

THE

**CORRESPONDENCE**

BETWEEN

**JOHN GLADSTONE, Esq., M.P.,**

AND

**JAMES CROPPER, Esq.,**

ON THE

**PRESENT STATE OF SLAVERY**

IN THE

**BRITISH WEST INDIES**

AND IN THE

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA;**

AND ON THE

**Importation of Sugar**

FROM

**THE BRITISH SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA.**

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WITH

**AN APPENDIX;**

CONTAINING

**SEVERAL PAPERS ON THE SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.**

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**LIVERPOOL:**

PRINTED FOR THE WEST INDIA ASSOCIATION,

*By THOS. KAYE, 45, Castle-street.*

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1824.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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A CORRESPONDENCE lately took place, through the medium of the Liverpool Courier and the Liverpool Mercury, on the subject of the present State of Negro Slavery in the West Indies and in the United States of America, with a particular reference to the British Colonies, and on the Importation of Sugar from the British Possessions in India, conducted, on the one side, under the Signature of MERCATOR, and, on the other, first in an anonymous article, entitled "*Impolicy of Slavery*," published in the Mercury, but afterwards acknowledged, and followed up in subsequent Letters, by Mr. CROPPER, who was formerly an American, and is now an East India Merchant.

The WEST INDIA ASSOCIATION of Liverpool, being interested in the subjects of the discussion, and impressed with a sense of their importance, were desirous of placing the merits of this great national question in a candid and impartial manner before the Public, by whom it is now

so much and so generally agitated throughout the kingdom. They considered, that the most effectual manner of doing so would be to publish the whole of the Correspondence in one Pamphlet; with an Appendix, containing copies of and extracts from other Letters which had appeared, under different Signatures, in the Liverpool Advertiser, and which were referred to either by Mr. CROPPER or MERCATOR.

The Association having understood that Mr. GLADSTONE, a West India Planter, and also a West and East India Merchant, was the Author of MERCATOR'S Letters, they obtained his permission to make that fact known in the present publication.

Mr. CROPPER having announced his intention to publish his Papers and Letters separately, together with "additional facts," extracted from the Correspondence of his opponents, the Association directed that Gentleman to be informed of their determination to publish the whole; offering, at the same time, to supply him with any number of copies of the Pamphlet, at cost price. This offer he thought proper to decline, for the reasons assigned in a Letter which appeared in the Liverpool Mercury of the 2d of January, and which is republished in the present Pamphlet.

The whole of this Controversy is now submitted to the Public, in a more permanent form than in the perishable columns of a newspaper. The Association trust, that their motives for publishing it will be justly appreciated, and their conduct approved by every disinterested reader.

*February 6th, 1824.*

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*✂ Through inadvertence, several of Mr. Cropper's Letters to the Editors of the Liverpool Mercury have the word "Gentlemen" prefixed to them.*

## CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

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[FROM THE LIVERPOOL MERCURY OF OCTOBER 31, 1823.]

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### IMPOLICY OF SLAVERY.

**I**N the cruelty and injustice of Negro Slavery, in the misery it occasions, and the devastation which it spreads over the face of the earth, all the thinking part of mankind are agreed. How, indeed, is it possible there can be two opinions on the subject, when, to say nothing of the Slave Trade, it has long been a matter of public notoriety, that the Slaves in the West Indies are degradingly driven, like cattle, by the whip at their labour, which, for nearly half the year, lasts for one-half the night, as well as the whole day?—That they are held and dealt with as property, and often branded as such with a hot iron?—That they are liable to be sold at the will of their master, or for payment of his debts, and the nearest ties in life are thus rent asunder?—That they are liable, whether male or female, to be exposed and degradingly punished at the caprice, not only of the

\* It remains yet to be seen, whether the colonists will ameliorate the treatment of the Slaves, in accordance with the Resolutions of the House of Commons.

master or overseer, but of the meanest driver?—That they are compelled to work on the Sabbath for their own subsistence, which is, in fact, for their master's profit?—That the advantages of religious instruction, and of the marriage tie, are almost universally withheld from them?—That the most unrestrained licentiousness prevails amongst them, and is exhibited in a degrading disgusting, and depopulating promiscuous intercourse, encouraged by the debaucheries of the Whites?—That they can hold no property; their evidence is not received, and hence laws for their protection are but a mockery?—The reader will be ready to exclaim, “ Surely there must be some great and palpable gain arising from this system, to induce its maintenance for a single hour!” But what will be his astonishment to find, that, instead of gain, it is attended with great and enormous loss; that such is its inherent impolicy, that if it had not been supported and protected by bounties and prohibitions, it would long since have been ameliorated and finally have fallen?

The protecting bounties and prohibitions mostly apply to Sugar, which is the chief production of our West India Colonies.—They are:

I.—A bounty which is paid on the exportation of refined Sugar, and which raises the price of all Sugar in the home-market about 6s. per cwt. above its natural price.

II.—A high duty of 10s. per cwt. above what is paid from the West Indies, imposed on Sugar, the produce of the British Dominions in India.

III.—Prohibitory duties on Sugar grown in all other parts of the world.

Thus we see, that the cruel system pursued in the British West Indies requires to be supported by a bounty paid by the people of England, and to be protected, not only from the competition of the produce of free labour, but also from that of milder systems of slave labour.

But though such injustice and cruelty may flourish for a time, yet the present state of Slavery is a clear illustration of the position, that an all-wise Creator has made it the interest of every man to do right; that whatever is contrary to justice and humanity, must be equally contrary to sound policy; that interest and duty are indissolubly bound together.

Had commerce been carried on with enlarged and enlightened views of self-interest, and especially if united with motives of benevolence and humanity, how would knowledge and civilization have marked the steps of Europeans, and have been extended from the coasts to the interior of Africa! Instead of which, we have spread barbarism and desolation on her coasts, and thereby formed a formidable barrier to our intercourse with the more civilized interior! Had these views and these motives characterized our intercourse with India, how would darkness, ignorance, and idolatry have been disappearing amongst her vast population! Then might we, at this day, have been exchanging the produce of a vastly-extended manufacturing industry, for the cheap productions of voluntary labour on the fertile soils of Africa and of India. But how widely different has been our conduct! What but absolute infatuation could have induced the Europeans to destroy the native inhabitants of the West Indies, in order to re-people those islands, at an enormous expense, from the coast of Africa? And what but absolute infatuation can it have been, which in this country has actually led us to reject Sugar, if produced by the labour of the African on his native soil; and at the same time to give a bounty on the produce of his labour, when converted into a slave, and forced to cultivate the now-exhausted soils of our West India Islands? Such is truly the state of things; and how lamentable is it, that, after condemning and abolishing the African Slave Trade, we should still be



supporting, with enormous pecuniary sacrifices, the remnant of our wickedness and folly!

Let us look at the map of the world. We know that Sugar can be produced at least thirty degrees on each side of the Equator; we know also, that an acre of good land, in those climates, will produce as many pounds of Sugar as our land does of wheat; and that, if it were not for duties and bounties, Sugar might be supplied in great plenty at a very cheap rate. Who then can sufficiently condemn a policy which holds in chains of bondage 700,000 of our fellow-beings; and, for the very sake of maintaining this oppressive and wicked system, confines us to a few little colonies for our supply of one of the most valuable and important of all foreign productions? Who can sufficiently condemn a policy which, for the sake of furnishing to these poor miserable beings the few things with which their masters may choose to supply them, restricts and sacrifices an unforced and beneficial commerce, with tens, nay hundreds of millions, in Asia, Africa, and America, whose unrestrained choice would range through the almost indefinitely varied field of our manufacturing inventions?

The impolicy of bounties to raise the price of the produce of slave labour, and their injurious effects on the condition of the Slave Population, might be clearly illustrated by a comparison of the state of the British West India Colonies with those of Spain and Portugal, and with the United States. These bounties have enabled the British Planters to be absent from, and to neglect, their own concerns, and to delegate to others the tremendous responsibilities of their situation; this characteristic of the British system is the fruitful source from which most of its peculiar evils arise. The Colonies of Spain and Portugal have been compelled to support themselves; they have neither had bounties on their produce, nor the expenses of a standing army,

*paid by the mother country.* Their system of treatment is more mild; they encourage emancipation, and have vast numbers of free labourers;\* and these are the countries which are underselling the British Sugar Planters, in all the markets of Europe.

With prices of produce sometimes so low as not to pay for the importation of Slaves, the Slave Population of the United States has augmented by natural increase, after allowing for importation, about one hundred and twenty-five per cent. in thirty years; whilst, with prices comparatively high, and with the large importation into Jamaica, during the same period, of 188,785 Slaves, the Slave Population of that island has only increased from 250,000 to 345,252; showing, when compared with the United States, a destruction or waste of human life, or a counteraction of its tendency to increase, of 400,000, in the short period of thirty years. And this is the country which, thirty years ago, only produced one-tenth part of the Cotton which was then produced in the Island of Jamaica, but which now produces nearly one thousand times the quantity it then did; whilst its culture in Jamaica has been nearly abandoned!

That a system which destroys the lives, or prevents the existence, of 400,000 human beings in one island, in thirty years, is desperately wicked, whether it yields profit or loss, there can be no question; but, if these lives may be reckoned worth £50 each, (and nearly half of them have actually been replaced by purchase,) the pecuniary sacrifice to the country will be no less than £20,000,000 in this one island, and, as that contains not one-half of the Slave Population of the West India Colonies, the whole sacrifice will amount to upwards of

\* Free men are variously employed: they often cultivate the land for their own profit; but, under the present constitution of things, in the European Colonies, they are very averse to hire themselves to perform field labour, that being the employment of Slaves driven by the whip.

£40,000,000, which, at six per cent. interest, would make £2,400,000 per annum, or 15s. per cwt. on 160,000 tons of Sugar, being the annual consumption of Great Britain and Ireland! No wonder that the West Indians should feel the enormous expense of this cruel system press so heavily upon them! No wonder that the share the country has borne of that expense is felt to be insufficient; and that they have lately sought for further protection, declaring, that without it they shall be ruined! And so they will, by the operation of the general laws, ordained by a just and wise Providence, if they continue to adhere to a system which is radically wicked and unjust, and which must fall.

Slavery, being a forced and unnatural state of society, can only exist with high prices of produce, and becomes gradually extinguished in a competition with free labour. Thus we see it gradually diminishing in the northern parts of the United States, where there is the greatest competition of free labour, and where slave labour is, therefore, of least value; and, on the contrary, in those States, as we proceed southward, where there is less competition of free labour, and its profits are, therefore, increased, there we see Slavery in its worst form; for in proportion to the prices of produce, or the profits of the system, are its severities. Low prices of produce, also, compel the adoption of the best and most economical systems; and thus lead almost necessarily to an improved treatment of the Slaves; and, in point of fact, low prices of produce have generally been beneficial to the Slaves, whilst high prices have as generally been injurious to them. High prices alone have supported the destructive system which has kept Slavery in existence; for Slavery can only exist where the population is in a ratio greatly below the demand for labour. In Jamaica, we have seen how the population has been kept down, and Slavery has been upheld, by means of

that system; for it is obvious, that were the population as great there in proportion as it is in England, there could exist no temptation to maintain Slavery. Who, indeed, in this country, would ever think of holding men in Slavery with a hope of profit? And what but the waste of human life which has taken place in the West Indies, has there prevented a gradual approach to such a state of things?

An increase in the supply of men, as of any article, makes them bear a less price, until at length they become worth nothing as saleable property: but this is no loss to their master; for, by industry and good management, he will have a great increase of produce, and probably of income; but, even if his income remains the same, it will have the stability of landed income, instead of the unjust and uncertain tenure of property in the persons and lives of his fellow-men. Wherever Slavery exists, land is of little value. We seldom hear a Planter speak of the number of his acres, but of the number of his Slaves. In the United States, land of a worse quality, and more unfavourably situated, if cultivated by free men, is worth more than double the price of better land, in a better situation, in the same district, when that land is cultivated by Slaves. The continuance, therefore, of such a system of oppression, of wickedness, of impolicy, and of folly is almost incredible in this enlightened age; especially as it would unquestionably fall by its own weight, if it were left to itself. But we have not left it to itself: we are now paying in bounty to keep up the prices of Sugar, and in establishments and armies, to keep the Slaves in subjection, about two millions annually! And all this, we are distinctly told by the Planters, is not sufficient. Three millions more, according to their estimates, must be given them, to afford even a moderate remuneration,

which altogether would make an expense to the country of seven pounds annually, for every Slave held in bondage.

Great as this pecuniary sacrifice is, it is not all that we are called upon to make; we are called upon to support a system, the effects of which have ever been to hinder the progress of improvement, and to spread barbarism in its stead; a system, every where marked by the destruction of the very soil, and still more by its tendency to the destruction of every virtuous and moral feeling, no less in the master than in the slave. We are called upon to bind down the energies of the country, and to exclude that competition which would certainly destroy this wretched system. The rapid extension of our commerce, since its opening with South America and India, cramped and restricted as it still is, is abundantly sufficient to show what that extension might have been, under a conduct governed by more liberal and enlightened views. We have seen, for instance, the Cotton Trade, not only giving full employment to the population of the districts in England where it is now carried on; but, since the removal of some absurd regulations in the last Session of Parliament, we have seen with delight some branches of this trade extending to Ireland, and presenting the best means of improving and raising her depressed population! Had we but employed the means within our own power, of diffusing employment, civilization, and comfort over the regions of Asia, Africa, and America, we should long since have received in return employment and comfort for the suffering and depressed, though generous-minded population of Ireland! and even now, if we will but pursue this policy, we shall soon reap an abundant reward.

But, if we are still to make such immense sacrifices

for the Colonies, we ought at least to receive in return an overflow of wealth and prosperity from them. But, instead of this, we shall find, that to the general prosperity of this country there are two grand exceptions—the West Indies and Ireland. The Slavery of the West Indies, and the condition of a large part of the population of Ireland, form two dark stains on the otherwise bright and cheering picture. No true friend to this country can be indifferent to the condition of our Irish brethren. Now the most cursory observer, in contemplating the state of Ireland, cannot fail to remark the immense superiority of the condition of the North as compared with the South. The employment afforded by the Linen Trade in the North is an obvious cause of this superiority, and points out to us a practical remedy for the distress of the other parts of that country: and here it is most important to remark, that from the recent rapid increase of the Cotton Trade, we see a part of it already beginning to flow towards Ireland, so as to afford the most cheering hopes of what might be soon effected by a liberal and enlightened policy. It might, indeed, be incontestably shown, that the very same restrictions which mainly serve to maintain the bondage of the colonial Slaves, also serve to bind down the energies and prevent the prosperity of Ireland; and that the same remedy, namely, the removal of those restrictions, will tend to relieve them both. What is chiefly required, in order to produce this happy result, is, that the people of England should cease to make the sacrifices, which they are now compelled to make, in the shape of bounties and protecting and prohibiting duties, and which are the grand means of perpetuating both the evils in question; both the Slavery of our Colonies, and the misery and degradation of a great part of Ireland.

The unrestricted commerce of the world, and the competition of free labour, would necessarily introduce

improved systems into our West India Colonies; would gradually ameliorate the treatment of the Slaves, and finally extinguish Slavery itself. These Colonies, enjoying their natural advantages, would not then need to fear the competition of any other part of the world.

The unrestricted commerce of the world would give employment to Ireland; her population would then exchange idleness and rags for industry and comfort; her fine streams, now wasting their powers, would give motion to numerous manufactories; her grain and provisions, now compelled to seek a market in other countries, would then find ample demand amongst her own improved population.

We have already observed, that it might at least have been expected, that in sacrificing such immense national advantages, we should have had some manifest and palpable compensation in the enormous wealth and unparalleled prosperity of those for whose benefit the sacrifice is made. Is then the present system of colonial cultivation advantageous to the Planters? If it be, of what do they complain? Have they not the unrestrained use and full control of their Slaves? Have they not the privilege of importing their produce at a less duty than other countries? Have they not bounties also on its re-exportation? Yet we hear every day that West Indian cultivation is no longer profitable, and that, without further sacrifices on the part of the mother country, the Planters will be ruined. But can the Planters suppose that this country is prepared to make these further sacrifices? to submit to still heavier burdens, for no other purpose than to support an unjust system, which is at the same time unprofitable, not only to the country, but to themselves? Instead of looking any longer for such ruinous support, let them employ the means of improvement which are amply within their power. Let them examine what it is that enables

their competitors to undersell them; they will soon perceive, that if the advantages of one system of Slavery, as compared even with another system of Slavery, are so great and obvious as they will find them to be, the comparative advantages of free labour will prove infinitely greater!

We have seen that the cultivation of indigo, by free labour, in the East Indies, has almost wholly superseded its cultivation by Slaves in the Western world; and this was the only article which could bear the high charges of conveyance to Europe during the monopoly of the East India Company. If the obstructions to our commerce with India were removed, similar success would, doubtless, attend the culture of Sugar and Cotton, so as to compel the adoption of free labour in the West Indies. It is useless, however, to pursue a subject which has been so completely established, that all controversy upon it must now be for ever at rest; and, referring the reader to Hodgson's Letter to Say, we shall only just state, that, amongst the many proofs of the advantages of free labour, the experiment of gradually raising Slaves to the rank of free men was most successfully tried, in the British West Indies, by Joshua Steele! By the substitution of hope of reward for force and fear; by treating his Slaves as human beings, this benevolent individual stopped the gradual decrease in their numbers; and, after following this system for the short period of only four years and three months, he tripled the annual net produce of his estate.

Amongst all the obvious disadvantages of slave labour, there is none more striking than its tendency to deteriorate the soil. To those who are at all acquainted with the slave cultivation, either of the United States or of the West Indies, the fact is so well known, and so universally admitted, as to make any proofs unnecessary. Wherever Slaves are used, the master thinks compara-



tively little of sparing them, but has recourse to their sinews for every thing. Cattle are, therefore, far less employed than they ought to be, and hence Slave countries are behind all others in agricultural improvements. Our own soils would wear out, if constantly cultivated, even with wheat, with barley, or with oats. But, happily, the people of England are not Slaves! they eat beef and mutton, they wear woollen cloth and leather shoes. A demand for these articles promotes the introduction of cattle, and of green crops, which manure the soil, and preserve its fertility.

If the change from Slavery to freedom was attended both with danger and with loss, who would even then be found to advocate the continuance of Slavery? But when its policy has been so fully proved, let us hope that the enlightened part of the West Indians themselves will unite with us to extirpate this evil. And when it is considered, that the sacrifices that are now making to perpetuate Slavery would be more than sufficient to purchase the entire redemption of all the Slaves, at the earliest period they could be prepared for freedom, who can entertain any doubt, that, if the subject was properly investigated, and the interests and claims of the Planters, and those of their oppressed Slaves, fairly taken into consideration, a plan might be devised and adopted which would prove greatly beneficial alike to Planters, to the Slaves, and to the country at large?

Do not these things call for investigation? Can any individual, who feels an interest in the prosperity of his country, or in the happiness of his fellow-creatures, refuse to examine whether they are true? And, if convinced of their truth, shall we be guiltless if we hold our peace, or relax our efforts until the whole mass of this iniquitous system, with all its ruinous effects, is understood and felt by the country?

THE FOLLOWING REMARKS ON THE PROBABLE EXTENSION OF OUR COMMERCE WILL FURTHER ILLUSTRATE THE IMPOLICY OF SLAVERY.

No one who will take the pains to examine the subject can entertain any doubt, that the earth is capable of producing a sufficiency for all its inhabitants; and that, by the aid of machinery, comforts and luxuries may be manufactured to an extent far beyond what any country now enjoys. There can, therefore, be no imaginable limit to the further extension of commerce, but that of the power of the earth to produce, or of man to manufacture, the comforts and luxuries of life to the full extent of the desire to enjoy them. The object of commerce being to make those exchanges of the products of manufacturing or agricultural industry which difference of climate, soil, or other circumstances renders advantageous, such exchange will be most extensive and beneficial between countries where those are most varied.

Sugar and Cotton being the great productions of warm climates, must consequently be the great objects of the foreign commerce of Great Britain, and to them these remarks will chiefly apply.

The people of this country or Ireland have no disinclination to consume Sugar, if they can obtain it; it is estimated, that many individuals do consume 80lb. per annum, being about five times as much as our average consumption for each individual in the British Empire. If the duties on Sugar were reduced as the consumption increases, the revenue would sustain no loss. If the consumption was four times as great, the rate of duty might be reduced to one-fourth; and then, with a free trade, we might have brown Sugar at 3*d.* per lb.

No objection anywhere exists on the part of the people to the use of British manufactures, which are, with little exception, cheaper than those of any other

country; and it is shown, in the Report of the Liverpool East India Association, that if the duty on Sugar was removed, a native of India would be able to procure five pieces of British calico in return for the Sugar which his labour, if applied to its cultivation, would produce, in the time which would be occupied in manufacturing one piece of such calico in India; but the high duty on the Sugar to be received in payment prevents the sale of the British goods as effectually as a duty laid on their export. The population of England, and especially that of the cotton districts, is now generally well employed. And, Great Britain having about double the population of Ireland, it is fair to calculate, that one-half more added to our present foreign commerce, would be more than sufficient to relieve that portion of Ireland which is now in distress from want of employment.

The probability of obtaining such increase may be judged by the following facts:

I.—The consumption of Cotton in Great Britain is about 160,000,000 of pounds annually.

II.—If one-half that quantity is consumed at home, it will be 4lb. for every individual, and no one who has seen much of the poor in England, and more especially of Ireland, will contend that even all our population are sufficiently clothed.

III.—If the population of our Eastern Dominions took from us half a pound weight each of cotton goods, being only one-eighth part of the rate of consumption in Great Britain, it would be enough to give ample employment to Ireland.

IV.—The Slaves in our West India Islands, by being made free, would not only raise more produce, but also consume much more of our manufactures. Thus would Great Britain find within her own dominions abundant scope for the extension of her commerce, and share with the rest of the world the vast field which would be opened beyond them.

V.—If the population of the whole world is estimated at 900,000,000, and if their habits were improved so as to enable them to consume as much as the population of the British Dominions, it would probably amount to about eight or ten times the

extent of the present cotton manufactures *of the whole world*; leaving an ample field to reward the exertions of other countries which might adopt the same enlightened policy. But though, with respect to Africa, it may truly be said, that the crimes and devastations of ages cannot be repaired at once; and ages may still elapse before she is restored to the state in which European commerce found her; and though this may be true, it is no argument against making a commencement.

