all the laws of humanity.

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“But it is false, that either we or our colonies would be ruined by the abolition of slavery. It might occasion a stagnation of business for a short time. Every great alteration produces that effect; because mankind cannot, on a sudden, find ways of disposing of themselves, and of their affairs; but it would produce many happy effects. It is the slavery which is permitted in America, that has hindered it from becoming so soon populous as it would otherwise have done. Let the Negroes be free, and, in a few generations, this vast and fertile continent would be crowded with inhabitants; learning, arts, and every thing would flourish amongst them; instead of being inhabited by wild beasts, and by savages, it would be peopled by philosophers, and by men.”

Francis Hutcheson, professor of philosophy at the university of Glasgow, in his *System of Moral Philosophy*, page 211, says “He who detains another by force in slavery, is always bound to prove his title. The slave sold, or carried into a distant country, must not be obliged to prove a negative, that *he never forfeited his liberty*. The violent possessor must, in all cases, shew his title, especially where the old proprietor is well known. In this case, each man is the original proprietor of his own liberty. The proof of his losing it must be incumbent on those who deprive him of it by force. The Jewish laws had great regard to justice, about the servitude of Hebrews, founding it only on consent, or some crime or damage, allowing them always a proper redress upon any cruel treatment, and fixing a limited time for it; unless upon trial the servant inclined to prolong it. The laws about foreign slaves had many merciful provisions against immoderate severity of the masters. But under christianity, whatever lenity was due from an Hebrew towards his countryman, must be due towards all; since the distinctions of nations are removed, as to the point of humanity and mercy, as well as natural right; nay, some of these rights granted over foreign slaves, may justly be deemed only such indulgences as those of polygamy and divorce, granting only external impunity in such practice, and not sufficient vindication of them in conscience.”

Page 85. It is pleaded, that “In some barbarous nations, unless the captives were bought for slaves, they would be all murdered. They, therefore, owe their lives, and all they can do, to their purchasers; and so do their children, who would not otherwise have come into life.” But this whole plea is no more than that of *negotium utile gestum* to which any civilized nation is bound by humanity; it is a prudent expensive office, done for the service of others without a gratuitous intention; and this founds no other right, than that to full compensation of all charges and labour employed for the benefit of others.

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A set of inaccurate popular phrases blind us in these matters; “Captives owe their lives, and all to the purchasers, say they. Just in the same manner, we, our nobles, and princes, often owe our lives to midwives, surgeons, physicians,” &c. one who was the means of preserving a man’s life, is not therefore entitled to make him a slave, and sell him as a piece of goods. Strange, that in a nation where the sense of liberty prevails, where the christian religion is professed, custom and high prospects of gain can so stupify the conscience of men, and all sense of natural justice, that they can hear such computations made about the value of their fellow-men, and their liberty, without abhorrence and indignation.

James Foster, D.D. in his *discourses on natural religion and social virtue* also shews his just indignation at this wicked practice; which he declares to be “*a criminal and outrageous violation of the natural right of mankind.*” At page 156, vol. 2 he says, “Should we have read concerning the Greeks or Romans of old, that they traded with a view to make slaves of their own species, when they certainly knew that this would involve in schemes of blood and murder, of destroying, or enslaving each other; that they even fomented wars, and engaged whole nations and tribes in open hostilities, for their own private advantage; that they had no detestation of the violence and cruelty, but only feared the ill success of their inhuman enterprises; that they carried men like themselves, their brethren, and the off-spring of the same common parent, to be sold like beasts of prey, or beasts of burden, and put them to the same reproachful trial, of their soundness, strength, and capacity for greater bodily service; that quite forgetting and renouncing the original dignity of human nature, communicated to all, they treated them with more severity, and ruder discipline, than even the ox or the ass, who are *void of understanding*—should we not, if this had been the case, have naturally been led to despise all their *pretended refinements of morality*; and to have concluded, that as they were not nations destitute of politeness, they must have been *entire strangers to virtue and benevolence*?

“But notwithstanding this, we ourselves (who profess to be christians, and boast of the peculiar advantage we enjoy, by means of an express revelation of our duty from heaven) are, in effect, these very untaught and rude heathen countries. With all our superior light, we instill into those, whom we call savage and barbarous, the most despicable opinion of human nature. We, to the utmost of our power, weaken and dissolve the universal tie, that binds and unites mankind. We practise what we should exclaim against, as the utmost excess of cruelty and tyranny, if nations of the world, differing in colour, and form of government, from ourselves, were so possessed of empire, as to be able to reduce us to a state of

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unmerited and brutish servitude. Of consequence, we sacrifice our reason, our humanity, our christianity, to an unnatural sordid gain. We teach other nations to despise, and trample under foot, all the obligations of social virtue. We take the most effectual method to prevent the propagation of the gospel, by representing it as a scheme of power and barbarous oppression, and an enemy to the natural privileges and rights of men.