In conclusion, we may say—that among all the absurd and impolitic restrictions which still fetter our commerce, *the greatest obstruction of all to its extension is to be found in the effects of the devastation made to procure Slaves on the coast of Africa, and the sacrifices we are now making to support the system of Slave cultivation in the West Indies.*

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*To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.*

SIR,

IN the Mercury of last Friday there is a long tirade against West India Slavery, well mixed up with East India Sugar. I am told, that Mr. Cropper is the author of it, and I am inclined to believe that he is, from the mistatements and exaggerations with which it abounds, and for which his previous publications on these subjects are notorious. Addressing myself to both publications, and recollecting that he is the most considerable importer of East India Sugar into this port, I was amused by the sly, yet earnest manner in which, with the aid of his map, the interests of the East India Sugar-growers are put forward, and by his endeavours to persuade our manufacturers, that it is their interest and duty to prefer it to the produce of the West; whilst he leniently lets off, and not without comparatively indirect praise, his

*slave-owning* connexions in the United States, who consign their cotton, *the produce of the labour of Slaves*, to his house in Liverpool for sale.

It is not my intention to advocate Slavery in the abstract, or to enter into a discussion of the causes that maintain it in so many quarters of both the civilized and comparatively barbarous world. It is enough to know, that Slavery has prevailed, without interruption, from the earliest ages. And, if Mr. Cropper will inform me, why the Almighty has, in his wisdom and goodness, for so long a period, permitted three-fourths, or more, of mankind to remain strangers to the truths of Christianity, a knowledge and belief of which, we are taught, are necessary to salvation; if he will tell me, why God, in his providence, has planted, in the breasts of men, those powerful, but baneful, passions, which impel them, in even the best states of society, to calumniate and to prey upon each other, and from which no sect, not even the Quakers, are exempt; if he will explain why there should be, in all ages, master and servant, bond and free; if he will tell me, why tyrants should have been permitted to sport with the feelings and lives of their fellow-creatures; if he will, I say, explain these phenomena, and assign causes, comprehensible by a plain understanding, why such things are or should be, I will then undertake to inquire, with him, why Slavery has existed for so many thousand years, and why it is likely to continue for many years to come, notwithstanding all the efforts of his intemperate and injudicious zeal to extinguish it. But I am, nevertheless, ready to join with Mr. Cropper, not in unjust and indiscriminate abuse of those who, under the guarantee and safeguard of the laws of the land, have vested their property in the labour of Slaves; but to assist in practically endeavouring to improve the condition of the Slaves, *where improvement is necessary*, so as, if possible, to increase

the comforts of which their situation may, from time to time, admit. When the time arrives, as it probably will, that their acquirements become such as will enable them to understand the *obligations* as well as the *advantages* of being their own masters, it will *then* be the proper period for considering what steps ought to be taken for effecting that object; not according to the predatory and levelling views of the precipitate emancipators of the present day, but with a due and just regard to the lives, the property, and the interests of their masters; property which the laws have guaranteed to them, and lives which it is the duty of the Government to protect from violence.

I cannot doubt, that the waste of life, the destruction of property, and other distressing circumstances which attended the late revolt in Demerara, with the causes (originating here) which are ascertained to have led to it, and the arts by which the unfortunate Slaves were deluded, deceived, and misled, have awakened the Government to a sense of the extreme danger with which the strong and precipitate measures adopted in the last Session of Parliament are pregnant; measures which were, I believe, in a great degree, *forced upon them*. Nor can I doubt, that a more prudent course will be adopted for the future. Indeed, the reinforcement of troops now sending out to the garrisons in the West Indies may be regarded as the forerunner of a more cautious policy. Nor am I without hope, that the recent events in the above colony will produce similar impressions on the mind of that well-meaning, but mistaken man, Mr. Wilberforce, as well as induce the more intemperate, credulous, designing, or interested individuals who have placed themselves in his train to pause.

My object now is, not to follow up this subject farther, but to expose the fallacy of the statements which have been made to the public, particularly by Mr. Cropper, respecting the importation and future supply of East

India Sugar, in opposition to that from the West Indies. In addition to the stigma which Mr. Cropper has endeavoured to fix on the latter, by connecting its production with Slavery, he has uniformly ventured to state, that Sugar, of equal quality, at lower prices, as well as in sufficient quantity, may be procured from our possessions in the East Indies. It is the foundation of these statements that I mean to examine and expose.

In Bengal, two descriptions of Sugar are made; one such as we are accustomed to see imported and consumed here; the other is a low dark-coloured sort of dab, without grain, and full of molasses, called Khaur, which is seldom, if ever, exported to Europe. Of what is called middling and dry brown, with strong grain, such as is in general use in this country, both by the refiner and in the Muscovado state, they have none in Bengal. The cost of such India Sugar as we consume has, since the trade was opened, been from 8 to 11 rupees per maund, the Khaur 4 to 6 rupees; and, until within the last two years, the exchange ruled from 2s. 6d. to 2s. 9d. Taking the average price at 9 rupees, and the exchange at 2s. 7d., the cost was about 33s. per cwt., on board, at Calcutta: at the present exchange of 2s. 1d., it is about 27s. Khaur will not sell at any price here, and, therefore, requires no consideration. *For the sake of argument*, I will concede the question of duty, and suppose Bengal Sugar to be admitted at the same rate with West India, namely, 27s., and I will take the average cost, at the present low exchange, at 27s. more: I will add 8s. for freight, and 2s. for insurance and charges of sale; which brings the whole cost to the importer to 64s. per cwt., or within a fraction of 7d. per pound. To allow him a moderate profit, and remunerate the retailer, it could not be sold under 8d. to the consumer, and this for a soft, weak quality of Sugar; Sugar which our refiners cannot be induced to use, and which

can only be disposed of by being chiefly mixed with West India, in order to conceal its softness and disagreeable flavour. I have taken the freight at 8s., because I believe it to be as low, if not lower, than ships could be chartered to bring it as cargo. It is true, that it has occasionally been brought as low as 4s. or 5s.; but then it was only as ballast; and what has come has, in consequence, been chiefly on account of the ship-owner, and resorted to by him from the want of better freight. But, if the trade were capable of being extended, the rate is more likely to be above than under 8s.

The manufacture of Sugar is still limited in India, notwithstanding the high prices paid for it. No doubt ample means exist in Bengal for carrying it to any extent; but, to call them into action, it must also be granted, as experience has shown, *that present prices, high as they are, are inadequate to do so; and increased inducement must, therefore, be held out to effect it.* Yet Mr. Cropper speaks of supplying us from India, with good Sugar, more in quantity even than the whole of our consumption, at 3d. per pound, including one-fourth part of the present West India duty, or 6s. 9d. per cwt.; whereas the small quantity we now receive from thence, being about one-twentieth part of our consumption, cannot be afforded to the consumer, with the lowest peace freight and charges, and without the payment of any duty, under 5d. per pound. Away, then, with such delusion! But let Mr. Cropper either reconcile, if he can, these discrepancies, or, in fairness and candour, admit that he is in error.

But let us suppose, that, in place of receiving one-twentieth part, we required only one-fourth part (much less the whole) of our supply from India. In that case, I would ask, what effect such an increase in the demand would produce at Calcutta? Would it not be found, if



all mercantile experience of the effect of demand on supply is not to be abandoned, and the wildest theories substituted in its place, that an immediate and considerable advance would take place in the price of a most inadequate stock? and would not a farther permanent improvement in price be required, in order to induce increased cultivation? If this conclusion is correct, what becomes of Mr. Cropper's dreams about supplying us with cheap Sugars from India? And what should we say of a Government who, with such facts before them, would hesitate to continue to protect that great and *certain* source of supply of *unadulterated* Sugar which our West India Colonies now afford, or venture to depend on one, not only, in point of fact, more expensive, but which is placed under a Government founded on opinion, therefore of uncertain duration; exposed and remote in situation; on which no *certain* dependance could be placed for the supply, at almost any price, particularly in time of war, of an article which is become next to a necessary of life in this country; which is one of our principal sources of revenue, and of which the freight alone has been known to exceed the cost of good Sugar in the West Indies? I did hope, that more reflection would have satisfied Mr. Cropper, that his theories were neither politic nor practicable. Since, however, this has not been the case, it is the more necessary, by a plain statement of facts, to guard the public against such delusions as he has put forth, although I have now hardly a hope of making much impression upon him, and still less of dispelling the visions of so confident and dashing a *speculator* as this great reformer has become.

It is in vain for Mr. Cropper to speak of increasing our exports by bringing Sugar from the East instead of the West. At present, all the Sugar we consume of the produce of our Colonies is either paid for by manufac-

tures exported to them, or consumed by the owners of West India estates residing in this country. If you were to take less from the West and more from the East, you only, to that extent, change the destination of your exports; but the quantity remains the same: and if your consumption of Sugar increases without reduction in price, so would your exports, in that case, find a farther vent in the West, as, I doubt not, they also would in the East, were it wise, as I contend it would not be, to adopt Mr. Cropper's partialities. But, in either case, the situation of the manufacturer would not be altered. We should also recollect, that India has many other branches of cultivation and export that are highly beneficial, (much more so than Sugar,) and for which the climate of Bengal is well adapted. These are too well known to require enumeration here; whilst our West India Colonies are almost entirely dependant on Sugar for their support, and which they, fortunately, furnish of a very *superior* quality to what could be procured from the East.

There is another point on which great stress is laid by the Mercury's correspondent, and which I am the more desirous to notice, as I consider it to be a piece of gross, if not wilful, misrepresentation. A comparison is drawn between the cost and produce of slave labour in the foreign colonies or possessions in South America and the West Indies, and the British Colonies there. It is taken for granted, that the cost of labour is less and its produce more in the foreign than in the British Colonies, which is most unfeelingly, as, thank God! I believe it to be unjustly, attributed to kinder and more indulgent treatment in the one than in the other. Now, is it not a notorious fact, that the Slave Trade is still carried on, to a great extent, and accompanied by the most cruel and aggravated circumstances, by the Spaniards, the French, and Portuguese of Brazil?

Is it not also notorious, that the Slaves so imported are sold at *very low* prices; and that it is by the continuance of this trade alone that the planters of Cuba, of Brazil, and of the French Colonies are enabled to follow their present systems, whilst, even with this manifest advantage, their cultivation languishes, and is, on all hands, admitted to be far from profitable, owing to the quantity of produce made exceeding the demand for or consumption of it; a result found to exist in all cases of supply beyond demand, notwithstanding the theories of Mr. Cropper and his friends connected with our currency; theories now, I believe, pretty well exploded?

There is another point to notice, and it is one of fact. Mr. Cropper boldly states, that were the Negroes free, they would be both more willing and better labourers than they are in their present situation. Every person who has been in the West Indies with whom I have conversed on this subject, assures me that the fact is quite the contrary; and that, in general, the manumitted Negroes are idle, indolent, slothful, and too often become profligate, though they possessed good characters whilst they remained Slaves. Of the truth of this description, Cayenne afforded a striking instance, when the Slaves there were emancipated in the days of Victor Hughes and the French Revolution. Mr. Cropper has not, I believe, ever been in the West Indies or in America. Let him visit both, and inform himself, by observation on the spot, of the state of the Slaves; and when he returns, if he should still entertain the same opinions on the subject of Slavery, I shall be more disposed than I am now to give credit to them. He quotes Mr. Steele's proceedings in Barbados in evidence of the advantages of free negro labour; but, if he will take the trouble to inquire, from any gentleman acquainted with that island, he will find, that he has been grossly misled, and made the credulous instrument to mislead others; the

consequences of Mr. Steele's schemes and experiments having, as I am well informed, been the reverse of what are stated by Mr. Cropper, as they terminated in loss and disappointment. Neither can I admit either the fairness of the manner or the correctness of his statement of the extent of drawback on refined Sugar when exported. The duty on Muscovado Sugar is 30s., descending to 27s., under a scale governed by the average prices: the drawback is calculated on the duty of 30s.; so that when the price of Sugar falls very low, as at present, there is a benefit of 3s. in the drawback. But this is temporary and incidental; whilst whatever benefit may be reaped from it, East India Sugar partakes thereof equally with the produce of the West.

It would be well if this restless gentleman would occupy himself more with his own concerns, of which, judging from appearances, one would suppose both his hands and warehouses were pretty full, in place of annoying himself and others by meddling with matters respecting which he has had no experience or any opportunity for personal or competent observation, and by advocating measures which, in their tendency, strike at the lives and property of others; property in which he himself has no direct or pecuniary interest at stake.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

P.S.—The Editor of the Mercury has stated, that no Whites were killed by the Negroes in the late revolt in Demerara. He is mistaken. Two were shot dead on one plantation by the Negroes, because they endeavoured to defend a lady, whose person the Negroes attempted to violate, when she also was wounded by

them in the attempt. Wherever any resistance was made, the Whites were insulted, beat, and wounded, and many so severely, that the limbs of several have since been amputated. The confinement of the rest was only meant to be temporary: their final fate remained to be determined when the Negroes should have got possession of the colony. The general conduct of the Negroes, wherever they had the superiority, was most ferocious and brutal; and it is painful to add, that the ringleaders in the insurrection almost wholly belonged to estates which were most distinguished for kind and indulgent treatment.

M.

*Liverpool, 5th November, 1823.*

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*To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.*

SIR,

I HAVE been informed, in reference to the letter which I addressed to you on the 5th instant, that there are some gentlemen who question the truth of my opinion, namely, that the discussion which took place in Parliament, during the last Session, on the subject of Slavery in our West India Colonies, and the measures that were, in consequence, adopted, were, in a great degree, forced upon the Government. If so, I beg to refer them, for a confirmation of the truth, to Messrs. Wilberforce and Buxton.

I have also been told, that *Mercator* was too personal towards Mr. Cropper, particularly in the concluding part of his letter. No man can disapprove of personality, in public discussion, more than I do; but, in this case, I

cannot persuade myself, that those who made the observation can have read Mr. Cropper's publications: when they have, they will find who threw the first stone. When advocates of political measures choose to go so far as to tell those West India Planters whose fortunes are such as to enable them to live in England, that it is a disgrace to them not to reside upon their estates in the West Indies, or to take upon them to intrust the charge of their people to others, and, in consequence, to load them with gross and unmerited abuse, at the same time printing and circulating those opinions, thereby instigating the Negroes to insurrection, with its consequences, murder and destruction; when I hear of those who have sent emissaries to almost every manufacturing and market town in the kingdom, to stir up the population to meet and sign petitions to Parliament, taken cut and dry in their pockets, of which the object is the abolition of Slavery, without regard to the actual condition of the people, or to that property which the laws of the country have guaranteed to its owners; when I read and hear of such things, and much more of a similar character, which I will not, at present, enter into, can any man be surprised that I should express a wish, that those, so occupied, should mind their *own* concerns?

I have also been told, that none of the *friends* or connexions of Mr. Cropper's house, who send Cotton to them for sale, own a single Slave. This brings to my recollection the story of the Jew that was applied to for a loan of money, and who answered, he had none of his own, but he had a *friend*, an unconscionable rogue, from whom he could procure it; but, to do so, an excessive interest must be paid. I ask, what is the difference between the man who owns the Slaves that raise the Cotton, and he that buys it, pays the other for it, and sends it to market for sale? Does the buyer not place himself in the situation of one who encou-

rages, protects, and therefore approves of, the conduct of the cultivator? Nay, is he not prevented from filling the situation of his *friend*, by knowing that his own is more safe, and less exposed to risk, labour, or apparent responsibility?

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, 15th December, 1823.*

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*To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE paper on the "Impolicy of Slavery" has been confidently assailed by a charge of exaggeration and misrepresentation. It is very easy, as we have seen, to make such assertions, but not so easy to prove them. The fact is, that the advocates of West Indian Slavery are not angry with the paper because it has *many* mistatements, but because it has *none*. This being the case, it is clear, that silence or personal abuse is the only alternative of our antagonists. The latter is the course which they have generally chosen to adopt; but the abolitionists must not follow the example which has been set to them; their duty is to keep steadily to their post and to the point: by so doing, they cannot fail of opening the eyes of the people of this country to the nature of Slavery, and to the sacrifices which they are making for its support, when this crying evil cannot be of long continuance.

If the giving to Slaves their freedom, before they were fit for it, would do them an injury, (and I have always considered that it would,) then the rejection of the produce of their labour would have the same effect. It is, therefore, our duty to take the most rational means for the relief of the oppressed; and, if more direct means fail, the disuse of the produce of their labour will be well deserving of consideration. I am not now interested in consignments of slave-cultivated Cotton; but in time past I have been, and I do not, therefore, shield myself under that circumstance. If the thing in itself is wrong, it would, unquestionably, have been of great individual importance; and to which, I trust, I shall never be indifferent. It has, however, no reference to the great cause, and we must have no pairing off of wrong things: two things being wrong do not make one right. Besides, 700,000 human beings are not to be punished for my fault, even if this were one; nor are the people, for any errors of mine, to tax themselves for the support of this falling system. Surely this is not the way in which that prodigious waste of human life, in Jamaica, is to be passed over; where, in the last thirty years, as compared with the increase of Slaves in the United States, it amounts to 400,000, and is an actual decrease of about 90,000. Such a state of Slavery as this cannot have existed on an extensive scale for *many* thousand years; for, if general, it would have reduced the whole population of the earth to about one-hundredth part, in half of *one* thousand years: and yet *Mercator* (whom, from his arguments and his style, I take to be John Gladstone, a West India Slave-holder) says he is not an advocate for Slavery in the abstract, but he appears to be an advocate for it in this, probably the worst form in which it ever existed.

If we are not to be driven from our ground by personal abuse, neither should we allow ourselves to be



drawn into a theological dispute, or into the solving of the question, why ignorance of the truths of Christianity should so long have existed; or, why those to whom these truths are known should so long have violated its precepts, by holding their fellow-men in Slavery. It is enough to know, that, however good men may differ in their opinions on some of these points, they all evince, by their conduct, that they believe it is the will of their Creator, that man should know his truths and keep his commandments. It has ever been their endeavour to do all they could to remove ignorance, to lessen crime, vice, and misery. On what grounds but these are the Scriptures so extensively circulated? and how can it happen, that the advocates of Slavery take a part in their circulation?

In reply to *Mercator's* farther remarks:—If to the price of brown Brazil Sugar, for some years past, only 6s. 9d. duty were added, it would not then cost more than 3d. per lb.—the statement on that subject had no particular allusion to East India Sugar, though there can be no doubt, that if *British skill and capital* were allowed a free operation on the fertile soils and abundant population of India, that Sugar of any quality, and to any extent, might be obtained from thence as cheap, or cheaper, than from any other part of the world; but until the experiment is tried, it can only rest on reasoning by analogy from the facts we know, confirmed by the opinions of those best informed. If *Mercator* was not of the same opinion, he would not object to the experiment being tried.

It is impossible, that the continued importation of Slaves into the Brazils and Cuba can be the cause why they undersell the British Planters; and whilst all the West India estimates lately presented to Parliament show, that the present price of Sugar pays little or nothing, not nearly interest for the cost of land and

buildings alone, are we to suppose, that the situation of the Planters would be mended by purchasing more Slaves to extend still further such a losing business?

And with respect to the United States, in the last thirty years they appear to have added 854,735 to their Slave Population, by natural increase. If they had followed the system of Jamaica, they must have imported nearly double that number to have made their population what it now is; and these, at £50 each, would have cost fully eighty-four millions. Will *Mercator* say, that it would have been an advantage to the United States to have followed the Jamaica system, and to have increased their Slave Population by importation? Will he say, that it would have been an advantage to them to have paid away eighty-four millions for a population which they have obtained by good management *alone*? I do not here charge him with wilful misrepresentation; for I place it to the most pardonable, and I believe to the true cause—a want of knowledge of the nature of the subject about which he has so unceremoniously undertaken to correct me.

The complicated subject of the bounty on the importation of Sugar (that hidden prop of Slavery) could not be explained in the compass of a short letter. In “Relief of West Indian Distress” it is clearly proved to be fully as much as I have stated. There it will also be seen, that I knew that this bounty also raises the price of East India Sugar; and further, I may add, that, if the abolitionists had no higher motive, some of them might have been benefited by joining *Mercator* in an attempt to increase this bounty.

The case of Steele is only mentioned as one amongst great numbers which prove the advantages of free labour. This case has been published many years, in Dr. Dickson’s “Mitigation of Slavery,” and more recently noticed in “Hodgson’s Letter to Say,” neither of which

have had any answer, nor will they be shaken by the loose statements of *Mercator*. Even if they were, there are proofs enough without them. The alarms of the West Indians at the idea of coming into competition with free labour are strong presumption of their opinions on the subject.

*Mercator* is willing to join in practically endeavouring to improve the condition of the Slaves *where improvement is necessary*, and contemplates the time when their acquirements will become such as to enable them to understand the obligations, as well as the advantages, of being their own masters. In every case where they do not already understand these, it cannot be denied that improvements are necessary. He is willing to join in these improvements; and yet he tells us, that the ring-leaders of the Demerara insurrection were from the estates where they were best treated. If the Planters believed, as I do, that the emancipation of their Slaves would be a benefit to themselves, then they would adopt it; but, so long as they think it would be a loss, can we suppose them likely to be the sincere advocates of an improvement which is to fit the Slaves for emancipation? I agree with the writer in the *Cambrian*, that such improvements will continue to be opposed by the Planters, so long as they consider that emancipation would occasion a loss, and whilst there is no previously settled plan for their remuneration. Such plan of emancipation and remuneration seems equally necessary for the Slave as for the master; for that instruction which will make the Slaves acquainted with their obligations and their duties, must also make them acquainted with their rights; and how is it possible they can be satisfied, if no certainty is held out for their obtaining those rights?

To purchase the freedom of the Slaves would be an act of such tremendous responsibility as few Govern-

ments would be disposed to incur, until the nature of the case was understood by the people at large; but, if they become convinced that they are now throwing away, in an unavailing attempt to support a falling system, more than sufficient to purchase the redemption of all the Slaves, there can be no difficulty; and, with a view to some such amicable arrangement, I was sorry to see *T. F.*,\* who allows it to be a bad institution, become its advocate. It must, indeed, have a pernicious effect on the minds of those engaged in it, when it can induce a man, so respectable in the other relations in life, to pervert the Scriptures to its support. If Christians are bound to do to others as they wish others to do to them, then Christianity does not “*steer clear*” of *Slavery*, but *clears Slavery away*; and the text which he quotes will be in strict accordance with this, if he will consider, that the non-resisting doctrine of Christianity relieves the oppressed, not by encouraging them to resistance, but by its operation on the hearts of the oppressors.