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

EXTRACT

From an ADDRESS

in the

VIRGINIA GAZETTE,

of MARCH 19, 1767.

Mr. RIND,

Permit me, in your paper, to address the members of our assembly on two points, in which the public interest is very nearly concerned.

The abolition of slavery, and the retrieval of specie in this colony, are the subjects on which I would bespeak their attention.—

Long and serious reflections upon the nature and consequences of slavery have convinced me, that it is a violation both of justice and religion; that it is dangerous to the safety of the community in which it prevails; that it is destructive to the growth of arts and sciences; and lastly, that it produces a numerous and very fatal train of vices, both in the slave and in his master.

To prove these assertions, shall be the purpose of the following essay.

That slavery then is a violation of justice, will plainly appear, when we consider what justice is. It is truly and simply defined, as by *Justinian*, *constans et perpetua voluntas ejus suum cuique tribuendi*; a constant endeavour to give every man his right.

Now, as freedom is unquestionably the birth-right of all mankind, *Africans* as well as *Europeans*, to keep the former in a state of slavery, is a constant violation of that right, and therefore of justice.

The ground on which the civilians who favour slavery, admit it to be just, namely, consent, force, and birth, is totally disputable; for surely a man's own will and consent cannot be allowed to introduce so important an innovation into society, as slavery, or to make himself an outlaw, which is really the state of a slave; since neither consenting to, nor aiding the laws of the society in which he lives, he is neither bound to obey them, nor entitled to their protection.

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To found any right in force, is to frustrate all right, and involve every thing in confusion, violence, and rapine. With these two, the last must fall; since, if the parent cannot justly be made a slave, neither can the child be born in slavery. “The law of nations, says Baron *Montesquieu*, has doomed prisoners to slavery, to prevent their being slain; the *Roman* civil law permitted debtors, whom their creditors might treat ill, to sell themselves. And the law of nature requires that children, whom their parents, being slaves, cannot maintain, should be slaves like them. These reasons of the civilians are not just; it is not true that a captive may be slain, unless in a case of absolute necessity; but if he hath been reduced to slavery, it is plain that no such necessity existed, since he was not slain. It is not true that a free man can sell himself, for sale supposes a price; but a slave and his property becomes immediately that of his master; the slave can therefore receive no price, nor the master pay, &c. And if a man cannot sell himself, nor a prisoner of war be reduced to slavery, much less can his child.” Such are the sentiments of this illustrious civilian; his reasonings, which I have been obliged to contract, the reader interested in this subject will do well to consult at large.

Yet even these rights of imposing slavery, questionable, nay, refutable as they are, we have not to authorise the bondage of the *Africans*. For neither do they consent to be our slaves, nor do we purchase them of their conquerors. The *British* merchants obtain them from *Africa* by violence, artifice, and treachery, with a few trinkets to prompt those unfortunate people to enslave one another by force or stratagem. Purchase them indeed they may, under the authority of an act of the British parliament. An act entailing upon the *Africans*, with whom we are not at war, and over whom a British parliament could not of right assume even a shadow of authority, the dreadful curse of perpetual slavery, upon them and their children for ever. *There cannot be in nature, there is not in all history, an instance in which every right of men is more flagrantly violated.* The laws of the antients never authorised the making slaves, but of those nations whom they had conquered; yet they were heathens, and we are christians. They were misled by a monstrous religion, divested of humanity, by a horrible and barbarous worship; we are directed by the unerring precepts of the revealed religion we possess, enlightened by its wisdom, and humanized by its benevolence; before them, were gods deformed with passions, and horrible for every cruelty and vice; before us, is that incomparable pattern of meekness, charity, love and justice to mankind, which so transcendently distinguished the Founder of christianity, and his ever amiable doctrines.

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Reader, remember that the corner stone of your religion, is to do unto others as you would they should do unto you; ask then your own heart, whether it would not abhor any one, as the most outrageous violater of that and every other principle of right, justice, and humanity, who should make a slave of you and your posterity for ever! Remember, that God knoweth the heart; lay not this flattering unction to your soul, that it is the custom of the country; that you found it so, that not your will; but your necessity, consents. Ah! think how little such an excuse will avail you in that awful day, when your Saviour shall pronounce judgment on you for breaking a law too plain to be misunderstood, too sacred to be violated. If we say we are christians, yet act more inhumanly and unjustly than heathens, with what dreadful justice must this sentence of our blessed Saviour fall upon us, *"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven."* Matth. vii. 21. Think a moment how much your temporal, your eternal welfare depends upon an abolition of a practice which deforms the image of your God, tramples on his revealed will, infringes the most sacred rights, and violates humanity.

Enough, I hope, has been asserted, to prove that slavery is a violation of justice and religion. That it is dangerous to the safety of the state in which it prevails, may be as safely asserted.

What one's own experience has not taught; that of others must decide. From hence does history derive its utility; for being, when truly written, a faithful record of the transactions of mankind, and the consequences that flowed from them, we are thence furnished with the means of judging what will be the probable effect of transactions, similar among ourselves.

We learn then from history, that slavery, wherever encouraged, has sooner or later been productive of very dangerous commotions. I will not trouble my reader here with quotations in support of this assertion, but content myself with referring those, who may be dubious of its truth, to the histories of Athens, Lacedemon, Rome, and Spain.

How long, how bloody and destructive was the contest between the Moorish slaves and the native Spaniards? and after almost deluges of blood had been shed, the Spaniards obtained nothing more than driving them into the mountains.—Less bloody indeed, though, not less alarming, have been the insurrections in Jamaica; and to imagine that we shall be for ever exempted from this calamity, which experience teaches us to be inseparable from slavery, so encouraged; is an infatuation as astonishing as it will be surely fatal:—&c. &c.

EXTRACT

OF A

SERMON

PREACHED BY THE

BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER,

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Before the SOCIETY For the PROPAGATION of the GOSPEL, at the anniversary meeting on the 21st of *February*, 1766.

From the free-savages, I now come (the last point I propose to consider) to the savages in bonds. By these I mean the vast multitudes yearly stolen from the opposite continent, and sacrificed by the colonists to their great idol, the GOD OF GAIN. But what then? say these sincere worshippers of *Mammon*; they are our own property which we offer up. Gracious God! to talk (as in herds of cattle) of property in rational creatures! creatures endowed with all our faculties; possessing all our qualities but that of colour; our brethren both by nature and grace, shocks all the feelings of humanity, and the dictates of common sense. But, alas! what is there in the infinite abuses of society which does not shock them? Yet nothing is more certain in itself, and apparent to all, than that the infamous traffic for slaves directly infringes both divine and human law. Nature created man free, and grace invites him to assert his freedom. In excuse of this violation, it hath been pretended, that though indeed these miserable out-casts of humanity be torn from their homes and native country by fraud and violence, yet they thereby become the happier, and their condition the more eligible. But who are You, who pretend to judge of another man's happiness? That state, which each man, under the guidance of his Maker, forms for himself, and not one man for another? To know what constitutes mine or your happiness, is the sole prerogative of Him who created us, and cast us in so various and different moulds. Did your slaves ever complain to you of their unhappiness amidst their native woods and deserts? Or, rather, let me ask, did they ever cease complaining of their condition under you their lordly masters? where they see, indeed, the accommodations of civil life, but see them all pass to others, themselves unbenefited by them. Be so gracious then, ye petty tyrants over human freedom, to let your slaves judge for themselves, what it is which makes their own happiness. And then see whether they do not place it in the return to their own country, rather than in the contemplation of your grandeur, of which their misery makes so large a part. A return so passionately longed for, that despairing of happiness here, that is, of escaping the chains of their cruel task-masters, they console themselves with feigning it to be the gracious reward of heaven in their future state, which I do not find their haughty masters have as yet concerned themselves to invade. The less hardy, indeed, wait for this felicity till over-wearied nature sets them free; but the more resolved have recourse even to self-violence, to force a speedier passage.

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But it will be still urged, that though what is called human happiness be of so fantastic a nature, that each man's imagination creates it for himself, yet human misery is more substantial and uniform throughout all the tribes of mankind. Now, from the worst of human miseries, the savage Africans, by these forced emigrations, are intirely secured; such as the being perpetually hunted down like beasts of prey or profit, by their more savage and powerful neighbours—In truth, a blessed change!—from being hunted to being caught. But who are they that have set on foot this general HUNTING? Are they not these very civilized violaters of humanity themselves? who tempt the weak appetites, and provoke the wild passions of the fiercer savages to prey upon the rest.

THE END.

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