I have endeavoured to meet the objections of the West Indians, by turning the attention of the country to its own concerns; to the share it has had in the support of Slavery, when they so strenuously objected to an interference with theirs, I will once more meet their objections to my want of knowledge, from not having been in the West Indies. Their laws we can understand as well here as there. I will just give a sketch of one of them, especially as it may throw some light on the yet mysterious business of the Demerara insurrection, where there has been so great a loss of Negro life, and so little of the Whites.

In most, if not all the Colonies, “when a Slave is condemned to death by the civil magistrate, he is, previously to his execution, appraised, and the value (not

\* See APPENDIX A.

exceeding a limited sum) is allowed and paid to his owner out of the public treasury of the island." To this there is one exception, which is accompanied with a most gross violation of the plainest principles of justice and mercy. In cases of offences, where their masters fail "of providing what is necessary for their Negroes or other Slaves," "and that necessity may have compelled him to commit the offence," *the unfortunate Negro is, nevertheless, to die*; but nothing is, in this case, to be paid to the master or owner. Though my letter is already longer than I had intended, yet I must give an extract from an Act of the Bahama Islands; for here it seems to be meant, that the Slave shall be executed first, and the necessity that led to his crime be inquired into afterwards.

EXTRACT FROM AN ACT OF THE BAHAMA ISLANDS OF 1784.

"And be it also enacted, that when any Slave shall suffer death, two justices and three freeholders or housekeepers shall forthwith inquire what treatment such Slave had received from his or her owner; and if it shall appear to them, or the major part of them, that the owner of such Slave had *inhumanly used him or her, and that necessity or cruel usage might have compelled such Slave to run away, or to the commission of the offence for which he or she shall have suffered*, the owner shall not be entitled to, or receive any allowance for such Slave."

So far as I know, these laws are still in operation: and may I not now ask, where is the individual, who has the feelings of an Englishman, who would not rejoice at being abused by the advocates of such a system? or, who would not be "restless" until it was fully understood and felt by the country? And, though I believe that the knowledge, that it would ill become me to use irritating language, whatever may be the provocation to it, lays me more open to abuse, yet I trust this will not induce me to swerve from my duty.

JAMES CROPPER.

To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.

SIR,

I WAS not sorry to see, in yesterday's Mercury, a letter from Mr. Cropper, in which he acknowledges himself to be, as I had suspected, the author of the article on Negro Slavery and Sugar which appeared in that paper of the 31st ult. This enables me to treat both in connexion with his other publications; and I shall now proceed to examine the defence he has put in, to the charges I urged against him, before the tribunal of public opinion, as well as some of the new matter he has brought forward, and which, in point of fact, occupies the greater part of his letter.

Mr. Cropper denies that he has been guilty of either mistatement or exaggeration, and retaliates by calumniating his neighbours, whom he also charges with being "angry," because, he says, he has not been guilty of either. It shall be my duty to show how far he is correct, or the contrary, in this denial, as well as in his profession of *benevolent Christian feeling*, under which he dictates so gross and, I add, so unfounded a libel.

First, then, as to Sugar. He seems now to have forgotten all he had previously written on the subject of supplying us with good and cheap East India Sugar. In his letter to Mr. Wilberforce, dated the 9th of March, 1821, he says, "there can be *no doubt* of our obtaining from the East an *immense quantity* of Sugar, on *very moderate terms*;" which, "at the then reduced rate of exchange, would, probably, not cost more than 16s. 6d. per cwt. on board." Now, before I go farther, I must remark, that I cannot avoid suspecting that Mr. Cropper must, at the time, have been aware how unfounded this assertion was. He had only to refer for evidence to his

own invoices of shipments made to him from Calcutta, about the time he was writing, with the rate of exchange at which his agents would have drawn, or did draw, bills for the amount. If he will now refer to them, and state the facts, I do not hesitate to say, that the prices will be found not less than forty and from that to seventy per cent. above his quotations to Mr. Wilberforce. If such would be the result of the reference, and if such a representation is not "exaggeration and mistatement," to call it nothing worse, I know not the meaning of the words.

Mr. Cropper, in his letter published yesterday, tells us, that his statement relating to the supply of Sugar, at threepence per pound, "had no particular allusion to East India Sugar; but that if British skill and capital were allowed free operation in India, there *could be no doubt* but Sugar, of *any quality*, and in *any quantity*, could be procured from thence, as *cheap* or *cheaper* than from any other part of the world." In consequence of this statement, I felt desirous to ascertain on what authority he made this communication. For this purpose, I have looked over his previous publications. What I find there is enough to stultify credulity itself. He writes to Mr. Wilberforce, that he had been told, by a person (*respectable, of course*) who had lived for twenty years in the sugar district of Benares, that, in this man's opinion, *if suitable encouragement were given*, in ten years India would produce more Sugar than Europe would consume. On the *same authority* he tells us, that this person, who employs many people, never heard of a slave; and, therefore, Mr. Cropper concluded that there were none, or next to none, in Bengal. But who this man is we are not even told, and, for aught we know, he may be the man in the moon, of whom children hear so frequently. But, with this authority for *quantity*, Mr. Cropper takes it for

granted, that the Sugar must necessarily be *cheap*; and therefore, "to put it beyond all doubt," he adopts the idea for fact, and reasons upon it accordingly. For my part, I cannot consent to go quite so far, *on such grounds*; but, if Mr. Cropper is disposed to visit India, and make the experiment, (of which, I am inclined to think, he would have the sole merit, without risk of competition,) he will find, that *British* skill and capital have been introduced and employed, to a great extent, in the manufacture of indigo and other articles in Bengal, and that there is nothing to prevent the same being done with regard to Sugar, but *the want of inducement*. He may also learn, that an attempt was made there, with British skill and capital, about, I think, the year 1792, to establish sugar-works, on the West India system, when, as I am informed, it failed, and was abandoned. Such assertions as these of Mr. Cropper's are really too ludicrous for serious consideration. But what are we to think of his evidence in favour of cheap Sugar, the fruits of free labour, when he at once abandons the cultivation of India, and has recourse to the Sugar of Brazil! Sugar not only made by Slaves, but in a country where the Slave Trade is still continued in its worst character? When he tells us, that, in proposing to supply us with good Sugar, at threepence per pound, he has no particular allusion to India, and quotes the price of Brazil brown Sugar in support of it, I ask, does he mean to advocate Brazil cultivation? Is it with *such* produce that he proposes to supply us at this price? And does he mean, that it should be admitted here on the same terms of duty as the produce of either our Colonies or Foreign Possessions? If so, this subterfuge cannot avail him; but, in that case, let him speak out and declare his opinion, and I shall know how to deal with it. If it is not, why introduce Brazil Sugar at all into the discussion? And why say he had



no allusion to the Sugar of India, until he had gone too far for his object, and when, in point of fact, he had made allusion to no other? But I cannot allow him so to shelter himself. Is not the whole drift of his argument, in *all* his publications, to show, that what he calls free labour in India, as opposed to slave labour in the West Indies, is capable of producing Sugar, and supplying us with it at a much cheaper rate?

But, then, Mr. Cropper turns round, with his theories at his heels, and says—Since you think we cannot supply you with good and cheap Sugar from Bengal, why not let us make the experiment by equalizing the duties? To this I answer, No: we cannot consent to exchange the substance for the shadow. It is enough to know, from past experience, that Bengal is so situated and circumstanced, that no dependance can be placed on receiving considerable supplies of good Sugars from thence; whilst, from the same experience, we know that we can depend on having more than we require of such produce from our West India Colonies. We also know, that those Colonies possess acknowledged and long-standing claims of reciprocal interest, guaranteed to them before Sugar from India was thought of; claims which ought not and must not be trifled with, for the purpose of making delusive experiments, founded on false theories, and only susceptible, at the best, of the most precarious results. We know farther, that this country now possess a great source of revenue, arising from the *certain* supply of an article become, what may be termed, a necessary of life; and that we owe it to ourselves to keep the good we have in possession, and not expose it to hazard.

So much for Sugar. Mr. Cropper tells us, that he is not *now* interested in receiving consignments of slave-cultivated Cotton. It would have been well if he had also told us *when* he ceased to be so interested. It

would be rather a curious coincidence, were we to find, that this cessation was coeval with his becoming a public writer against Slavery: and, in that case, is it not rather remarkable, that he should not have been induced to turn author until his slave Cotton agency had ceased? Might I also inquire, how it happens, that he has left his near relatives and late partners—so largely occupied in this way, and who, I presume, are also members of his society for abolishing Slavery—exposed to all the obloquy that must follow what he now considers so sinful a pursuit? But, leaving such matters as food for his reflection, I cannot quite reconcile, with the same ease as he does, the general and unqualified abuse he pours out against Slavery and Slave-owners, employing the terms, “wicked,” “worthless,” “atrocious,” “unjust,” and what not, in all their stages, accompanied with the admission of “*his having always considered, that to give Slaves their freedom before they were fit for it, would be to do them an injury.*” If Slavery is in itself so wicked and unjust in principle, it must be so at all times, whatever the state of the Slave may be. I am, however, satisfied to have him thus far with me, even on his own terms, though I must grant, that his object, in making the unexpected admission, seems like an attempt to qualify his past conduct as an agent for the sale of the produce of slave labour, and is, therefore, a little suspicious.

In one of his publications, Mr. Cropper has told us, that the cultivation of Sugar is highly profitable in the United States, whilst it is so much otherwise in the British Colonies. Let us examine a little into this fact, and into the policy of that country. The United States make but a moderate proportion of the Sugar they consume; the greater part of their supply is of foreign production, which pays a heavy duty, I think Muscovados about 15s. per cwt. on importation. Here, then,

is at once a bounty to that extent in favour of the Sugar made by the labour of Slaves in America, with which the consumers are taxed for the benefit of the growers; whilst Mr. Cropper is very angry with our Government for allowing the drawback on refined Sugar of the whole duty that may be chargeable here, which, when the prices are very low, as at present, gives our Planters and East India importers, including friend Cropper and Co., a bonus of 3s. per cwt. Surely Mr. Cropper will admit the American Government to be wise and liberal; and yet their policy is to carry the principle of protection to the fruits of slave labour, and encouragement in favour of their own cultivators, to five times the extent we do. Can we, then, be surprised, that Sugar planting should thrive so well in the United States, whilst it is less prosperous in our Colonies and Indian Possessions?

Mr. Cropper has dwelt long and said much on the nature and comparative merits of free and slave labour; on the great *natural* increase of the Slave Population in the United States; and on the comparative waste of life in our Colonies. I am not disposed to admit the correctness of either his statements or his reasonings; nor do I mean to shelter myself under the charge of ignorance of the subject, which he brings against me; but I do mean to expose his "*exaggerations and mistatements*" on these subjects, as well as on the still more important one, the treatment and condition of the Slaves in our Colonies; but, as these and other matters brought forward by Mr. Cropper will, necessarily, lead to some detail, I shall reserve them for another letter, without now intruding farther on the patience of your readers.

Mr. Cropper assumes, that it must be Mr. Gladstone who addresses you under the signature of *Mercator*. He says, that he thinks so from the *similarity* of argument and style. I confess I am rather curious to learn

where specimens are to be found, as I am not aware that Mr. Gladstone had, like Mr. Cropper, appeared as an avowed author before the public. Be that as it may, if Mr. Cropper is desirous to ascertain the fact, and chuses to apply to Mr. Gladstone, it is probable the latter may satisfy him; but, at present, it is necessary that I should call on Mr. Cropper to explain what he means by stating, that, "whilst I profess not to advocate Slavery in the abstract, I appear to do so in, probably, the *worst* form in which it ever existed." I call for his evidence in support of so unfounded an assertion.

If I have used any expressions towards Mr. Cropper, either now or before, which circumstances do not justify, and which can be fairly construed into "personal abuse," as he terms it, let them be pointed out, and their misapplication shown, when I shall be ready to retract them. But I deny that he has any just ground for complaint, or that more has been said than circumstances authorize. He has put himself forward as a public man; he has chosen to attack, without provocation, the legal and guaranteed rights and properties of private individuals, on whom he has ventured, most slanderously, to heap unmerited obliquy; and he has, therefore, laid himself open to all the consequences of such conduct.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, 22d November, 1823.*

To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

GENTLEMEN,

THERE is nothing in *Mercator's* second letter, of itself, deserving of any reply. I might safely leave him to create, and then to attack, with all his might, the phantoms of his own mind; but controversy, by giving an interest to the subject, affords a means of informing the public mind which ought not to be neglected. If, in the exposure of the evils of the system of Slavery, I have appeared to make an indiscriminate attack on those connected with it, it was not my intention to do so; for I am aware there are many good men unfortunately placed in that situation. The blame and the reproach of the system attach, but in different degrees, to almost every class and every member of the community. There were many who imagined Slavery was abolished with the Slave Trade; and a still more numerous class, (amongst which I must place myself,) who imagined this state had been greatly improved, and had no idea of the extent of its present enormities, until the investigations which have lately taken place: but we are all blamed, and justly so, for the sanction given by the English law. Amongst the West Indian Slave-holders there may be some who, having only recently come into possession, are no more blameable than the rest of the community; but, as a body, the case is different; for, knowing the tremendous powers and responsibilities of their situation, what have they done for its melioration? Still less can they be exonerated, if they do not now evince more anxiety to raise these poor dependants to the rank of human beings. None of them can say that it is not a bad and impolitic system; and why do they not propose plans for its extinction, at the earliest possible period?

Into the paper on the Impolicy of Slavery I had originally introduced a paragraph on the Leeward Island Amelioration Law; but, from some supposed inaccuracy, I was induced to suppress it until I had obtained further information; and I am glad that I did so, for, having since satisfied myself of the correctness of my impressions, it now gives me the opportunity of going more at length into this part of the subject. This is the more important, because the law alluded to is one of those made in consequence of the agitation of the Slave Trade question, and may be taken as a proof of what we are to expect from the Legislatures of our Colonies.

By this law, which was passed in 1798, and professes to be a measure "calculated to obviate the causes which hitherto may have impeded the natural increase of Negroes," it is enacted, that there shall be weekly provided for every Slave, nine pints of corn (about seven or eight pound,) or beans; or eight pints of peas, or wheat, or rye flour, (about five pound;) or Indian corn meal, or nine pints of oatmeal (about five pound;) or seven pints of rice, or eight pounds of biscuit, or twenty pounds of yams or potatoes, and also one pound and a quarter of herrings (being about three and a half;) to be distributed in such proportions as the owner may think proper. There are other articles enumerated, out of which the master has the choice of supplying his Slave; but I have selected these as best known here, and best admitting of comparison.

Where one-tenth part of an acre of land is allotted, and master's time allowed for cultivation, this allowance of provisions may be lessened one-half, or any greater proportion, according to its produce. Every Slave, capable of working the same, is allowed forty feet square of good land, near to his house. This is about one twenty-seventh part of an acre, and might,

therefore, if master's time were allowed for cultivation, be considered equivalent to about one-fifth, in addition to the allowance of dry provisions.

By the same law, every Slave is allowed, twice in the year, one woollen jacket and Osnaburg trowsers; and every female Slave one wrapper of woollen cloth, and one petticoat of Osnaburgs. The owner may substitute a blanket and a hat or cap, with consent of the Slave, for one suit of clothes.\*

The Slaves are not to be turned out to work before five in the morning, nor continue later than seven in the evening; and are allowed half an hour for breakfast, and two hours to rest and refresh themselves, and to *procure, dress, and eat their dinner*. Crop time, or any evident necessity, is excepted from these restrictions to labour.

A comparison of this allowance of food with that of ten of our English prisons, indiscriminately taken, shows that it is only about half the average, and, compared with six Irish prisons, little more than one-third. In Scotland, I am informed that an agricultural labourer is allowed seventeen pounds of oatmeal per week.

Working from five till seven would here be considered a day and a quarter, and would be so in actual working time, within twenty-two and a half minutes; and in crop time, such as are able to bear it must work fully one day and a half.

The law is not like an individual act of cruelty; it is the deliberate act of an assembly professing to improve the condition of the Slaves. We need not be told, that many of the masters give them more; this is stated in the petition of Antigua, and it is of itself the strongest condemnation of the act, and stamps the character of the community where such laws could be framed.

\* By a petition, presented to the House of Commons in last Session, the whole value of clothing appears to be about 15s. for every Slave.

Here we have men labouring for a day and a quarter, with scarcely half an allowance of food for one day, and yet these poor beings are not even allowed a blanket or a hat, unless they give up a suit of clothes for them.

It is generally said, that a man's own interest will induce him to do right. I admit this to be the case, when he is driven to it by *necessity*; but we have given the Sugar Planters a bounty to enable them to do wrong, and they will have need enough of it, so long as they pursue such a course as this. Remove this bounty, and bring in the competition of free labour, and these law-makers will soon understand their own interest better than to attempt to extract labour by the lash from such half-fed beings. We should then hear no more from *Mercator* of the advantage of importing Slaves.

Well may I feel a wish, that West Indian Slaveholders should not receive a bounty to enable them to neglect their own concerns; a neglect which brings disgrace on the country, whose laws, we are often told, have sanctioned the system. That it is a disgrace to every one of us, I shall not deny; but, then, it is every one's duty to endeavour to remove it.

I am glad that *Mercator* (no doubt, ignorant of the nature of what he was referring to) has mentioned the ancient state of Slavery, for it affords me the opportunity of giving some information upon this subject. By our ancient laws, "the English lord had the power of beating or correcting his villain; but it was a power which he could only exercise in person, and with his own hands; he could not delegate that important and dangerous authority."\* If this law was part of the system of our Colonial Slavery, the owner of Slaves must reside with them; there could, even then, be no driving, unless he himself was the driver.

\* 9 Coke's Reports 76 A.



If I were to stand by unconcerned, whilst only one man was murdered, giving no notice of the fact, I suppose I should be considered as an accomplice, and that no pleading of the fulness of my warehouses, or the urgency of my concerns, would save my life. Am I, then, when I call the attention of the country to a system which destroys the lives, or prevents the existence of hundreds of thousands of human beings; a system which, from being sanctioned by our laws and supported by our bounties, makes us all participators, and brings disgrace on us all; am I, then, to be insultingly told to attend to my own concerns? If this is not my own concern, I confess I do not know what is.

JAMES CROPPER.

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*To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.*

SIR,

IN my letter of the 22d instant, published in your paper of yesterday, I promised to resume the consideration of Mr. Cropper's publications, as well as to proceed in exposing his "mistatements and exaggerations," on the subjects of Sugar and Slavery. I shall now redeem that pledge.

Mr. Cropper has informed us, "that, with respect to the United States, in the last thirty years, they appear to have added 854,735 to their Slave Population by *natural increase and good management alone.*" This assertion led me to inquire into the fact, and, in doing so, I find the *official* returns from the different States are as follow :

OFFICIAL RETURN OF THE SLAVE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, TAKEN IN 1790, 1800, 1810, & 1820.

	1790.	1800.	1810.	1820.
Connecticut, &c. ....	3,886	1,339	418	145
New York.....	21,321	20,613	15,017	10,088
New Jersey .....	11,421	12,422	10,857	7,557
Pensylvania .....	3,733	1,706	791	211
Delaware .....	8,887	6,153	4,175	4,509
Maryland .....	103,037	107,707	111,507	107,398
Virginia.....	292,627	346,968	392,518	425,153
North Carolina.....	100,572	133,196	168,824	205,017
South Carolina.....	107,091	146,151	196,365	258,475
Georgia.....	29,264	59,699	105,218	149,656
Alabama .....	0	0	0	47,439
Mississippi .....	0	3,489	17,088	32,814
Louisiana .....	0	0	34,660	69,064
Tennessee.....	3,417	13,584	44,535	80,107
Kentucky .....	12,430	40,343	80,561	126,732
Missouri, &c. ....	0	3,379	8,835	19,323
Totals.....	697,686	896,749	1,191,369	1,543,688

By these it appears, that the *whole* increase in the Slave Population of the United States, produced by *importation* and *natural increase* together, in the thirty years, was 846,002, being above 8,000 less than Mr. Cropper's statement of increase from *natural causes alone*. But I shall now proceed to examine what proportion was obtained from each of those sources. By the official returns, we find that, in the States to the eastward and northward of Maryland, the Slave Population was annually decreasing; that in Maryland it was almost stationary; that in Virginia the increase was about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum; and that, as we proceed further south, where the climate and cultivation is so much more *unfavourable* for increase, we find that it *went on with most astonishing rapidity*.

I also find, from other documents, that, after 1776, no Slaves could be legally imported into Virginia, nor into North Carolina, after 1798; into Georgia, after 1802; South Carolina, New Orleans, &c., after 1808, when the act of the general Government for the abolition of the trade took effect; although Mr. Cropper, in his Letter to

his Liverpool Abolition Society, has stated, "that the abolition of the African trade was general in the United States, as the act of particular States, prior to 1792."

I believe it will be readily admitted, by all who were *practically* acquainted with the subject, that, for the first eighteen years of Mr. Cropper's thirty, there was a very large and regular importation of Slaves going forward into the Southern States, particularly into South Carolina, from 1802 to 1808; from whence, after the direct *legal* import ceased into Georgia and North Carolina, there was no difficulty in transferring them to those States. It is notorious that, during this period, the Southern States of America were the great markets for the sale of African cargoes, under British and various other flags, of which many individual instances from this port alone might be given;\* that there was a constant trade of this description going on from Cuba and the Bahama Islands, to the opposite coasts; that, during this period, above twenty considerable Bahama planters, whose names lie before me, removed their Negroes and settled in Carolina and Georgia, with the permission of the American Government; and that there was a great and constant importation going on for the whole of that period into New Orleans, from whence were supplied the States situated on the rivers that unite with the Mississippi, and fall into the sea there. And is it not well known to every planter in the Southern States, that indirect sources of Spanish supply have been resorted to, since the period for legal importation terminated?

By these official returns, we find, that the number of Slaves, in the States connected with New Orleans, was, in 1790, 15,847; that, in twenty years, (that is, in 1810,

\* I have a letter now before me, from Mr. Thomas Higham, dated Charleston, South Carolina, 28th January, 1806, to a gentleman in the Bahamas, which says, "At the present moment this market is overstocked, there being no less than seven or eight cargoes of Slaves on sale."

being two years after the legal importation ceased,) it had increased to 185,679! that, in ten years more, the number was 375,481! Does Mr. Cropper mean to say, that this was *natural* increase? Here we find 15,847 in thirty years grown up, beyond all precedent, to the prodigious number of 375,481! In Georgia, during the same period, 29,264 is increased to 149,656; in South and North Carolina, 207,663 is run up to 463,492. Thus, the aggregate of those States, which, in 1790, was 252,774, we find, in 1820, to be 988,629! If we take Virginia as a criterion, and it certainly is a most favourable one for Mr. Cropper, from its superior climate and cultivation, and from its Slave Population being chiefly Creole, it is evident, that, in 1820, the natural increase would have been from 252,774 to about 367,000, in place of 988,629. Surely Mr. Cropper will not contend, that it could be more; indeed, in granting this much, it is more than probable, that, under all the comparative circumstances and disadvantages attending the introduction and settling of new Negroes, I grant too much, by at least half the number, or above 50,000. But, admitting it for argument alone, here we find at once, that 620,000 of Mr. Cropper's 854,000 could only have been provided by *importation* to those States, either direct from Africa, or indirectly from other quarters, independent of illicit supply since 1808, instead of being the fruits of "*natural increase and good management alone*," as he has thought proper to represent it, as well as to reproach me with ignorant presumption because I was not disposed to credit his assertions. Whether this is not another instance of "gross misstatement and exaggeration," I leave to others to determine: but, in my turn, I inquire of Mr. Cropper, whether I am to impute such a statement to "wilful misrepresentation," or "to a want of knowledge of the subject," leaving it with him to make his election.

The next prominent feature which I shall notice in Mr. Cropper's "exaggerated statements" is the apology he puts forward for his attempting to deal with this complicated subject, of which, having never been in the West Indies or America, he has no practical knowledge or experience. To clothe himself, however, as an authority deserving of credit, he asserts his acquaintance, *by reading*, with colonial law, and gives us, as a specimen, what he says is an extract from an act passed in the Bahama Islands in 1784, and which, he tells us, directs "that the Slave should be executed first, and the necessity that led to his crime inquired into afterwards." Where he finds either the act, the clause, or the construction, I know not; perhaps he will deign to inform us. But I have got the Bahama Acts before me, regularly indexed, bound, and folioed. They belonged to the late Speaker of the House there, and, looking through them, I can find no such act. In 1784, the islands had just been ceded to Great Britain, and only *two* acts were passed in that year. But, if such an act as that mentioned by Mr. Cropper had existed, it would have been repealed in 1796, when I find an act was passed to consolidate and bring into one the several laws relating to Slaves. I must conclude, however, that it did not suit Mr. Cropper to refer to the consolidation act; for, since he lays so much stress on his acquaintance with colonial laws, I must suppose that it could not escape his attention. This act regulates and directs the weekly provision to be given to each Negro, which is as follows: namely, a peck of unground Indian corn; or, twenty-one pints wheat flour; or, seven quarts rice; or, fifty-six pounds of potatoes: children, under ten years, are allowed one-half; over and above a sufficient quantity of land for the proper ground of every Slave. Another section directs two suits of clothing to be provided annually for each, enacting a penalty of £50 for

every omission; a third, that suitable provision is to be made for instructing the Slaves in the Christian religion, and, when fit, for their baptism. Another authorizes the magistrates to give freedom to any mutilated Slave, and to fine the party offending £100. Another further subjects any person who may cruelly beat, whip, &c. any Slave to be punished by fine and imprisonment. Another alters the mode of trial for offences to trial by jury, from which jury the proprietor of the estate to which the Slave belonged, and his attorney, overseer, manager, &c., are excluded. The 56th section gives justices power to respite the sentence, in case proper cause shall appear to them for so doing, or the *jury* shall recommend the prisoner to mercy, until the sentiments of the governor shall be known. The 65th section enacts, that in all cases where any Slave shall receive sentence of death or transportation, the *jury* shall appraise and value such Slave, and the justices shall certify such valuation, provided always that such shall not, in any case, exceed £60; and provided also, if it shall appear, that the owner or possessor of such Slave hath treated him or her with inhumanity, or that necessity or hard usage might have driven such Slave to the commission of the offence of which he or she shall have been convicted, that then, and in such case, no valuation shall be made, and the owner shall not be entitled to receive any allowance whatever from the public.

This clause, from an act passed in 1796, seems to bear *some* resemblance to Mr. Cropper's quotation; but the object of it is evidently a humane one, and intended for the benefit of the Slave, in so far, that if, on inquiry by the *jury*, the conduct of the master is found to have, in any way, led the Slave to commit the offence for which he was tried, his master would not only be deprived of his remuneration, but the fact so reported by the *jury* would give the Slave the benefit of the 56th

section, which I have recited. This clause likewise provides, that the same jury which tries the Slave, when required, tries the master also.

If Mr. Cropper had known any thing of the Bahama planters, their habits and character, he would not have rashly ventured to bring so base and unfounded a charge against them. I hesitate not to say, that there is not any where a more humane or respectable body of individuals. Anecdotes of their conduct towards their Slaves might be mentioned; anecdotes which reflect great credit and honour on the feelings of the masters, and show an attachment on the part of the people to their masters not less creditable to them. From 1789 to 1815, four instances only are to be found of Slaves being executed in those islands; of these, three were for murder, namely, two of Slaves and one of a coloured man; the fourth for housebreaking. So much for this gross mistatement of Mr. Cropper's.

There still remain several other topics put forward by this gentleman which I ought to dispose of. It is not, however, necessary for me to enter into an examination of the charges he has brought against the Planters in Jamaica and the other islands for the treatment of their Slaves; nor into the relative increase in the state of the population; though it is well known, that the number of males in our Colonies greatly exceeds that of the females, whilst in the United States they are about equal. These subjects have been most ably handled, and the charges *refuted*, in various publications, which, if Mr. Cropper will take the trouble of reading, he would, I think, find the statements and explanations such as would remove, from any unprejudiced mind, the delusive apprehensions under which he labours. I would particularly refer him, as concerns Jamaica, to the pamphlets lately published by the Right Hon. Sir George Rose, and by the Rev.

Mr. Brydges, of that island, with the facts they state and the documents they contain; and, as relative to Barbados, to the speech of Mr. Hamden, delivered in and published by order of the Council of that island. If he will be influenced by such respectable and high authorities, instead of unfairly resorting to obsolete laws, long since repealed, if they ever existed; instead of giving himself up to the guidance of unfounded or exaggerated reports made by hired emissaries, whose objects seem to have been to revolutionize the Colonies, in place of promoting their *professed* object, religious instruction among the people, I will not yet despair of his conversion to a more liberal course of thinking, and to a more upright and candid line of public conduct.

As far as respects the habits of the Slaves, the regulation of their labour, and their general treatment in Jamaica, Mr. Cropper has been completely answered by *Vindex*,\* in the Liverpool Advertiser of last Tuesday; but, though his able observations may also apply to many of the other islands, they do not extend to the Colonies of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice. There, night labour of the Slaves is now unknown. Even on Sugar estates, the grinding ceases at sunset; and the boilers, the only parties that remain longer, finish cleaning up before nine o'clock. Their general food, (besides salt fish, and occasionally salted provisions,) the plantain, preferred by them to all other, is cultivated in the ordinary daily work of each estate, or purchased when deficient; and they are supplied with more than they do or can consume. They are well provided with clothing, suitable for the climate and their situation. They have the Sabbath and their other holydays to dispose of, for the purposes of religion, if so inclined.

\* See APPENDIX B.



They have ample spare time on their working days for attending to the raising of their pigs and stock for sale and for cultivating their small gardens. Branding was never authorized or practised in Demerara. The Slave, when guilty of crime, is tried in the same manner as his master. No driver or overseer can punish beyond six lashes for any offence. Connexion by marriage is encouraged, and its lawful fruits of increase rewarded. Families cannot be separated, but, when disposed of, must be sold together. In case of sickness, able medical aid is provided; and in old age, when invalided, every comfort is afforded and continued. Their dwellings are roomy and commodious; their labour regulated and moderate. Manumissions are frequent; they are regulated by law; and the Slave is protected in the possession of any property he may acquire by his extra labour. In short, when we compare their situation with that of the peasantry generally, in this or any other country, much less with the miserable and degraded beings of Hindostan, whom Mr. Cropper calls "free labourers," and change the term *slave* to that of *servant*, it will be found, that they possess serious and important advantages over them; and that, whilst left to their masters and to themselves, before they were broken in upon by the fury of emancipators, and the dangerous doctrines of their misguided agents, they were a contented and happy people. I do not mean to say, that some exceptions are not to be found to this representation; for it is too well known, that there is no state of society of which worthless and wicked individuals do not form a part; individuals who will play the petty tyrant, and abuse power, when placed in their hands, and from which neither the radical reformers here, whatever hat or coat they may wear, or those in the West Indies are exempt; but with this difference, that there, when such men are guilty of using abusive language, or mal-

treating their people, the laws hold them liable for their conduct, and punish them accordingly.

As what I have written must necessarily occupy a considerable space in your columns, and as I have still much matter of Mr. Cropper's to dispose of, I shall reserve it for the subject of another letter: indeed, I have now been drawn out to greater length than I had contemplated; but I shall not, on that account, cease to follow him in his *turnings* and *windings*, or leave any part that merits observation or correction unnoticed.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, November 27, 1823.*

P.S.—Since writing this letter, I have read one from Mr. Cropper, in the Mercury of to-day, in which he is pleased to say, that “there is nothing in *Mercator's* last letter of itself deserving any reply;” thus compromising his past conduct by admitting the truth of the charges exhibited against him and his writings. But there is, in this letter, an affectation of candour and moderation which cannot be allowed by me to pass for sterling, nor, I am satisfied, will it by the public. He must not be permitted, in this way, to escape from the toils which he has so industriously woven for himself. But, as he has again endeavoured to divert our attention from the past, by bringing forward new matter, that shall also be investigated and discussed hereafter, that is, as soon as my time will permit, unless it should, in the mean time, be taken up by some one abler and more competent.

M.

*November 28.*

To the *EDITORS* of the *LIVERPOOL MERCURY*.

GENTLEMEN,

FEELING an unshaken confidence that the foundation of the cause in which I am engaged stands sure, I am undismayed at the increase of my opponents. If these attacks on my motives would have no tendency to retard the progress of the great cause, I should wholly disregard them; but, believing that the intention of their authors is not really directed against me, but against that cause, it is my duty to do what I can to disappoint them.

If the acquisition of wealth had been my object, it would have been most extraordinary to have given up the most lucrative part of my business to acquire it in this thorny path; in which, if I had no higher motive, I should deserve to lose my reputation. Surely if that had been my motive, it would have been easier to have joined *Mercator* in the attempt to increase the bounty on the export of Sugar, which must have added to its price, whether from the East or West Indies.

Slavery has, indeed, long existed; and it may be said, why was this particular time chosen to attack it? I do not know that I can better answer this, than by giving an extract of a letter I lately addressed to the Anti-slavery Society in London.

“ Full thirty years ago, when reading Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*, I was much interested in his remarks on the comparative cheapness of free labour, and of its effects in producing a change in the condition of the people in Europe. I then concluded this would, at some time, be the means of bringing about the freedom of the Slaves in the British Colonies, though I did not then see the way in which it was to operate. When the East India trade was opened, and I became acquainted with the

productions and capabilities of India, I at once saw that the great experiment of free and slave labour was about to be tried. When the Slave-holders began to take the alarm, and to seek for farther protection, then it was that, in the course of my business, I saw that hideous monster, Slavery, gasping, as it were, in the agonies of death, seeking for that support which could alone continue its existence. What was then my choice? Either to endeavour to do all I could to open the eyes of others to see what I saw, and to join in the destruction of this monster, or to remain under the agonizing feelings of self condemnation. I could not suffer the fear of reproaches, on account of being interested, to get the better of the paramount feelings of humanity and duty. I durst not encounter the reproaches of my own conscience, for not having done all I could to rescue 700,000 of my fellow-beings from the dreadful state in which they were held by the contributions of the people of England.

“ If this means (urging the impolicy of Slavery) should be rejected, it would appear to me so extraordinary, that I have been endeavouring to find some similar case; but as I believe such an one never existed, I can only imagine one, by supposing that the society formed for the improvement of prison discipline had found, that all its efforts for the improvement of this class of our fellow-creatures was rendered unavailing, by the temptation held out for stealing, by a bounty paid upon all stolen goods, and a prohibitory or high duty laid on all that were honestly come by. What would, in such a case, have been the conduct of that society? Would it have continued, without remonstrance, to contribute towards this bounty? Equally extraordinary would be the conduct of the Anti-slavery Society, if it should refuse to take up the impolicy of Slavery. But, if it is to be done, who is to do it? Am I, as an individual, to do it, and expose myself to all the abuse that would be poured upon me? Most willingly I agree to that, if good would be the result! But how is the Anti-slavery Society to act, if I go into the front of the battle?”

From the preceding, it will be seen, that I have not rushed into this contest without anticipating what has followed. I considered that it might go pretty quietly on whilst we only looked to *amelioration laws* for the improvement of the state of Slavery. Delays and alarms, and at last some professions of improvement,

and the making of some *inefficient laws*, might put the country to rest; until, perhaps, after twenty years more, we might hear that Slavery still remained in the same unaltered state, when all hopes of good from any further exertion would have vanished. In this course we might have been suffered to go on pretty quietly. But show the people its impolicy, and show them (if they are sincere in the cause) the necessity of taking away the support they are now giving to it, and without which it cannot long exist;—let us touch this point, and *we touch the very life of the system*, and are at once surrounded by a swarm of assailants.

To attack vice in its low and vulgar recesses is an easy and often a popular task; but when some of the worst of crimes; nay, when crimes, vice, and misery, perhaps exceeding all the rest put together; when 700,000 to 800,000 innocent human beings, charged with no crime, are held in darkness and ignorance, and in the most oppressive and degrading bondage; when those, more immediately connected with the system, are living in the first ranks of society; when it is sanctioned by laws, and the country at large contributing by bounties to its support;—whoever attacks such a deep-rooted evil must not expect an easy path; he must expect to be assailed with the greatest violence.

Then, as to the dealing or using the produce of slave-labour: though I venerate those who have thought it their duty to keep clear of it, yet we must take the thing as it now is, and adopt the most direct, rational, and effectual means of extirpating the evil. When first the produce of slave labour was presented, if it had been then rejected, and its cultivators compelled to restore the first victims of that guilty commerce to their native shores of Africa, in that state of things this would have been the right course; but to send the descendants of these early victims back to Africa would now, and

especially in the present state of the Coast, be no less cruel than the act by which their predecessors were originally torn from it. And slave produce has now so interwoven itself with the wants and employment of the people of this country, and with those of the Slaves themselves, that this state must be tolerated until these poor beings are fitted for their freedom; but no expediency can justify their being held in Slavery one hour beyond it.

Do these writers, who reproach me for having dealt in the produce of slave labour, mean to propose the disuse of such produce as the best means for the extinction of Slavery? Or do they, on the contrary, think that, by showing how every member of the community is more or less implicated, they shall weaken the hands of the abolitionists, and thereby render this odious state perpetual? These writers profess not to be the advocates of Slavery, or, not in the abstract. If, then, they intend this as a means of doing it away, their proposition and mine shall be examined. The immediate disuse of slave produce would put out of employment hundreds of thousands of people in this country, and would, more or less, put to inconvenience almost every member of the community; whilst to the Slaves it would be far more injurious than the most unprepared and immediate emancipation.

My plan, on the contrary, by introducing the unrestricted competition of free labour, by the removal of bounties, would at once compel the Planters to adopt the best systems of management. Instead of lessening, it would greatly increase employment, by the opening of new sources of commerce, and supply the people with Sugar, in the first place, considerably cheaper, and at prices further reduced as improvements were made in its culture, and its consumption extended. If a part of these pecuniary advantages were given to the

Planters, as a remuneration for losses which, I believe, are only imaginary, still the country would be greatly the gainer, by the vast extension of its commerce. Between two such alternatives, what rational man would hesitate?

The object of the paper on the "Impolicy of Slavery" was to show, that cruelty and oppression were a great expense, and that, if they were not supported and protected by bounties and prohibitions, they would be ameliorated, and the country be supplied with Sugar at a cheaper rate, and also have a great extension of its commerce.

We have given, in "Negro Slavery," such an account of the treatment of the Slaves as would make the serious inquirer ready to exclaim, "Under such an oppression as this, you would, in a few centuries, depopulate the world; I cannot believe in its existence, unless you prove it by its effects." We then present him with the appalling picture of the waste of human life, which, though an indisputable corroboration, our opponents still attempt to deny our facts. But what will they say to the Leeward Island laws, about food and labour? These they cannot deny; and, as human beings are considered property, a waste of human life is a waste of property; hence it follows, that, so long as this waste continues, the Planters cannot afford their Sugar so low as if their Slaves were treated better.

Neither *Mercator* nor *Vindex* can deny, that, if the bounties and prohibitions were removed, and we were allowed to go to the best market, we might be supplied with Sugar much cheaper.

*Mercator's* third letter will give me little trouble. What I have already said is a full answer to all he says respecting Sugar, as connected with this subject; but he wanders into the claims of the West Indians to protection. That is no part of our question, which is

merely the impolicy of those protections. And it is curious to see the advocates of an increased duty on East India Sugar, who at one time contended that a difference of 10s. per cwt. in duty was not a sufficient protection, now, on the contrary, contending, that Sugar cannot be produced cheaply in the East. If they believed in their own statement, no protection could be necessary.

In my letter to W. Wilberforce, I stated, that "in the year 1798 the average cost of the Company's importation (of Sugar) on board was 19s. per. cwt., *though at present it is much higher*; but from the recent great alteration in the exchange, Sugar, bought at the same price in rupees, would probably not cost more than 16s. 6d. per cwt. on board." Now, by garbling this plain statement, *Mercator* wishes to make his readers suppose, that I had stated Sugars would only then cost 16s. 6d. per cwt. on board, though my assertion in the same sentence is directly the contrary. He then adds, "If such a representation is not exaggeration and mistatement, to call it nothing worse, I know not the meaning of the words." Here the writer is caught. He thought he had left himself a hole to creep out. His words are, "If such a representation is not," &c. &c.; but he knew very well I had never made such representations, and therefore he intended, no doubt, to say, that, in his haste, he had misunderstood my meaning.

In my letter, inserted in the *Liverpool Mercury* of the 21st ult., I said, that "If the giving to Slaves their freedom before they were fit for it would do them an injury, (and I have always considered that it would,) then the rejection of the produce of their labour would have the same effect." *Mercator*, in reply to this sentence, says, "I must grant that his object, in making the *unexpected* admission, seems like an attempt to qualify



his past conduct as an agent for the sale of the produce of slave labour, and is, therefore, a little suspicious." By this, it is evident, he meant to *insinuate*, though it might seem as if, knowing the contrary, he would act with the caution he had just before evinced, and not directly say, that this sentiment of mine was new, and now *unexpectedly* avowed for a base purpose. What will be the reader's surprise to find, that, in that same letter to which he had just referred, I have said, "Though I might respect the feelings of the man who should at once emancipate his Slaves, yet how much more deserving of esteem would he be, whose feelings were governed by judgment, and who held them in Slavery until he had so prepared them as to make emancipation a benefit?" I leave such conduct, as I have in these two cases shown, to be its own commentary.

I think *Mercator* will have hard work in the two points he has next chalked out for himself; that is to say, to disprove or prove exaggeration in my statement of the waste of life in the British islands, or to say any thing in reply to the new matter—that is to say, the law by which men are to be hanged for offences which their masters' cruelty has compelled them to commit. What can he say to this, unless *Vindex*, with his silver brand, proves that these men are hanged with a golden chain?

I scarcely know whether ridicule can be allowed in so serious a case: the mention of such a palliation of an act which compels a poor creature to bear about him, in indelible characters, the marks of his own degraded condition, has, I trust, ere this, covered the mind of its author with deep and lasting regret.

With respect to *Vindex*, it would be better and more manly, when he makes charges and assertions on his own authority, if he would tell us who *Vindex* is. I am the more desirous that those who write in vindica-

tion of this system should give their names; for, with the knowledge which is now abroad on the subject of Slavery, I believe it is very near its end, and *Vindex* and *Mercator*, whatever they may profess, would, in the estimation of mankind, have a distinguished post amongst its last advocates.

He does, however, give us one authority, that of G. W. Bridges, who, it seems, is a clergyman in the parish of Manchester, Jamaica, and says he has married 187 couple of Slaves in the last two years. I shall not have much trouble with him, for a reply has already been given in the Appendix to the Substance of the Debates on this subject in last session, page 246.

“ On looking, however, at the return recently laid on the table of the House of Commons, from Jamaica, of ‘ Marriages legally solemnized between Slaves, since 1st January, 1808,’ down to 1822, inclusive, we find (page 130) that, in the parish of Manchester, not a single such marriage was celebrated prior to 1820. In 1820, five marriages took place; in 1821, three; and, in 1822, none. Mr. Bridges must have written his ‘ Voice’ in April or May, 1823. The expression, ‘ Within the last two years,’ could, therefore, have extended no farther back than the beginning of 1821. But the official return of marriages from the beginning of 1821 to the 17th March, 1823, is only three. What may have been ‘ the active labours’ of the clergy’ in the other parishes we have no means of knowing; but we do know, that most of their labours had been crowned with much the same success as attended those of Mr. Bridges, prior to the appearance of Mr. Wilberforce’s Appeal. He was, himself, Rector of St. Dorothy’s before he removed to Manchester; but, during his incumbency, not a single marriage appears to have taken place. Before 1820, no marriage of Slaves had occurred in that parish, and from 1820 only *three*.”

This being a subject on which this gentleman ought to be best of all informed, we shall not expect to hear much more of his statements.

JAMES CROPPER.

To the *EDITOR* of the *LIVERPOOL COURIER*.

SIR,

I RESUME the consideration of Mr. Cropper's publications. In most of them he has laboured to convince himself, and, thinking he has succeeded, imagines his readers must be equally satisfied, that the more the value of the produce of labour is diminished, the less labour will be performed; and he thence concludes, that the more the value of West India produce is reduced, the lighter will be the labour of the Slave, and the less his value to the owner, until, at last, becoming of no value whatever, his freedom will be given to him. However correct this hypothesis may appear in the abstract, such doctrines are not illustrated or confirmed by practical experience. The object for which man labours is to obtain the means for sustaining life, and, if possible, of procuring its comforts. If the labourer can obtain sufficient remuneration to answer these purposes by working eight hours in the day, he will not work longer; but, if the rate of his wages be reduced, he will, to enable him to procure that to which he has been accustomed, labour ten, twelve, or more hours to make up the deficiency. This Mr. Cropper will find to be confirmed by the practice of every operative manufacturer in this county, and is in the teeth of his proposition. But, if he goes (as, I hope, he may *now* be induced to go) to the West Indies, he will find, that there his principle has no effect either way; that the labour of the Slaves is regulated by more humane and higher motives; and that the price of the produce of their labour causes no change in its extent, which is the same in good as in bad

years, although the means of the master must, in the latter case, be diminished.

Another favourite point with this gentleman is, the presumed higher value of free labour, as contrasted with slave labour. He has been repeatedly told, such are the natural dispositions of the Negro race, when left to themselves, in a tropical climate, that they will not labour in the field, if they can by any means avoid it; but that, on the contrary, whenever they have possessed the power, they have preferred to procure the means of support in any other way, however wrong or worthless. He speaks of their habits in the middle States of America; but, if I were inclined to admit his statements as correct, which I am by no means disposed to do, I find no parallel there. The climate is altogether different in those States. White people work in the field without inconvenience. In the West Indies, on the contrary, they are incapable of doing so. There the Negro is not under the same degree of lassitude which is experienced by all when exposed to the sun within the tropics. Mr. Cropper again forces upon us, as evidence, a report of the results of what was called Mr. Steele's copyhold system in Barbados. In support of his assertions, he resorts to the Edinburgh Review, and quotes Mr. A. Hodgson, of this place, who was never, I believe, in the West Indies. With the impressions derived from such authorities, he tells us, "that by his (Mr. Steele's) system he stopped the gradual decrease in the number of his Slaves; and, after following it for only the short space of four years and three months, he tripled the annual net produce of his estate." Now it happens, that I have in my possession a written statement, made, a few days ago, by a most respectable Barbados Planter, (which I have left with the Publisher of the Courier,) in consequence of reading Mr. Cropper's

unfounded statements in the Mercury, of which the following is a copy :

“ Mr. Joshua Steele superintended the management of his estates, under what was called the copyhold system, from the year 1780 to 1797. In that time the Slaves decreased from 262 to 240, whilst there was a general natural increase going on upon the neighbouring estates; and during that period the produce of his estates was at the ratio of one-third less than those adjoining.

“ Mr. Bell was living on the estate when Mr. Steele died, and succeeded him in the management, as attorney for the heirs. He continued to do so for fourteen years, when he died. At the expiration of this period, there was a farther decrease of thirteen Slaves; and the produce of the estate, in spite of his *superior* management, was, on an average, about one-fourth less than that of the neighbouring ones.

“ I lived with Mr. Bell, and can vouch for these facts, which I simply mention in answer to those who ignorantly state, that the copyhold system was attended with profit and an increase of the people. Mr. Steele was a well-meaning good man; but, for some time before his death, his affairs became so involved, that his credit was gone, and his estate deep in debt.

“ Suits in Chancery were afterwards commenced against the estate, when the system was abandoned altogether. I had a small Sugar estate within three miles of those that were Mr. Steele's, on which there was an increase on the Slave Population, from natural causes alone, of from 65 to 102, between the years 1797 and 1816.

“ The usual weekly allowance given to Slaves, in the Island of Barbados, is thirty-six pounds of yams or potatoes, (commonly called ground provisions,) one pound of salt, one and a half pounds salted cod fish, two pints of molasses, and three gills of rum; one pint of warm ginger tea every morning before going to labour; and a dressed meal of vegetables, pulse, and meat every day at one o'clock. Every woman, on the birth of her child, is allowed seven pounds of ground provisions extra weekly, and until the child is able to eat and walk, from which age to fourteen all the children have three dressed meals provided for them daily, tables and benches being made suitable for their sizes, that they may partake of it comfortably.

“ In 1820 I was in America, at Saratoga Springs, where I met with several Planters from the Southern States, particularly Georgia and South Carolina, who told me they never would admit of a registry act there, because they could always get supplied with Slaves, by importation from Cuba and other sources, when they wanted them, and were then, in fact, receiving such supplies.”

This gentleman lived for *several* years on the estate in question, and afterwards resided on one of his own near to it. Your readers will compare the two statements, and form their own conclusions. Mr. Cropper speaks of other instances of the *advantages of free labour in the West Indies*; but, as it is only in his *loose, dashing* way, without naming any in particular, it is impossible to notice them. He must know, or must have heard of, the general indolent habits of manumitted Slaves. He sees in St. Domingo the frightful fruits of emancipation. There the population, in less than thirty years of *freedom*, is reduced to about one-third of what it previously was. None labour, but from the most urgent necessity, and that is almost wholly confined to gathering coffee. Practical religion they have none; and moral principle, or obligation, seems to be almost banished from among them.

Mr. Cropper, in his writings published last spring, credulously affected to smile at the idea of insurrection in any of our Colonies. He quoted all that had passed in the United States and the Island of Cuba, as instances of safety; and thence inferred, that his experiments might be made with impunity. Did he not know, or did he not chuse to recollect, that, in the States of the American Union, the proportion of the free population to the Slaves is as eight to one? That in Cuba it is three to one? Whilst in our islands it is near ten Slaves to one free person on the average, and in Demerara fully twenty to one? So different is the relative

state of society in the United States from that in the British Colonies. But, notwithstanding the Americans enjoyed such means of security, I am informed, that considerable alarm has been felt in the Southern States, since Mr. Cropper's publications have been circulated among the Slaves there. I hope, however, that the awful warning which has been given, in Demerara, to the propagators of such pernicious principles will remove all scepticism even from his mind.

This gentleman has taken great pains to persuade the public, that the Negroes, in the British Colonies, are hard worked and worse fed. The first charge has been completely and repeatedly disproved. In support of the second, he tells us, in his last letter, that he had read the *Leeward Island* amelioration law passed in 1798; that he had prepared, but postponed publishing, something connected with it; that he was *glad* he had done so, for he had now discovered, by *this law*, that the Slaves were most miserably fed. I wish him joy of his *pleasure!* But where he found such a law, or by what authority it existed, I know not. Each island, or colony, has its legislature, and regulates its own concerns; and, I believe, no two are regulated in the same manner. In my last, I stated the legal provision made for the Slaves in the Bahamas; and in the above letter will be found that of Barbados. I do not hesitate to say, that the provision, in either case, is more than sufficient. It is well known, that, within the tropics, a human being consumes less strong or animal food than in cold climates; that he lives more on vegetable substances and liquids; that he stimulates his appetite with hot peppers, which nature has there provided in abundance; that he is not capable of performing the same labour that he would go through in a colder climate; and that, in consequence, the daily work of a Negro, in the West Indies, is considered not to equal two-thirds of what is performed by a common labourer

here. The ordinary period for work is from sunrise to sunset: from two to three hours are allowed for rest, breakfast, and dinner, leaving nine to ten for work; certainly a shorter period than the average for labour in England.

Mr. Cropper sneers at the idea of a West India Planter residing in England, and being a member of the Bible Society, or active in promoting the circulation of the Sacred Volume. This sneer ill becomes one who wears the garb of humility. But may not a man be a West India Planter, and yet be honestly anxious to instruct his people in the truths of Christianity, as necessary to their happiness and comfort both here and hereafter? And do we not find, in the Scriptures, the highest authority for their adopting such a course under similar circumstances? He chuses to express his surprise, that I should wish to promote the improvement and to better the condition of the Slaves, after having stated, that the chief ringleaders in the Demerara insurrection were from estates where they had received most indulgence. But his wonder will cease, when I tell him, that one of the consequences of such indulgence, and what I must term its abuse, was a frequent intercourse with the emancipating emissaries, Smith, Elliot, and their agents, who, under the pretence of giving religious instruction, corrupted and inflamed their minds with the doctrines of emancipation, and of the necessity of their taking the means for obtaining it into their own hands. I would have the Negroes to receive the benefits of religious instruction, but from pure sources, not such as the emancipators here have hitherto forced upon the Planters; a course which, I trust, the Government will now put an end to, having seen the danger with which it is pregnant.

After a fortnight's cogitation, Mr. Cropper has produced the two last paragraphs of his letter in the Mercury of the 28th ult. The fable of the mountain



in labour might well be applied to them. The miserable expedients to which he resorts seem to make his conduct rather matter for compassion than subject for argument. Indeed, on the subjects of Sugar and Slavery, he seems to act and write like a man almost beside himself, giving credit to and adopting every silly tale that is told, however unfounded or unsupported by evidence, provided it is to the prejudice of the West Indians or their friends. I would ask, what has the ancient practice which connected the lord of the soil with the villein of England to do with my observation, "that Slavery had prevailed in the world from the earliest ages?" The insinuation and the censure meant to be conveyed against the West India Proprietors living here are evident, though he has not manliness enough openly to avow them. But, even then, where is the analogy? Does our country gentleman attend his labourers to the field, or is it necessary he should do so? Does he not intrust this duty to others in whom he confides? And why may not the West India Planter do so likewise? It is his interest, as it is his duty, to know that every degree of justice is done and protection afforded to his people. Then why does Mr. Cropper, in his last paragraph, attempt to justify his improper interference with the private property and concerns of the Planters, by such a horrifying illustration, as that they ought not to stand by and see a man murdered? Were any person to do so, he ought to be taken into custody as an accomplice in the crime. But where, I ask, is the aptitude of the illustration? Does Mr. Cropper mean to say, that the West Indian Planters murder their Slaves, and that, therefore, his interference is necessary? If so, I must set him down as deranged indeed. It is an insinuation as absurd as it is false, and unfit for serious discussion. On the other hand, I do not hesitate to say, that the waste of life which attended the insurrection in Demerara may, with great justice

and truth, be imputed to the doctrines so industriously circulated among the Slaves by the agents of the emancipators, among whom Mr. Cropper stands so prominent, and to the excitement, irritation, and impatience thus produced in their minds. Nor can I suppress my indignation, or sufficiently express my astonishment, at the following passage in Mr. Cropper's first letter. He says, "their laws (the colonial) we can understand as well here as there. I will just give a sketch of one of them," (that quoted as of the Bahamas, and discussed in my last letter,) "as it may throw some light on the yet mysterious business of the Demerara insurrection, where there has been so great a waste of Negro life and so little of the Whites." I ask him what he means by so horrid an insinuation? Is this the evidence of his benevolent and Christian disposition? Does he mean to regret, that more Whites were not murdered in cold-blood, or fell in the field? It is said, that even the emissary Smith, when he is reported to have administered the sacrament to the ringleaders the evening before, recommended that they should be sparing in the effusion of blood! I ask, is it disappointment Mr. Cropper feels, that the insurgents should not have been better provided with fire-arms and other offensive weapons, or more perfect in the use of them? Is he not aware, that the first measure adopted by the Governor was to ride up, unarmed, to the insurgents, attended only by the gentlemen of his suite, offering to redress their grievances, if they had any to complain of, and recommending to them to return peaceably to their homes, when, in return, he was fired on? Does he not know, that Colonel Leahy, commanding the troops, afterwards made another similar effort, and was in parley with them, to no purpose, for an hour and a half, before he was forced to attack them? If he does not, he ought to know, that the claims they advanced were nothing short of immediate emancipation, and that, when called

upon, they admitted that they had no grievances to complain of? Where, then, is the "mystery" of which Mr. Cropper ventures to complain?

In the course of this gentleman's writings, he occasionally hints at indemnity to the Planter; but he deals so much in generalities, and treats the subject so obscurely, that one would suppose he was afraid to trust himself with the discussion of its justice, lest it should impede his way or influence his conscience. He, therefore, arrives at no clear explanation of his meaning. But on this subject I, at least, will assist him with my views of it. I consider the title of the West India Planters to their property in their Slaves to be as strong and valid as the law of the land can make it; and that if, for any purpose whatever, the public should interfere with, injure, or take their property from them, they are bound to make *full* compensation, as is the practice in every other case of interference with private property for a public purpose. To admit the principle of requiring any higher title than that which the law recognises, would be to strike at the root of all property throughout the kingdom. *In the question of compensation, the Slave is no party; that is between the proprietor and the Legislature only.* The law must, at least, be binding on those that made it; but it is not for either party to fix the value: *that*, as in all similar cases, ought to be done by a jury, not of emancipators, but of honourable, unprejudiced, disinterested men, and such, I trust, when wanted, will be readily found. The Slaves in Demerara admitted, that they had no grievances to complain of: that fact will be certified by the Governor and others in authority there. They avowed, that their only motive for insurrection was immediate freedom, which had been so much discussed here, and industriously promulgated there. I do contend, therefore, that the loss which has been suffered by the insurrection should, and must, be made good by the public here.

They occasioned it, they inflicted the wrong, and are, in justice, bound to make reparation for it. It is beyond all doubt, that Slavery was, in the first instance, encouraged and protected by the Government or the people of this country for their own benefit, and that the Colonies were invited to receive their supplies through their medium. If Slavery, then, be a moral crime, it must be expiated by those with whom it originated. They must pay the penalty, and not attempt to avoid doing what is in itself just, by the commission of another crime; I mean, a breach of faith. Let Mr. Cropper disprove the truth of these doctrines or the justice of these principles, if he can; if not, let him and his party, or association, candidly and honestly, as well as *unequivocally*, come forward to admit their truth. Let them make the only reparation now in their power, by becoming the advocates of both.

Mr. Cropper will probably attempt to tell me, that the Slave Population, in the United States, has been kept down by frequent manumissions. In reply I will tell him, that the manumissions in the British Colonies are also frequent. I have reason to believe, that the waste of Negro life on the Sugar plantations in the State of New Orleans is on a scale unknown in our Colonies. Is he aware, that no manumission can take place in Georgia, Carolina, or Louisiana, without a special act of their Legislatures? I have been told of an instance which occurred in New Orleans, where the owner of a Slave, wishing to give him his freedom, had, to enable him to do so, to send the Slave to a friend in another State 1,400 miles distant. Does Mr. Cropper not know, that, by the census of 1820, the whole free coloured population of the United States amounted only to 236,000, although so many years have elapsed since Slaves were first introduced there, and the progeny of those manumitted annually increasing? I have under-

stood, that several of the States' Governments are much at a loss what to do with their manumitted Slaves: few will work, and they are not now content to be shipped off for Africa as before; in consequence, many become burdens to the community that has to support them.

So much for the systems and good management of the United States, *which Mr. Cropper has held up to us as a precedent to follow.* One word more on the comparative state of and increase in the Slave Population of that country and our Colonies.

By the Slave Registrar's Triennial Report, for the Colony of Demerara, made up to the 1st of September last, and since published, it appears, that there then remained, in that Colony, of African males, 16,258; of African females, 9,745; of Creole males, 14,742; of Creole females, 15,638: but of the Creole population a very large proportion is under twenty years of age, and of the African Negroes many are far advanced in years. Thus there is, for the purposes of natural increase, in that Colony, an unproductive number of 5,513 African males; and it is well known, that, on the part of the imported Africans, there was a dislike to marriage, or restricted intercourse between the sexes: consequently, the proportion of increase from them has been much less than from their Creole descendants, *of which, be it remembered, the Slave Population in Virginia and the other middle and Eastern States almost wholly consists.* In the three years preceding the 1st of September last, there were born, in Demerara, 1,735 males and 1,791 females; whilst the deaths, of which a large proportion were old Africans, were 5,201, showing a decrease of 1,675 in three years, from which ought to be deducted the manumitted Slaves, but, not knowing their number, I am unable to do so. Taking the whole 1,675, the annual decrease is very near to one per cent.; but, if the Creole population (where the

sexes are equal) is taken *separately*, there will be found a *considerable increase*, which is well ascertained by the returns from those estates where the people are known to be chiefly of that description.

As the old Africans die, in the course of nature, the proportions of the sexes to each other will be more and more equalized, and when the period arrives that they become equal, *as they now are in the United States*, we may confidently expect the increase, "from natural causes and good management alone," will be found, at least, as great, if not larger than the United States (though so much boasted of by Mr. Cropper) have yet exhibited.

I have now, I think, examined and reviewed all the *prominent* points of Mr. Cropper's propositions, "exaggerations, and misstatements." It is for the public to judge, whether or not I have redeemed the pledge I gave them. As for that gentleman, I now leave him to enjoy, as he best can, the fruits of his labours of "benevolence and charity."

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, 4th December, 1823.*

P.S. I have just read Mr. Cropper's letter in the Mercury of yesterday. The observations he has addressed to me I shall not fail *to notice, in the way they merit*, as soon as you can afford me space in your paper. I understand that Mr. Cooper, the person who was sent out to Jamaica by Mr. Hibbert, has lately been, or is now here; and that he has undergone a course of examination before Mr. Cropper and his association. If

this information is correct, I hope the inquisitors will favour us with a statement of the opinions given to them by this gentleman as to when, or at what future period, according to his judgment, emancipation of the Slaves in Jamaica might be resorted to with safety and advantage; and that he will take the trouble to certify it.

December 6.

M.

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To the *EDITORS* of the *LIVERPOOL MERCURY*.

THE question of the impolicy of Slavery acts like a two-edged sword; there is no getting clear of it. Some people will contend, that Slavery is a happy state; others are quoting the Scriptures, at great length, to show it to be allowable under the Christian dispensation; and yet, poor, despised, and deserted Slavery, even those are not willing to be called thy advocates! But, if these writers should accomplish their object, they have still another difficulty; there is the other edge of the sword. *Vindex* tells us, that the Slaves do not perform one-third of the work of English labourers. In this, I have no doubt, he is right, it agrees so exactly with what Joshua Steele states. He found that six men, with the hope of reward, would perform as much work as eighteen would do under the whip. *Vindex* is consistent, for he tells us, that if East India Sugars are admitted on equal terms, the West Indians will be ruined. If he had said the system of Slavery would be ruined, I should exactly agree with him; but I do not believe the West India Proprietors would be ruined: on the contrary, I should rather think, that, if they were driven to it by necessity, they would adopt the system of Steele, the system which operates on the people of

England; and then I should be more inclined to expect, according to *Vindex's* own account, that, *instead of being ruined by the change*, they would obtain three times as much Sugar as they now do. This point seems very nearly set at rest between us; and the advocates of Slavery will find it hard work to persuade the people of England, that there is any scriptural command which obliges them to pay, as they are now doing, for the support of a system of such acknowledged folly.

As to *Vindex's* second letter, I must, for the present, refer him to the sentiments of Pitt, Fox, &c. on the subject of the abolition of Slavery, in a "Review of some of the arguments, with a statement of opinions which have been expressed on that subject."

I shall now call your attention to an account of the Slave Population in most of the British Colonies, for the years 1817 and 1820-1. Slaves have been removed from some of the other Colonies to Demerara and Trinidad; some have also been removed from the Bahamas (not included in this statement) to Demerara; and, on the other hand, there will have been some manumissions in this period.

	1817.	1820-1.	Decrease.
Antigua .....	32,269	31,053	1,216
Berbice .....	23,725	23,180	545
Demerara.....	77,867	77,376	491
Dominica.....	17,957	16,554	1,403
Grenada .....	28,024	25,677	2,347
Jamaica .....	347,069	341,862	5,207
Montseratt .....	6,610	6,505	105
Nevis .....	9,603	9,261	342
St. Kitt's .....	20,137	19,817	320
St. Lucia .....	15,893	13,794	2,099
St. Vincent .....	25,255	24,252	1,003
Tobago.....	15,470	14,581	889
Trinidad .....	25,941	23,537	2,404
Virgin Islands....	6,899	6,167	732
	<u>652,719</u>	<u>633,616</u>	<u>19,103</u>
Barbados .....	77,493	78,345	— Increase, 852



Though the increase in Barbados is very small, only about one per cent. in three years, it forms a striking exception to the other Colonies, and the cause of it is a subject for serious inquiry. One thing is certain, that a much greater proportion of the Proprietors reside in Barbados than in the other Colonies, which, in my opinion, is quite sufficient to account for this difference. If the other Colonies, in which there has been a loss of 19,103, had increased in the same proportion as Barbados, 7,185 would have been added to their population, making a difference altogether of 26,281, or 8,760 per annum, which, at £50 each, make £438,000, or very nearly 2s. 9d. per cwt. on 160,000 tons of Sugar. It is plain the Barbados Planters can afford to sell their Sugars 2s. 9d. per cwt. lower, on account of the better treatment of their Slaves; and it is full time that we object to pay, by bounties, the expense of this waste of human life.

In Trinidad, there appears a considerable reduction in the number of Slaves; whilst we find the coloured people, who, I suppose, are free, have increased from 7,066 in 1812 to 13,388 in 1821. During that period, a considerable number, who had joined the British standard, were carried thither from the United States, and there have, probably, been some manumissions; but, after all, there has been a great increase in the free people, and a decrease in the Slaves. Those writers, *Vindex*, &c., who profess to be enemies of Slavery, would render a great service to the cause of its abolition, if they would procure and publish farther information from this island on this interesting subject.

In the year 1776, Samuel Nottingham manumitted twenty-five Slaves in Tortola. These were visited in 1822: their conduct had been uniformly good, and their numbers had increased from twenty-five to forty-three. On this interesting subject, more hereafter.

The inequality of the sexes can no longer be generally pleaded. In Demerara, there is a considerable difference. About one-eighth of the population consists of an excess of males: but, at their present ages, three-eighths of one per cent. would be a large annual allowance for decrease on the whole population of Demerara on that account. In many of the islands the numbers are nearly equal; and, in Jamaica, in the year 1817, there were seventy-four females more than males.

Here, then, we see a great waste of human life still going on in the Colonies. We see that when the Slaves are made free they obey the laws of their nature, and the commands of their Creator; they increase and multiply: and whose fault is it that the Slaves do not also? No doubt many of those connected with the Colonies have been ignorant of these facts; but let me call upon them seriously to consider the duties and responsibilities of their situation. Let me call upon the people of this country at large to consider, how they can continue to contribute, by bounties, to the expense of such waste of human life.

I do not complain of the decrease of Slaves from any wish that there should be a greater number of the human race held in this degraded state, because I agree in the opinion expressed by "Mr. Ward,\* now Lord Dudley and Ward, himself a large proprietor of Slaves, whose numbers have continued, regularly and rapidly, to increase under his benign and paternal management. 'It was a fact,' he observed, 'which needed no evidence to support it, that the human race was prevented by nothing but ILL TREATMENT from multiplying as fast in the West Indies as in any other country where the bounty of nature was not cramped by mischievous institutions.'" This ILL TREATMENT has also kept Slavery in existence, by keeping down a population which

\* See Review beforementioned.

would otherwise have increased to the full extent of the demand for labour, when these "claims to servitude would not have been worth enforcing," and then Slavery would have fallen of itself.

May we not ask, what has been done by the Planters towards the abolition of Slavery? A generation has nearly passed away since the enormities of this system were first exposed to the English nation; and a new race has risen up to be the subjects of this shamefully protracted preparation for freedom. Surely the time is come for the nation to inquire into the subject, and to protest against the payment of bounties for the support of such a system.

By a correspondent in the United States, I was informed, that the abolition of the African Slave Trade was general in the United States, as the act of particular States, prior to the year 1790, and was abolished by the general Government as soon as, by the constitution, it had the power to do it, in 1808. The State of South Carolina re-opened its ports a short time prior to that period. Now, I have shown, in "the effects of high and low prices on the condition of Slaves," that, from 1790 to 1800, the increase of the Slave Population was  $28\frac{1}{3}$  per cent.; from 1800 to 1810,  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent.; and from 1810 to 1820,  $28\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.\* The marked difference in the middle period I there attribute to importation, and I also concluded, that the manumission of about 100,000 Slaves,† in these thirty years, would fully equal the importation. I was the more confirmed in this opinion from the information, from several parts of the United States, of the actual natural increase

\* It is probable, a small error may have been committed in this statement, which *Mercator* calls 8,000: this, however, can make but very little difference in the scale of increase.

† In 1790, the free Negroes were 59,256; in 1820, they were 233,398, being an increase of 174,142, of whom, it is reasonable to suppose, 100,000 at least must have been manumitted.

agreeing very nearly with these statistical accounts, and from knowing, that, in the earlier part of that period, the Americans could have little temptation to import Slaves, from the low value of their produce. Supposing, however, the allowance I have made for importation to be too small, and there is no certainty unless we had an account of them, still I shall be able to show, that even if more Slaves were imported than I have supposed prior to 1808, and that we confine the comparison to the rate of increase between 1810 and 1820, it will make no great difference.

The Slave Population of Jamaica being, in 1790, about 250,000

These, increasing at the rate of  $28\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in ten years, would have been, in 1820..... 530,445

To which adding the importation ..... 188,785

Makes a total of..... 719,230

The number in Jamaica, in 1820, I had supposed to be

345,252; it only proved to be ..... 341,862

Showing a decrease of ..... 377,368

which in the other mode of estimate I had called 400,000; but to this I might have added, *without any exaggeration*, the natural increase on the imported Slaves; which I estimate would have made about 120,000 more. How happens it, that this omission has escaped *Mercator*? In speaking of the waste of life attendant on this system, I might have made a large addition for the various losses, from their being torn from their homes in Africa to their landing in the West Indies. It will now be seen what ground there is to charge me with a disposition to exaggerate.

Can it be supposed, that *Mercator* was ignorant of, or did he intentionally omit to notice, a notoriously extensive Slave Trade and emigration from Virginia, Maryland, &c. to those States where the Slaves have so

rapidly increased, and which Slave Trade is repeatedly mentioned in my previous statements, which he professes to have examined? And it would be just as likely to smuggle a cargo of foreign corn into the county of Norfolk, as a cargo of foreign Slaves into Virginia or Maryland: the slave-breeders would be equally hostile to the one, as the corn-growers to the other.

Did *Mercator* not know, or did he not choose to notice, that I had mentioned the fact of the importation of Slaves into the United States, and had made a reasonable allowance for it? Was it intention or inattention which led him to leave unnoticed my omitting to calculate the increase of the Slaves imported into Jamaica?

When speaking of the disproportion of males and females, was he ignorant of the fact, that in Jamaica, to which island this discussion referred, there were 74 females more than males?

This writer charges me with not noticing the law respecting the food of the Bahama Islands. If I had known of it, and it had any thing to do with the law of the Leeward Islands, I should have done wrong to omit it. I am glad it has been brought forward, because it is another proof of the inadequacy of the allowance by the amelioration law; and though I have not seen an account of the population of the Bahamas, yet I understand this better supply of food is indicated by some increase in their numbers.

The law by which a Slave may suffer death for the commission of crimes which his master's cruelty may have compelled him to commit, is not confined to the Bahamas, though it may be the case with respect to the provision by which, it seems, it was intended to inquire into the cause of his crime after his execution; but it is enough if he is to be hung for his master's crime, and

is immaterial to the poor creature whether that fact is ascertained before or after his execution. A law to the same effect did, and, I believe, does still, exist in Barbados;\* but it is only since I wrote that letter that I have seen an extract of the *Vade Mecum* of Demerara. In speaking of compensation for the loss of Slaves sentenced to capital punishment, it adds: "And that it shall not have appeared on the trial, that ill treatment or neglect, on the part of their masters, had any share in leading them to the commission of the crimes for which they are sentenced to suffer, as in such case the proprietor will not be entitled to compensation." Of course, this provision has no meaning, if they were intended to be pardoned; it has no meaning unless they do actually suffer. This is under date 3d November, 1808, and will not be considered obsolete law. Was *Mercator* ignorant of the existence of this law?

I had written a short reply to *T. F.*, but the appearance of his second letter renders its publication unnecessary. It may be safely left to the common sense of the public, whether Christianity, and the golden rule of doing to others as we would that they should do to us, can be so twisted and managed as to sanction *T. F.* in the purchase of a Slave whom he knew to have been obtained by the most diabolical means, and, when he had so purchased him, still to withhold from him his just and natural rights. If this rule can be made to sanction such things, what crimes are there that Christianity forbids? I can have no objection to his giving further publicity to any thing the Anti-slavery Society have written.

If I were somewhat behind in my replies where my opponents are three to one, it would be excusable; but

\* Act of Barbados, No. 329. Section 19. P. C. Rep. part 8. Appendix.

the account I have now given of a decrease in the Slave-Population is a sufficient confirmation of the recent facts stated in "Negro Slavery," even if combated by men avowing their names, and still more are they sufficient to refute the bold, but unsupported, assertions of a nameless writer.

JAMES CROPPER.

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To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.

SIR,

So, Mr. Cropper has, at length, found something in my letter, of the 19th ult., deserving reply; and he proceeds to inform us, that if the acquisition of wealth had been his object, he would not "have given up the lucrative part of his business to acquire that wealth in a thorny path." But, however thorny, and perhaps crooked, he has found the path, I must take the liberty of following him and inquiring into the facts. He told us, that he had retired from his American business, though he does not even yet say when; but, in so retiring, it is understood that he transferred it, with its concomitant sins, (as he views it,) to his sons, for whose benefit he had previously been labouring; they, I presume, being now considered competent to labour for themselves. Then, as to the phrase "lucrative:" what that means he must know best; but we all know, at the same time, that there are many in Liverpool who have found what is termed the American commission trade *far from profitable*. I wish not to pry into the private concerns of Mr. Cropper or of any other gentleman; but, when he tells us of the sacrifices he has made *on public grounds*, I hold it my

duty to inquire into the facts. He also informs us, that he refused to join with the West Indians in an application to Government for an alteration in the law which regulates the drawback on refined Sugar, an alteration which, they thought, would have been more equitable than the present system, and more favourable to both the East and West India importer; namely, to return to Mr. Vansittart's Act, which was, I think, repealed in 1815, at the request of the sugar-refiners. I ask Mr. Cropper, whether he was not then of opinion, that such an application had no chance of success? But, if such had not been his opinion, whether he would not rather have sacrificed his own interests, as an importer of East India Sugar, than that the West India Planters should, in any respect, have been *benefited* by the measure?

Mr. Cropper next enters into a long, obscure, complicated, and, to me, almost unintelligible argument, of which the object seems to be, to justify his agency for the sale of Cotton, Rice, Tobacco, and other produce, the fruits of the labour of Slaves. In the course of it, he asks what would otherwise become of the multitudes who raise and manufacture, as well as those who are now accustomed to consume, those commodities? I agree with the answer he gives to this question. It is highly proper, that the consumers should continue to be supplied, and amply too. But, then, how does this justify his conduct? Where is the necessity for Mr. Cropper or his emancipating friends (who, by the by, appear never to lose sight of themselves in the course of their exertions) being the agents for this produce, unless they like it? Are there not abundance of others, equally competent, engaged in the trade who can and will carry it on, whether Mr. Cropper or his friends may be disposed to do so or not? But to this proposition these emancipating gentlemen answer, "No;" and add, "If we retire, the object we aim at cannot be effected,



unless you also retire with us!" Surely this is an effort of vanity and egotism such as could hardly have been expected from so *modest* and *benevolent* a quarter. But it has its parallel in the proposition which, Mr. Cropper tells us, he made to what he calls "The Anti-slavery Society in London," "to put himself in the front of their battle!" I cannot conjecture what benefit this was to confer on them, unless he expected to be of use in *covering* their retreat, which the just feelings of the country are now inducing many of them to commence; nor am I sorry to understand, that several members have already withdrawn from his abolition society here.

Mr. Cropper dwells much on the *presumed* support which, he says, this country gives to the West India Colonies; and he again attempts to show, that a bounty is given in the drawback on refined Sugar when exported. I have shown, that it is unimportant, temporary, and incidental to low prices; that in North America, where republican jealousy looks to undue preferences, with the strictest scrutiny, *five times* the amount that can, in any case, be received here is cheerfully conceded for the protection of their Sugar Planters: but of this he has not found it convenient to take any notice. I have also shown, that no considerable supply of Sugar can be depended on, *under any circumstances* short of the destruction of our West India Colonies, from our possessions in India; and I must, therefore, conclude, that it is the protection against *foreign* Sugars that Mr. Cropper is desirous of withdrawing, in order to reduce the price here. If so, let him *honestly* avow it, and state the reasons why he prefers Sugars made in foreign countries, not only, also, by Slaves, but where the Slave Trade flourishes in full and horrifying vigour, to those made in British Colonies. I shall then be ready to meet and discuss the merits of his plan and his motives for recommending it. But

even there the protection is nominal. Our growth exceeds our consumption; and, as the surplus must be exported, the price obtained in the foreign market necessarily governs the price of the whole consumed here. If Mr. Cropper means to contend for such principles, then he must be prepared to extend them in every case where the agriculture or manufactures of this country are concerned. The West India Planters deny, that any protection is afforded to them beyond what they are well and in justice entitled to; but they loudly and justly claim to be protected from the dangers to which their lives and properties have been exposed, by the propagation of the false principles, chimerical views, and inflammatory proceedings of Mr. Cropper and his emancipating associates; and this, they do not doubt, the judgment of the Legislature, the good sense of the Government, and the voice of the country will afford them.

Mr. Cropper has ventured to resume the subject of East India Sugar, and complains, that I only quoted a part of the passage in his letter to Mr. Wilberforce. I thought I had transcribed *quite enough* for his purpose; but I am content, as he wishes it, to quote the whole. The cost of the Sugar which the East India Company bought, in 1798, was, *he says*, 19s. per cwt. at Calcutta. At that period, the monopoly was in full action; the Company were the only European buyers; and the rate of freight to England was from 25s. to 30s. per cwt. The growth was limited, and no quantity worth notice, had it been wanted, could have been procured. But what has this to do with the occurrences of the *present day*, which we are now discussing? He goes on to inform Mr. Wilberforce, that this price, (19s.) at the present exchange, would not exceed 16s. 6d. I ask him, why did he quote the price at all, if it was not to show, that we might be supplied on such terms,

contending, as he was, for cheap Sugars? But he immediately shrinks from the fact, and will not inform us what the price then *actually* was, though it was the only thing we had to do with, and respecting which he was, and is, so well able to inform us. I think his ship, the Albion, loaded Sugar, at Calcutta, *very early* in 1822, when he had all the advantage of the low exchange in his favour. Let him tell Mr. Wilberforce and the public, what that Sugar cost him on board, and I will readily admit it as evidence, instead of his putting forward a price *said* to have been paid by the company twenty-five years ago, of which no evidence, beyond his assertion, is offered, and which does not, in any case, bear on the question before us. He has also made an *ingenious* discovery of the way by which I meant to protect the conclusion I came to. Of this, I assure him, I was not before aware, nor do I now mean to avail myself of it, willingly resigning to him both the advantage and the merit of it.

Mr. Cropper refers me to an expression used by him in one of his letters to Mr. Wilberforce, somewhat similar to that which I extracted from the Mercury, in which he avows his conviction of the injury that would be done to Slaves by giving them their freedom, before they are in a fit state to receive it. I most readily give him all the benefit of having done so, for he *then* stood just as much *in need of it* to defend himself from the charge I brought against him as he does now. The suspicion of motive which I expressed applied *then, equally as now*, to his agency for the sale of produce the production of slave labour, and leaves the case unaltered. I assure Mr. Cropper, that I did not, and do not, mean to deal in insinuations; but to speak out plainly the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, whether he may like it or not, and however he may attempt to construe it.

I had written thus far, when I received and read Mr. Cropper's letter, in the Mercury of to-day. If further evidence were wanting of the determined *cullibility* of this gentleman, how amply he affords it in his repetition of the idle and unfounded reports of the fruits of Mr. Steele's system for the management of his estates in Barbados, and on which he lays such unmerciful weight! But, lest he should chuse to call in question the authenticity of the letter on this subject, of which I furnished a copy in my last, I have now the authority of the writer to give his name, Edmund Haynes, Esq., which, I believe, I have only to mention, in order to ensure the credit and respect to which he is so well entitled.

It appears to be Mr. Cropper's system to reject all evidence which does not suit his purpose, or correspond with the creed he has adopted; he seems determined, *at all hazards*, to adhere to it. Let as many of his friends and late coadjutors desert, or even turn against him as may, and as they have done, still he shuts his mind against conviction. I shall, therefore, leave him to dream on, and address myself to your readers, trusting that they will be found open to conviction, under the influence of facts, and of inferences and arguments fairly drawn from them.

It must be evident to every one, that whilst Mr. Cropper dwells, with so much *apparent triumph* and *satisfaction*, on the conclusions he works himself up to, on the comparative state of increase in the Slave Population of our Colonies, he throws behind him the causes which have controlled it, wherever they do not suit his purpose. Thus, where he finds there is any thing like an equality in the sexes, he does not inform you, that the great proportion of the African Negroes are far advanced in years; that most of the women are past child-bearing; that the natural tendency to propagation had been generally destroyed by promiscuous intercourse,

to which the Africans were so much addicted, and from which they could not be restrained; that of the Creole Population, the greatest proportion were still under twenty years of age; that in our Colonies the Slave Trade had only been sixteen years abolished, whilst in the middle and Northern States of the American Union it had been so for near fifty years; that very few Africans remain there; and that a due proportion of the Creole race having, for a long time, been well advanced in years, there has been nothing in the way to interrupt their natural increase. And here I cannot but observe, how very amusing it is to notice the manner in which he flounders about, whilst he is working himself up to ask the question, "Whether he exaggerates." I again answer, "Yes, most abominably, of which the public will judge."

Mr. Cropper is angry with me for not having corrected a blunder which, he says, he fell into in estimating the number of Slaves in Jamaica. In truth, I knew nothing of it; but I am now so accustomed to his *blunders*, (if he prefers that title for them,) that none he makes can surprise me. I have taken little notice of what he has advanced respecting that island in particular, because my information with regard to it was limited, and the subject was in better hands. I referred him to those gentlemen who had published their sentiments, accompanied by documents to support them; sentiments and documents which could not but convey both information and satisfaction to those who were *willing* to receive them. If any information be still wanting, I doubt not that Mr. Cropper's correspondent, *Vindex*, will, with his usual ability, set him right on such points.

Mr. Cropper charges me with ignorance, or something worse, in not being aware of what he calls a "*notorious* emigration of Slaves from Virginia and Maryland to the other States." I plead guilty; I have seen no docu-

ments, no evidence to establish such a fact, or to show its extent. Mr. Cropper does not produce or offer any, but seems, as usual, to expect we are to take his assertions (roundly made, I admit) for such; but, in this case, I must beg to be excused, since, after telling us "the increase in the Slave Population in America was from natural causes and good management *alone*," he now comes forward to state his belief, that, perhaps, some 100,000 Negroes were imported. This, however, he tries to set off by manumitted Slaves. Now I will mention, by way of illustration, that the whole increase, in the number of the free people of colour in the United States, from 1810 to 1820, was from 186,000 to 236,000. I leave it to Mr. Cropper to inform us, with his usual accuracy, what proportion of the 50,000, or about five per cent. per annum of increase, was "from natural causes and good management *alone*," and what from manumissions.

Neither do I think I am justly called upon to give implicit credit to the assertions of one, however angry he may be with me for not doing so, who first endeavours to cajole the public into a belief, that they may be supplied with Sugar from Bengal at 3*d.* per pound, including 6*s.* 9*d.* per cwt. duty, and who, when he finds his sophistry exposed and his ground become altogether untenable, turns round and tells us, he will bring it at that price from the Brazils! But in this, too, he is mistaken, were it worth while, as it is not, to discuss the merits of a statement which forms no part of the question at issue between us.

The other subjects of general abuse, calumny, and misrepresentation, renewed and repeated for the hundredth time in Mr. Cropper's two last letters, founded on old, obsolete, or repealed laws, party prejudices, anonymous publications, and the reports of hired emissaries, have been repeatedly answered and disposed of;

but still he resorts to them, and, like the sinking man, catches at a straw to save himself. They have been all too often repeated, and as often repelled by the evidence of facts, to merit or receive any further attention.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, December 12, 1823.*

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*To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.*

AT last this long-talked-of refutation of the statements of Joshua Steele has come to light. It is now stated, that he "superintended the management under what was called the copyhold system, from 1780 to 1797. In that time the Slaves decreased from 262 to 240. The account then adds, Mr. Steele was a well-meaning, good man; but, for some time before his death, his affairs *became* so involved, that his credit was gone, and his estate deep in debt. Suits in Chancery were afterwards commenced, when the system was abandoned altogether."

The reader of this article would very naturally be led to suppose, that under J. Steele's improved management the Negroes had decreased, and that, in consequence, his affairs became involved. Let us, then, see the plain fact, as it has already been published, and which this statement was intended to refute.

In Clarkson's Thoughts, it is said his concerns were "so ruinous, not only in a pecuniary point of view, but

as they related to what Mr. Steele called the destruction of his Negroes, that he resolved, though then at the advanced age of eighty, to go there and to look into his affairs himself." He arrived there early in 1780.

Between the years 1780 and 1783, he seems to have been occupied in making himself master of the system, when he began to make his improvements. The first was the disuse of the whip. In about another year, he tried whether he could not obtain the labour of his Negroes by voluntary means, instead of the old method of violence; and the result was, that six Negroes with the premium did more work than eighteen Negroes under the whip. In 1785, he adopted the system of working by the piece. In the year 1789, he erected his plantation into manors, and his Slaves were made copyhold bondsmen.

It must have been about this time when the following communication was made: "In reply to the 17th of the queries from his Excellency Governor Parry, answered by the Honourable Joshua Steele, a Planter of 1068 acres, in the parishes of St. John, St. Philip, and St. George, in the Island of Barbados. On a plantation of 288 Slaves, in June, 1780, viz. 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, by the exertions of an able and honest manager there were only 15 births, and no less than 57 deaths in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of governing the Slaves: the whips were taken from all the white servants; all arbitrary punishments were abolished; and all offences were tried and sentence passed by a Negro court. *In four years and three months*, under this change of government, there were 44 births and only 41 deaths, of which 10 deaths were superannuated men and women, and past labour, some above eighty years old. But, in the same interval, the annual net clearance of the estate was above three times more than it



had been for ten years before." In the year 1790, about a year after the last part of his plan had been put to trial, he says, in a letter to Dr. Dickson, "My copy-holders have succeeded beyond my expectation." This was his last letter; for he died in the beginning of the next year, and not in 1797, as has been stated.

It appears, then, by Joshua Steele's own account, that for three years and three months after his arrival, in 1780, the old system was continued, and that there were forty-two deaths more than births; and that, by the improved system, in four years and three months afterwards, there had been three births more than deaths, making a reduction of thirty-nine in the number of his Negroes, during his residence, so far as we have any account; though an increase of three, after the new plan of management had been adopted. His concerns were in a ruinous state before he left England; what but their being so could induce an old man, at eighty, to leave his native country? He lived long enough to establish the fact, that Negroes may be at once raised in the scale of being, with vast advantage to their masters; but he did not live long enough to retrieve the previously ruinous state of his circumstances.

There is one question which must, on first view, occur to every one:—If this plan really succeeded so well, why has it not been generally adopted? To this *Mercator* has furnished a most satisfactory reply. If (as he says) the Negroes of his friend have increased from 62 in the year 1797, to 102 in the year 1816, I ask why has not this example been followed? The answer to both is very plain: that so long as we give the Planters bounties to enable them to persevere in a bad system, they will not take the trouble to improve it.

We are told, if the Negroes are made free, they will be unwilling to work. An unwillingness to work, without an object, is equally common to Whites as to

Blacks; but let those poor beings be made acquainted with the comforts of life, and they will work for them as other men do. Amongst many other proofs of the good conduct of emancipated Negroes, are the American Slaves, who joined the British standard in the late war, and who are now settled in Trinidad, "where, under the protection of S. R. Woodford, the Governor, they are earning their subsistence," Mr. Wilberforce informs us, "with so much industry and good conduct as to have put to silence all the calumnies which were first urged against the measure."

To this I will only add one of the resolutions of a Committee of the House of Assembly, of Grenada, "that this committee is of opinion, that the free coloured inhabitants of this island are a respectable, well-behaved class of the community, and possessed of considerable property in the Colony."

With respect to the benefit of low prices of slave-cultivated produce to the condition of Slaves, I may just say, when such produce sells high, the Planters can afford to buy both Slaves and provisions; but, if such produce sell so low as that they have no money to spare, it is equally clear, that they must cease to buy them. If the cultivation of Sugar was less profitable than the cultivation of provisions, they would cultivate instead of buying provisions, and their Slaves would be better supplied. If they could not afford to cultivate with half-fed Negroes, they would, of course, feed them better, and then their numbers would increase. It is equally clear, that if the price of produce was so low that they could not afford to hold men in Slavery, they would raise them to the condition of free-men, when they would do three times as much work; and so, from stage to stage, the competition of free labour and its attendant low prices would gradually produce amelioration in the condition of the Slaves,

and fit them for that freedom which it would become the interest of their masters to give them. It has never been denied, that a reduction in the price of produce may cause the Slave to suffer with the master, until he makes the change to which he will, at last, be compelled to resort, or to be ruined.

If facts of ill treatment, corroborated as they are by the decrease of the Slave Population, are not enough to satisfy every unbiassed mind, the fact that the Slaves are held in Slavery remains undisputed; and, in the language of an old abolitionist, I will only say, if a man had stolen my horse, it would be no satisfaction to me if he proved that he fed him well and worked him easily; I want the restoration of my horse, and the Slave of his own person: still less should I be satisfied, if the man who wrongfully held my horse required from me (as the Slave-holders are doing from the people of England) a contribution to enable him to keep him.

But *Vindex* and *Mercator* have given us some facts which must not be forgotten. It seems Slaves can increase in the West Indies nearly as fast as they do in America; say, at the rate of about twenty-five per cent. in ten years. If this is compared with Jamaica, for the last thirty years, during the whole of which time the enormities of this system have been known, it will be found, that the population of that island ought to have been double what it now is; and, as we have no reason to suppose, that the treatment in the other Colonies has been generally better, we may conclude, that, under such treatment as on the estate in question, the population of the whole Colonies would have been more than doubled; and where there was land sufficient, a vast increase of produce, as we have seen of Cotton in the United States, must have been the consequence; and where the population were more than enough for the employment, as must have been the case in many, or most, of

the islands, Slaves would have been no more saleable (unless they were permitted to be sold to some other place) than men and women are in this country or Ireland; for, if their masters had no employment for them, "claims to servitude would not have been worth enforcing." Thus a vast increase of produce, and, in the islands where the quantity of land is limited, ultimate freedom, must have followed this better treatment. The fertile and extensive soils of Demerara would have been receiving supplies of free labourers from the islands, and would have produced Sugar on terms fearing no competition.

From the preceding facts, we are forced on the conclusion, that the *ill treatment* of the Slaves has kept down the number of the Slave Population, and the quantity of produce, and, consequently, kept up its price. The conduct of the Dutch has been long reprobated, who destroyed their spices to keep up the price; but we are giving bounties for the support of a system which keeps up the price of Sugar, by destroying the lives or preventing the existence of our fellow-creatures. I know this charge on the system is strong, but is it not true? Let those who may hitherto have been ignorant of the nature of the system with which they have been connected, examine for themselves, and they will soon be convinced, that they have not done all in their power for the amelioration and extinction of this odious system; they will soon be convinced, that the people of England will not suffer it to continue. Let them, then, unite their efforts with the friends of the cause for its earliest practicable abolition. Let them seek remuneration whilst the country are disposed to meet their claims with liberality; and let this not be delayed until their manifest neglect will be thrown into the opposite scale, and their claims only met with even-handed justice.

JAMES CROPPER.

*To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.*

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE postponed noticing your exposition of the views and objects aimed at by those who think with you on the subject of emancipating the Slaves in our Colonies, as published in your paper of the 5th instant, in the hope that some one more competent might be induced to do so. As this, however, has not yet been done to my knowledge, I will no longer delay stating, as briefly as the nature of the subject will admit, what I conceive to be the sentiments generally entertained by the West India Planters on the different points put forward in your journal, and in the order you have placed them before the public.

Your first is, "To remove all obstructions to the manumission of Slaves."

In answer to this proposition, it is to be observed, that the chief, if not the only obstruction in the way of manumissions in our Colonies, is, the security generally required, that the Slave, when made free, shall not afterwards require support from the community. In this respect, the relation between Master and Slave resembles, in some degree, that between husband and wife. The husband is bound to support his wife: so is the master to support and take care of his Slave, in health, in sickness, and in old age; but, if he gives or sells his Slave's freedom, the master, when his Slave is no longer able to labour, or incompetent or unwilling to provide for himself, is released from his responsibilities, which are transferred to the community, who are bound to give relief to the Slave. It is for protection against such claims, that security, or the payment of a reasonable sum of money, is required; and which must, I think, be admitted to be just and reasonable.

Your second is, "To cause Slaves to cease to be *chattels* in the eye of the law."

The title of the West India Planters to their property in their Slaves is as valid as the law of this land can make it; and, if that property is to be interfered with or disturbed, to satisfy public feelings or interests, that public is bound to make full compensation to the Planters, as is the universal practice in all cases of interference with private property, for public purposes. If Slaves are no longer to be chattels, their owners would be deprived of an important portion of the interest they now have in their property, because they could not then dispose of them as at present, by removal from one plantation to another, which circumstances occasionally make necessary. Buyers can generally be found for part of a gang, when none can be met with for the whole, either with or without the soil to which they had been attached. If this chattel-right is taken away, compensation must be given for the loss in value which would ensue, if that is provided for by the legislature, on principles clear, just, and explicit, to be paid, not by hypothetical systems for creating indirect and precarious means of remuneration, as is the case with all that have yet been suggested by the promoters of emancipation, but in money, or its equivalent. In the meantime, the Planters are not wanting, on their part, to meet this objection, by such means as are in their power, without making undue sacrifices. Their Slaves, when sold, are generally disposed of together, or in very large lots, so as to preserve for them much of the same society to which they had been accustomed; and in no case can a family be separated.

Your third proposition is, "To prevent Slaves from being sold from Colony to Colony, or otherwise transferred, except with the land to which they belong."

The answer to this proposition has, in a great measure, been anticipated by the preceding. The removal of Slaves from one Colony to another is also provided for, and placed on what is considered satisfactory footing, by Dr. Lushington's Bill, which was brought in and, I think, passed in the last Session of Parliament.\* But, certainly, much of the apprehension expressed by this proposition is imaginary: for do we not daily see our countrymen removing from one clime to another, in search of the means for supporting life, without murmur or complaint?

The next proposal is, "To give the Slaves a *real* Sunday; and to allot them, consequently, time, in some other part of the week, sufficient to cultivate their provision grounds."

This proposition appears to be founded in an ignorance of facts, as well as the practice as it now exists.

In all our Colonies the food for the Slaves is provided by the master, and at his expense. Where it is done by the labour of the Slaves, that labour is included in the ordinary work of the estate. In some Colonies more time is required for this purpose than in others; as, for instance, Barbados, where, on an average, above one-third of the time employed for labour is occupied in the cultivation of provisions for the support of the Slaves; but, in all, they are permitted, during their extra hours, to raise pigs, poultry, fruit, vegetables, &c., which they carry to market, and dispose of for their sole benefit.

These markets they have, from choice, generally held on the Sunday; but, in most of the Colonies, and Jamaica in particular, they have a whole working day given to them, once a fortnight, for that purpose. Hitherto the Negroes generally have shown little

\* I find this bill did not pass the Lords, it was so late in the Session before it got there; but it will be introduced again in the next.

disposition to attend Divine worship, or to receive religious instruction. Where it was otherwise, as on the east coast of Demerara, it has been ascertained, that other objects were discussed, at or after their prayer meetings, which produced the insurrection there. But no good or valid objection can exist to the Sabbath being devoted to the purposes of religion, if the Negroes can be induced to do so; on the contrary, I believe it to be the desire, as it is the interest, of their masters that it should be so; and they are anxiously extending the means, as far as their resources will admit, by providing additional places of worship, and the introduction of an increased number of the regular Clergy of the Established Churches. But, if it is meant to require a further portion of the usual and reasonable time that is allotted for labour to be given up to the Slaves, and placed at their disposal, such a proposition leads to the inquiry, whether it would be for their advantage, and whether it is incumbent on the Planter to consent to it.

In considering the first point, we ought to be guided by experience; and, I believe, I shall be found fully justified in stating, that, on those estates where the labour of the Slaves is lightest, and where it is not duly regulated, their moral habits are worst, and the disposition to insubordination the greatest; but that, where they are regularly employed, during the usual daily hours of labour, without being overworked, their habits are best, their health good, and their minds contented and happy.

Their extra hours are sufficient for all their private purposes; and, when disposed, they have the power to appropriate the Sabbath to religious duties. I ask, where is the class of labourers, in the United Kingdom, who, by working five days in the week, maintain themselves for the seven? Are they not almost universally under the necessity of labouring for the six? and, when it has



happened, that the demand, in particular branches of our manufactures, has caused such increase in wages as enabled the operative, for a time, to earn, in four or five days, what supplied his wants for the week, is it not well known, that the unoccupied time has frequently been passed in the alehouse, or in other places of dissipation? Such, or worse, would, I believe, be the consequence of a similar state of things in the West Indies, where the climate induces a still greater propensity to idleness and all its attendant evils.

With respect to the second point, if the Planters are called upon to give up a portion of the time hitherto employed by their Slaves in labour, the question of compensation immediately presents itself.

Their Slaves are their recognised property; so is their reasonable labour: they are guaranteed to them by the law of the land. The rights of the Planter in the Slave cannot be disturbed, until full compensation is given for whatever is proposed to be taken from them. *That* once arranged and clearly defined, the Legislature may deal with what they purchase from the Planter as they may deem best and most likely to answer the objects they aim at; but not otherwise. The law must, at least, be binding on those who made it; and, to invalidate or alienate the rights or property of the Planters, for purposes of either real or presumed benevolence, would be to recognise a principle of general spoliation.

Your next proposition is, "To give them a legal power of acquiring and transmitting property."

Practically speaking, they may be said already to possess this power. Whatever property the Slave acquires, he applies for his own use in the way he may think proper: it is always held sacred by the master; and, I believe, no instance will be found of his interfering with the private property of his Slave. Therefore, in point of fact, they possess all the benefit of this

proposition. To carry it further would create unnecessary difficulty, as well as danger.

The next that follows is, "To enable them to purchase their liberty, either by the payment of their value at once, or, by a day at each time, by the payment of a fifth of that value."

At present, there is nothing to prevent the Slave from purchasing his freedom, as shown in reply to your first proposition. If this proposed progressive means of purchase was attempted, I think it would be found surrounded with practical difficulties not to be surmounted. If the Slave purchased the value of his labour for one or two days in the week, still it would be necessary he should labour during the whole for his master, or he could not otherwise employ him. In that case, as his master would have to provide food, clothing, lodging, and medical attendance for him, during the days he worked as his Slave, I ask, how could these be dispensed with or otherwise provided, during the one or two days, weekly, when he worked for hire or wages? I think such a system would be found so complicated as soon to become wholly impracticable.

Your next proposal is, "To provide for their religious instruction."

On the wisdom and propriety of doing so, all parties are agreed; and the Planters are most desirous, as far as their means will enable them, to provide what is wanted; stipulating, as I have already said, that the Clergymen shall be of the Established Churches, and not from the Missionary Societies.

The next is, "To make their testimony available in courts of law."

I think the testimony of the Slave is now available in courts of law, in most, if not all, our Colonies, except against his master. In this country, the testimony of the wife can neither be received for or against

her husband. When a greater degree of moral

improvement has been acquired, and the nature of religious obligation better understood by the Slaves than it is at present, this law may be susceptible of relaxation: to alter it now would be attended with great risk and danger. But the disability is, in its effect, more nominal than real. If the master injures or maims his Slave, and no other evidence besides the Slave's can be found to prove it, he is bound to show the cause of the injury done, or be answerable for the consequences.

The next proposal is, "To institute and protect marriages from violation."

Marriage is now instituted. Inducements are held out to the Slaves to marry and remain faithful to each other in that state. It is the interest of their masters that they should do so. Rewards, in many cases, are given on the birth of children in wedlock, and the mother is exempted from labour for a portion of her time, which is extended as the number of her children increases.

The next proposition is, "To abolish the whip, and to place the person of the Slave under the protection of the law."

In all our Colonies, the Slaves are already placed under the protection of the law, with the exception of a *regulated* and *limited* power being given to the manager or overseer of the estate to direct slight corporal punishment for certain offences; such as, petty thefts, idleness, drunkenness, or riotous behaviour; which seldom exceeds six lashes in some Colonies, and ten in others. This is a question of great difficulty. Discipline must be maintained, or the whole system of society there would be dissolved. It may be said to resemble that of our army or navy, where it cannot be dispensed with. The greatest practical guards against abuse have been resorted to. The term "whip" is unimportant. If the whip is not used to inflict punishment, some other instrument must. It is vain to speak

of confinement where insubordination existed to any extent. No estate could provide the means; and, if that was done, such a system would defeat itself, by leading to idleness and loss of labour, and the consequent ruin of the cultivation and the estate. I understand, that the Rev. Mr. Cooper has been examined on this head by the Abolition Society here. Perhaps some one of your correspondents could give the public the substance of his evidence, as respects the Island of Jamaica. It is so decidedly the interest of the Planters to treat their people with humanity and kindness, that there can be no doubt of their readiness to adopt any system of improvement that would be consistent with the necessary safety, discipline, and subordination, if such can be pointed out; but that I very much doubt.

The next proposition is, "To provide, that all children, born after a certain day, shall be free, and to provide them with maintenance and education till they can take care of themselves."

In other words, this is *emancipation*, and can only be discussed when accompanied with a satisfactory proposal for compensation previously arranged and enacted by the Legislature. Until such a course is adopted, it would be idle, and a waste of words, to discuss it. The labour of the parent and his descendants is alike the property of his master: he cannot be deprived of it, without committing the greatest injustice and the grossest violation of the law of the land, which has placed and guaranteed that property in his hands. If indemnity and compensation are given, there cannot be a doubt of the willingness of the Planters to meet all reasonable and practicable proposals, connected with the emancipation of their Slaves. Forced measures would defeat themselves, and only lead to the ruin and probable destruction of the estate, the master, and the Slave.

Your last proposition is, "To bar any Colonial governor or other officer from possessing, or being directly interested in, slave-property."

Such an arrangement rests with the Government. I believe few instances of such a practice have occurred; they ought not to be permitted; and, if the Government would enforce such a regulation, I believe it would be heartily approved of in the Colonies.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, 13th December, 1823.*

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*To the EDITOR of the LIVERPOOL COURIER.*

SIR,

MR. CROPPER'S letter, in yesterday's Mercury, seems to draw our correspondence towards a close. Having once made, what he thought, a good thing of Mr. Steele's Barbados case, he still endeavours to cling to it, however untenable; I must, therefore, expose the unfairness of the grounds on which he rests this renewed attempt to prop up so miserable a superstructure.

From this gentleman's former *mutilated* statements, his readers must have been led to believe, that, when he reported a threefold increase on Mr. Steele's estate, he meant to show it was owing to the change of system; whereas it now comes out to have been so on a comparison with the produce of the estate for the ten years

preceding, and was, therefore, to be imputed to the *management* during the two periods. But part may also be accounted for by the very unproductive seasons in Barbados, for several years preceding the hurricane in 1780; after which a material change took place for the better, as is well known to every one connected with that island. Still, however, he proves, by this deficiency of produce, and the great excess of deaths over births, that the previous management must have been most abominably bad, *and nothing more*; as it does not at all apply to the comparative produce of Mr. Steele's estate, whilst under his care, with that of the adjoining estates, which were cultivated in the usual manner, and on which, Mr. Haynes informs us, *the produce was one-third more than on Mr. Steele's*. With this fact Mr. Cropper does not attempt to grapple. His object was to show the superiority of Mr. Steele's systems, as compared with those of his neighbours, or of what he calls free over slave labour; and in this he has completely failed.

From the manner in which Mr. Cropper notices the increase in the Slave Population on Mr. Haynes's estate, his readers would be led to believe, that this property had also been managed under the copyhold system. But no such thing: the usual Barbados cultivation only existed there, under which, though so much reprobated and calumniated by Mr. Cropper, the increase took place; but the Slaves were Creoles, which best accounts for it.

The nature of Mr. Cropper's authorities, and the manner in which he climbs up to his conclusions, remind me of the history of "The House that Jack built." Mr. Steele is said to have communicated the facts to Dr. Dickson, who informs Mr. Clarkson, who is quoted by the Edinburgh Review, and the quotation is adopted by Mr. Cropper, and so the snowball gathers as it rolls;

whilst I have brought forward the manuscript statement of Mr. Haynes, a living witness, who resided for years on the estate in question.

I find little else in Mr. Cropper's letter deserving of notice. He has, in a great measure, ceased to talk of bad feeding; of the cruel Bahama laws; of the mystery of the Demerara insurrection; of natural increase in America; of cheap Sugar in India, or even in the Brazils; and on the last strong hold, treatment of the Slaves, he seems disposed to soften and relax. But he states, as if he had made a wonderful discovery, "the fact, that the Slaves are held in Slavery remains undisputed." This no man can doubt, and he has himself assigned a satisfactory reason for it. He told us, "that they are not in a fit state for freedom, and, until they were, it would be doing them an injury to make them free." When that period arrives, and a satisfactory system of indemnity and compensation is agreed upon by *both* parties, it will then be the proper time to consider the means by which emancipation can be best effected with advantage to the Slaves; but until then, we ought, if it is meant to do good, instead of creating impatience, irritation, dissatisfaction, and their consequence, revolt, to endeavour, if it were possible, to conceal, even from ourselves, that such is the ultimate object, in place of now making it one of discussion. Let the benevolent and well-disposed amongst us do justice to the past endeavours, the honest and anxious desires of the Planters to improve, gradually, the state and condition of their people. Let them coolly examine and look at the important changes and improvements already made, as the best guarantee for the future. Let them consider, that the labour of the Slaves is moderate and well regulated; that they are amply provided with food and clothing; that they are supplied with many comforts and enjoy many advantages, which are alike secured to

them in sickness as in health, in old age as in the vigour of youth. Then let them step forward to defend the Planters from the slanderous charges and misrepresentations of their opponents, instead of giving countenance to their baneful proceedings. Whatever evils may be attendant on Slavery in the abstract, the Planters are not answerable for them, nor would emancipation be a cure for those evils. The only notion of freedom entertained by the Negro is exemption from labour. Place him at present in that state, and you ruin both him and his master.

I observe the notice with which your correspondent *G.*, and *Will-for-San*, in the Mercury, have chosen to favour my letters; but it is not my intention to enter the lists either with them, or with others that may chuse to follow them. My object has been to answer the propositions and expose the mistatements, exaggerations, and subterfuges of their LEADER, Mr. Cropper. I trust, your disinterested and unprejudiced readers are satisfied I have succeeded.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

*Liverpool, December 20, 1823.*

P.S.—Since writing the above, I have received another letter from Mr. Haynes, which I enclose, to remain with you; a copy is also annexed. I beg to recommend its contents to your readers, and to request that they will take the trouble to compare them with Mr. Cropper's statement.



“ *Liverpool, 19th December, 1823.*

“ I have seen Mr. Cropper’s letter to the Editor of the *Mercury* of to-day; and, in answer to his assertion, that Mr. Joshua Steele died in 1791, instead of 1797, as asserted by me, I have only to state, that that gentleman died on the 25th of October, 1797, as can be proved by the evidence of many gentlemen now resident in this country, should my assertion be doubted. Mr. Bell, who, on the death of Mr. Steele, succeeded to the charge of the estate, and carried on the same system of management, but with some improvement, such as, adding religious instruction, died on the 12th of February, 1811; and it was not until after his death that the system was again changed. I have only stated the decrease of Negroes to be from 262 to 240, the former number being on the estate between the years 1780 and 1797, the exact date I do not know; but I see it is admitted, that, in 1780, the number was 288, which, I have no doubt, was correct, making the decrease greater than I have stated.

“ It is also stated, that Mr. Steele came to Barbados at the advanced age of eighty years; whereas it is certain, that his age did not exceed that at the time of his death, although he lived seventeen years on the island.

“ The statement, that, ‘ in the year 1789, he erected his plantation into manors, and his Slaves were made copyhold bondsmen,’ is incorrect, in so far, that the estate was never erected into manors, although he chose to denominate his Slaves copyhold bondsmen. To each able labourer he allotted one-fourth of an acre of land; but, finding that it was never cultivated, though some of the Negroes paid rent for it, he resumed the occupancy during his lifetime, and it was again used for the purposes of the estates, in which situation I found it on the 13th of December, 1797.”

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*To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.*

AFTER having explained my motives for endeavouring to expose the evils of the system of Slavery to the world, I am satisfied to let that subject rest where it is,

being determined, from the first, not to be driven into a personal controversy beyond what the cause itself required. Were this not so decidedly my determination, it would scarcely be expected that I should enter upon this contest with *A West India Proprietor*, who hints at the application of firebrands to my extremities, to cure the diseases of my heart. The fire and the faggot have often, in past ages, been the reward of those who dared to show the people their transgressions, and to persevere in a course they believed to be right; and I rejoice in being deemed worthy to be numbered with such. Neither can it be expected, that I should do any more to expose the conduct of *Mercator*, than may show the miserable expedients to which the advocates of this system are driven. He first charges me with having misrepresented the cost of Sugar in India, because I had stated the cost to the Company in 1798, adding, *though at present it is much higher*: he chose to omit this part of the sentence, because it would have been a flat contradiction to his charge. When I charge him with thus garbling the sentence, he says, "I am content, as he wishes it, to quote the whole." He again takes care to omit this part of the sentence. To prove one such act against any one man is sufficient; and it will not be expected that I should take any more trouble about him.

It has never been denied, that some alterations may have been made in the treatment as well as in the laws of the Colonies; but the material point is not how much it is improved, but what it is now; and on this head it is clear, that if the general assertions of persons interested are to be taken as contradictions of particular facts, no existing evil would ever have been removed, and particularly this may be said of the Slave Trade. With respect to laws, of what avail can they be to the protection of Negro rights, whilst their evidence is

refused? and it is confessed, in the answer of both Houses of Legislature of Grenada, to the inquiries of the Privy Council: "As the matter stands, though we hope the instances in this island are, at this day, not frequent, yet it must be admitted, with regret, that the persons prosecuted, *and who certainly were guilty*, have escaped for want of legal proof."

In reply to the statements of *Vindex*, the Assembly of Jamaica would very naturally seek to obtain information from those who could give a favourable account of their own treatment of their Slaves, as in the case of James Quier, where the waste of human life had been repaired by natural increase; but that this is not the general state of the island, is shown by the gradual decrease in the whole population, which is a fact, proving *ill treatment* beyond all controversy.

But if all this state of happiness and superior comfort, as compared with the poor of England and Ireland, were proved, we might justly say, that it is very unreasonable that the poor people of this country, who do three times as much work as the Slaves, should be so heavily taxed by bounties, and make such sacrifices by prohibitions on their trade, to support so expensive a system, and which those who say so much about insurrections must admit, that the Slaves themselves do not like.

The arguments on my paper on the Impolicy of Slavery seem to have been brought near to a close. Before its publication, it had the advantage of the corrections of the friends of the cause; it has now gone through the severe animadversions of its enemies, which will have given it an increased interest with the public, before whom I intend it to come, probably in the shape of a pamphlet, with all the advantages of the additional facts in confirmation which its enemies themselves have brought forward.

It may now be proper to enumerate the points on which the two parties are agreed, and on which they differ.

I consider Slavery a bad and impolitic system; they are none of them willing to be called its advocates. *Vindex* confirms its impolicy by saying, that a Slave does not do more than one-third the work of a free labourer.

I have used strong language of reprobation in speaking of the system; so do they; for *T. F.* gives a quotation, calling it *odious*.

I wish to do it away at the earliest practicable period; this, too, agrees with their professions.

They claim compensation for any loss the change would occasion; here, too, we are agreed. No other means of giving freedom to the Slaves now in bondage, than their being allowed to purchase their freedom, has yet been brought forward by the friends of Negro emancipation; though many of them would prefer, as more just to the Slaves, that the price of their redemption should be paid by the country.

They would contend, that so much has been done for the Slaves by the Planters, as to render the interference of the country unnecessary. Here we differ! Notwithstanding the great advantages of free labour, and the successful experiments of Steele, who has only risen by the attempts to refute his statements, these improvements have not been adopted.

I have shown the vast increase of the Slave Population of the United States, and the still greater increase in its produce.

They have brought forward George Haynes, who proves that Slaves will increase nearly as fast in the West Indies. If either the plans of Steele or of Haynes had been generally adopted, the condition of the Negroes would have been improved, and a great pro-

portion of them, as I have shown, would now have been enjoying freedom. Here is indisputable ground for the investigations of the mother country.

I say that *ill treatment* is the obvious cause of the decrease of the Slave Population. Here again we differ ! They speak of the disproportion of the sexes, which, in many of the Colonies, has long ceased to exist, and even where it does, is no adequate cause of decrease ; but if it were, it will avail little to remove the cause from one species of inhumanity to another ; this would only prove, that whilst the Planters were purchasing Slaves, they bought a disproportionate number of men ; thus rendering it impossible that their Slaves should have the advantages of the marriage tie.

Can the country be expected to go on, without inquiry, contributing (by a bounty which raises the price of Sugar about 6s. per cwt.\*) to the supporting and perpetuating the system of Slavery, and thus enabling the Planters to continue, and accounting for their perseverance in the old system, without adopting the improvements of either Steele or of Haynes.

*Vindex* tells us, that with about one-third more Slaves, Jamaica only produces about the same quantity of Sugar as it did thirty years ago. I hope this may in part be owing to improved treatment ; but the deterioration of the soil is another cause ; and what can more imperiously demand the investigation of the mother country than the destruction of the people, and acknowledged deterioration of the soil on which they labour ?

When the Planters of Jamaica are meeting in the different parishes, and publishing in their own papers violent declarations, which show a determined opposition to the mother country, and are therefore the most likely means to encourage insurrections amongst the Negroes,

*T. F.* admits the difference in price between British and Foreign Sugar to be about 5s. per cwt.

if any danger from insurrection was really apprehended; are we to be told, that these subjects are not to be discussed in this country, from fears of the consequences in the Colonies?

The increased interest which this subject is exciting, in different parts of the country, are proofs that the people of England are not to be driven from their duty by groundless alarms.

JAMES CROPPER.

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*To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.*

It was not my intention to say any more about *Mercator*, if I had not been applied to, on behalf of the West India Association, to consent to the publication of my letters, in conjunction with those of *Mercator* and others. It is presumed, they also intended to publish those of *Justitia*, as I have not gone into those points which had been satisfactorily met by others. Though I wish my letters to have the greatest publicity, and though, in my views, Christianity enjoins me, patiently, to bear reproaches, and to suffer, without resentment, the greatest scurrility and abuse; yet there is nothing in Christianity which lowers the dignity of the human character, or requires of me to give a sanction to such conduct by consenting to my writings being associated with those in which scurrility and abuse are so conspicuous.

I have given my authority for stating the time of J. Steele's death to be 1791. It may be an error on the part of T. Clarkson, for to errors we are all liable; but whether it is one or not, I am unable at present to say; but I will venture to say it is not a wilful one. The

statement which has been made is in no degree changed, whether he died in 1791 or in 1797. Our latest account of him was in 1790, and I presume it was about that time when his statement was communicated, through Governor Parry, to the Privy Council. If we could suppose this good man capable of misrepresentation, it would have been at once detected by the Governor of so small an island, to whom such an interesting experiment must have been known.

In the course of this controversy, when I have once fairly answered an argument, I have been satisfied, without recurring to it on every frivolous objection; but as the decrease of population is incontrovertible proof of insufficient food, or forced labour, where a man is not allowed to be his own judge of the fitness of his body to bear it, or some other *ill treatment*, I have thought it best, on this point, to meet every objection. Different reasons have been given for the decrease of the Slaves in the British Colonies. In Demerara, where the importations seem to have been most recent and extensive, and where about one-half the Slaves, in 1817, were Africans, one-eighth or one-ninth of the population are an excess of males; but this is no adequate cause for the decrease there; and, in most of the Colonies, there is no inequality. The promiscuous intercourse, to which Africans are said to be so much addicted, is given as a reason for their non-increase. What will not the advocates of this oppressive system say, to get from under this unanswerable proof of *ill treatment*? These habits, to which Creoles are equally addicted, are most probably either acquired or made worse in the West Indies; for, if the natives of Africa had been decreasing at the rate of our West India Colonies, the Coast of Africa would of itself have been depopulated without the immense drain of the Slave Trade. But, even if, for

argument, we admit this ridiculous plea, and estimate that 400,000 had been imported in the last thirty years, it is not probable, that more than 230,212 of them were living in the years 1817 to 1820; leaving, therefore, 500,000, either Creoles or Africans, too old to have much effect on the increase of population, and in every population a part are aged. Those 50,000, increasing at the rate of G. Haynes's Negroes, should, with the 230,212, supposed to be Africans, imported within the specified period, have amounted, in the year 1820, to 767,712, instead of what they really were, 711,061, showing a destruction or waste, or a prevention of the existence of human life (by what but ill treatment?) of 55,751 Slaves, in only three years, and those the latest of which we have any account; but from this number there should be a small deduction, perhaps 2000, for manumissions.

What, then, I may ask, are the proofs of improved treatment? Are they in the still more recent report of the Registrar of Demerara, who, though he has written a long and laboured article to show it, still considers that want of more salutary regulations in the hospitals, or for the care of children, are amongst the causes of decrease, which he estimates at 3 per cent. in the three years from 1820 to 1823? He expects an improvement in the Creole Population will appear since 1820, and well it may, when all that are born are Creoles, whether of African or Creole parents. Were these proofs to be found in the anxiety of the Planters, while the Slave Trade continued, to equalize the number of the sexes, by the purchase of females? Was this manifested by their bearing a higher price? Assertions can be made in abundance, and reiterated with confidence; but, when we come to incontrovertible facts, as population returns, &c., then the proofs are wanting.



It cannot any longer be disputed, that the system has been, and continues to be, destructive of the population. Will its advocates now attempt to deny, what has hitherto been universally admitted, and even recognised by Act of Parliament, that it has destroyed the soil? Such is also its effects in the United States, for Colonel Taylor, himself a Slave-holder, says: "The fertility of Virginia has long been declining. Negro Slavery is a misfortune to agriculture, incapable of removal, and only within the reach of palliation." In the last part of this sentence I do not agree; Slaves would soon cease to be of any value in Virginia, and of course would cease to be held as Slaves, if not allowed to be sold out of the State. These are facts deserving of immediate investigation; they will, ere long, force themselves upon us. Some other curious facts have come out in the course of this controversy: the plentiful allowance of food in Barbados and the Bahamas has been brought forward, and these are the only two Colonies where the Slaves have increased. The soils of the Bahamas are so far exhausted that Slaves have been removed from thence to Demerara. It is said, the Slaves in Barbados are obliged to devote much time to raising food; and yet those are the only two Colonies where the people increase; another proof of the truth of my position, that according to the profits of Slavery are its oppressions. These oppressions, however, can easily be relieved; we have only to take off the bounty on the export of Sugar, and they will be obliged to make up for the loss by better management, and the consequent increase of the Slaves.

These most interesting facts cannot long fail of arresting the general attention of the country, and when the nature and cause of the disease is well understood, there will be no difficulty as to the remedy.

JAMES CROPPER.

To the *EDITOR* of the *LIVERPOOL COURIER*.

SIR,

WHEN I last addressed you, I thought I had done with Mr. Cropper's correspondence; but, a statement of his appearing in yesterday's Mercury, it is necessary that I should make some observations upon it. He says that he had been applied to, on behalf of the West India Association, to *consent* to the publication of his letters, in conjunction with those of *Mercator* and others, and which he had declined giving: and why? Because, forsooth, "the dignity of the human character" forbade him to sanction, by his consent, the association of his writings with those "in which scurrility and abuse were so conspicuous."

With regard to the object of the application, Mr. Cropper must have mistaken it; for I have the best reason to believe, that *no such application*, as he has stated, was made to him. The West India Association were desirous of placing before the public an impartial view of this great national question, in which they were, individually and collectively, most deeply interested. It appeared to them, that the correspondence which had passed between us upon it embraced all that could well be said on either side of the question; and, in order to put every one, who was disposed to inquire, into possession of its merits, they thought it would be the most fair and candid mode of proceeding to publish the *whole* in one pamphlet. They, therefore, gave instructions for that purpose, and the printing of the correspondence was accordingly commenced.

In this stage of the business, Mr. Cropper intimated, by his letter which appeared in the Mercury of the

26th ult., that it was his intention to publish his paper on the Impolicy of Slavery, with his series of letters, and such "additional facts" as he could glean from the writings of his opponents, in support of his doctrines. In consequence of such intimation, the West India Association deemed it right to communicate to Mr. Cropper the course they had adopted, and to accompany that communication with an offer to supply him with any number of copies, at the cost price; an offer which he thought proper to decline, in the way he has stated. This, I have reason to believe, was the whole that passed on the subject.

Next, as to the motives which have induced Mr. Cropper to prefer making an *ex parte* statement of his own, with *garbled* extracts, instead of accepting the offer made to him by the West India Association. I would ask that gentleman, whether there was not some other lurking feeling, some fearful apprehension for the result, if his merits and defence were, in the manner proposed, brought *fairly* before the public? I would ask him to point out the passages in my letters which contain the scurrility and abuse of which he complains. Is it not true, that he has come forward, *as a public man*, to attack, in a very gross and unjustifiable manner, the conduct and principles of a great body of respectable individuals? It is likewise true, that I have endeavoured to show how improper his conduct had been, as well as to expose the motives which appeared to me to direct it, and to pull off the mask under which he had attempted to find shelter. Under the circumstances in which he had *chosen* to place himself, I was, I contend, most amply justified in doing this, however offended or sore he may feel under the lash. But I am unconscious of having used either abuse or scurrility, as, I trust, I am incapable of descending to handle such miserable

weapons. Let us see, however, whether his hands are clean and his manner free from stain, or whether he has not been guilty of that which he is so desirous of fixing on others. To refer to his paper on Slavery, does he not stigmatize all who are interested as Planters, in the West Indies, as being, generally, guilty of practising injustice and cruelty towards their Slaves; of denying them the advantages of instruction, of marriage, and of the use of the Sabbath for religious purposes; of leaving them to be degraded, beaten, and whipped, like cattle, at the pleasure or caprice of their drivers? Does he not state, that the Slaves are made to work, for a great part of the year, for half the night as well as the whole of the day, and, as property, branded with a hot iron; with other assertions of a similar tendency? And, in his reply to the first letter which I addressed to you on this subject, does he not charge me with being "John Gladstone, who" (he says) "is a Slave-holder?" to which, as such, nothing derogatory can be attached. And does he not, in this manner, attempt to fix on a private individual all the slander, scurrility, and abuse which he had put forth, in his previous paper, (and from which none of his many publications are exempt,) against the whole body of Planters? Other instances might be referred to, in evidence of the liberties in which this gentleman has indulged his pen; but this one I deem quite sufficient. In the rest of his letter there is nothing that he has not repeatedly said before, and that has not been as repeatedly and as fully answered.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

MERCATOR.

Liverpool, 3d January, 1824.

To the EDITORS of the LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

I HAVE been charged with proposing a measure likely to encourage the Slave Trade—the introduction of the Sugars of the Brazils and Cuba. In a paper in which much matter was to be compressed into a small compass, it was not possible to enter into full explanation. That the abolition of the Slave Trade was intended to be the basis of that arrangement will be seen in my pamphlet, “Relief of West Indian Distress,” where a plan for the indemnity of the West Indians is also proposed. In this, however, I only followed a West Indian, (J. Marryatt, Reply, &c. p. 95,) who, after proposing the admission of these Sugars on the same terms as those of the East Indies, thus proceeds:—“The new situation in which Cuba and the Brazils are now placed, offers a favourable opportunity of inducing those countries to follow the example of South America in abolishing the Slave Trade; and of making this condition the basis of an arrangement under which their Sugars shall be admitted into the home-consumption of Great Britain. By availing ourselves with promptitude and policy of the present state of things, we have a fair prospect of obtaining the most important advantages to the cause of humanity, as well as to the commercial interests of the British empire.” If all this could be accomplished by the admission of these Sugars on the same terms as East India, how much more certainly by an entire equalization of duty!

If it were not for the opportunity thus afforded of stating my opinion of what is required from Christian Slave-holders, I should have left unnoticed the letter of the friend of *T. F.*, which seems like an attempt to make (though, perhaps, not intended) the present state

of West Indian Slavery accord with Christian principles. If all that was practicable had been done, and was now doing, to prepare the Slaves for freedom, we might lose sight of the means by which they were procured; but, without this, it is impossible to enter fully into the sufferings of these poor creatures; this afflicting part of their case ought not to be forgotten; for *they* have derived little benefit from the subsequent abolition of the Slave Trade. The purchasing and holding one single individual, under such circumstances, is not defended. Can the crime be lessened by the number of its victims? And are not those who hold them bound to do all they can to prepare them for freedom, even if the number so held, in the West India Colonies, should amount to 200,000?

In educating and preparing our helpless children for the world, do we do more than we would wish, in such a case, to be done for ourselves? and, if our continuing to purchase was the cause and not the effect of the Slave Trade, with all its enormities, are we less bound to prepare these helpless sons of affliction, these victims of our own avarice, to enjoy their just rights?

It is our duty to hold our children in subjection, until they are able to think and act for themselves; on these grounds only are the Planters justified in retaining the control of their Slaves, until freedom would be a benefit.

We are told of a number of Slaves, who were removed from the Bahamas, increasing at the rate of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. per annum; another proof that Slaves can increase in the West Indies, if well treated: but why have these circumstances not been diligently inquired into? And why have not the plans which have produced them long since been adopted? Show us an annual increase of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. throughout the Slave Population; put an end to the Slave Trade from island to island; and we

may rest satisfied, that the Slaves are rapidly approaching to a state of freedom. For it cannot be too often repeated, that *nothing but ill treatment can prevent the increase of the Slaves, and that Slavery can only exist whilst the population is in a ratio below the demand for labour.*

**JAMES CROPPER.**

## APPENDIX A.

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To the *EDITORS* of the *LIVERPOOL MERCURY*.

GENTLEMEN,

THERE appears an extraordinary want of candour in the leading article of your last paper, headed "The African Slave Trade," or else it exhibits a strange confusion of ideas, which I can hardly suppose to exist in your minds. You must know very well, that the African Slave Trade is no longer carried on to the British Colonies; and the drift of your observations refers not to the trade, but to the existence of Slavery there; two very different things, which you confound together, for what purpose I cannot imagine, unless it be to cast an unmerited odium on the Planters. Nor is it only in your title that you overlook this obvious distinction. Speaking of the attempts now making in this country to abolish Slavery in our West India Colonies, you "contend, that whatever may be the result of entertaining this great question, it is an imperative, moral, and religious duty to protest, without ceasing, against the continuance of a system abroad which has been declared felony at home; unless, indeed, it be proved, that moral obligations are affairs of mere convenience, and religion a matter of no consequence between the tropics."—Now what has been declared felony at home? The holding of Slaves? Certainly not: the carrying on the Slave Trade by British subjects has. But, you continue—"The advocates for the Slave Trade will scarcely go this length. Many of them profess themselves to be Christians, and they must recollect what St. Paul says of the natural equality of man, 'And hath made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on the face of



the earth.'” This is very loose writing, if it be not intentional misrepresentation. I may ask, who are the advocates of the Slave Trade? I know of none in this country or its Colonies. But if you mean to allude to the holders of Slaves, I have a word to offer upon this appeal to St. Paul. What does the same Apostle say when adverting, in the preceptive part of his Epistles, to the connexion of master and slave? “Slaves, (for so the Greek word *Douloi* should, undoubtedly, be rendered,) obey in all things your masters, according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. Masters, give unto your slaves that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.”—(Colossians, iii. 22, iv. 1.) Similar precepts occur in other passages of the Epistles; and the Apostle severely censures those who presumed to teach a contrary doctrine: “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words.”—(1 Timothy, vi. 3 and 4.) The fact is, Slavery is a civil institution, (a bad one, I allow,) and Christianity steers clear of every thing of this kind. It meddles not with any thing political; yet its tendency is to meliorate and improve the political and civil condition of mankind. But how? By inspiring mutual benevolence and charity, not by inciting men (as, it is to be feared, such articles as that I have commented upon, and the measures of the abolitionists generally, have a tendency to do) to hate and destroy one another.

Yours,

T. F.

November 4, 1823.

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*From the same*

To JAMES CROPPER, Esq.

SIR,

IT was not my intention to have had any further controversy with you, nor should I, most probably, have taken up the pen to notice any observations of yours on the subject of West India Slavery, (open as I think many of them are to the clearest refutation,) if you had not on a late occasion gone out of your way to attack me, and, in reference to a short letter of mine to the Editors of the Liverpool Mercury, to charge me with a moral offence, for such I consider a wilful perversion of the Scriptures, in support of any cause whatever. "I was sorry," you say, "to see *T. F.*, who allows it (that is, Slavery) to be a bad institution, become its advocate. It must, indeed, have a pernicious effect on the minds of those engaged in it, when it can induce a man, so respectable in the other relations of life, to pervert the Scriptures to its support."\* I am obliged by the concession that *T. F.* is respectable in the other relations of life; but that does not invalidate the charge of perverting the Scriptures, and it is the object of the present address to vindicate myself from it. At the same time I shall take the opportunity of explaining my views more at large on the general subject. There is in the above short quotation another charge, viz., that I am the advocate of Slavery, to which also I plead not guilty. How, indeed, it can, with any thing like the semblance of truth or consistency, be said that I am an advocate of Slavery, when in the same sentence it is stated that I allow it to be a bad institution, I leave to those whom it concerns to explain. The accusation destroys itself; and, in fact, there is not a word, in the article alluded to, in vindication of Slavery. Nor was that my intention. My object was to vindicate the characters of those who possess Slaves from gross misrepresentation and unjust aspersion; and, amongst other matter, from an insinuation in the Mercury of the 31st of October, that professing Christians, by

\* Mr. C.'s letter in the Liverpool Mercury of the 21st instant.

holding Slaves, were acting inconsistently with their religious profession, for which purpose the writer quoted a passage from St. Paul's defence at Athens, where, according to the Mercury, he speaks of the natural equality of man. In answer to this, I showed, from various passages of the Epistles, that the Apostle recognised the connexion of master and slave, and severely censured those who taught, that, by the principles of the Christian religion, Slaves ought to be declared free. This very brief argument it has become necessary, in consequence of your animadversions, to state more fully. But before I do so, I have a few words to offer on the reply of the Editors of the Mercury. As to their remark, that I have studied the Scriptures with the laudable view of discovering therein apologies for Slavery, I shall pass it by unheeded. What I wish to notice is, their quotations from Dr. Donne and Dean Swift. "Sentences in Scripture, like hairs in horses' tails, concur in one root of beauty and strength, but being plucked out one by one, serve only for springs and snares," says the former. "The Scripture," says the Dean, "in time of dispute, is like an open town in time of war, which serves indifferently the occasions of both parties; each makes use of it for the present time, and then resigns it to the next comer to do the same." These remarks, especially the former, are just enough, when applied to the mode in which theological controversy is too often carried on, by adducing texts, or scriptural proofs, as they are called, without regard to the connexion in which they stood. By this method, any doctrine whatever may be proved from the Scriptures; but I deny that this is my method, or that those remarks affect me. I have been taught, in reading the Scriptures, to consider the connexion, the scope and design of the writer or speaker, the occasion, the peculiarities of Jewish phraseology, &c., without attention to which points men may fancy they understand the sacred writers, when in fact they do not, but substitute their own vague notions for divine truth. And I contend, this is exactly the error into which the Editors of the Mercury have fallen, in the quotation before-mentioned. The Apostle, in his discourse to the Athenian philosophers, assembled at the Areopagus, was arguing against idolatry, and showing the absurdity of supposing the Godhead to be like to an image "graven by art and man's device,"

seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, and the maker of all mankind. This is the Apostle's argument, and shows the true sense of the passage in question. He was not advocating the rights of man; the passage has no reference whatever to the natural equality of mankind. The words, "God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth," taken out of the connexion, and viewed as an independent aphorism, may possibly bear such a construction; the inference, however, is not St. Paul's, but belongs to the Editors of the Mercury.

In the passage of the Epistle to the Colossians, from which my extract was taken, (Colossians, iii. 18 to iv. 1,) the Apostle is treating of the relative duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves. Upon slaves, he enforces the duty of obedience and cheerful service; upon masters, the obligation of giving their slaves that which is just and equal, i. e. a competent provision of food, clothing, and other necessaries. This appears to be the plain sense of the passage; it is, indeed, incapable of any other. My other extract may require fuller consideration. (1 Timothy, vi. 3 and 4.) For the sake of brevity, I quoted only the 3d and 4th verses; but the chapter should be read from the beginning to the end of the 5th verse. The design of the Epistle is to suggest salutary advice to Timothy, (whom Paul had left at Ephesus to instruct and organize the Church there during his absence,) to enable him to conduct himself with propriety and dignity in that commission. After a variety of instructions and directions, the Apostle proceeds, in the beginning of the 6th chapter, to instruct his young friend as to the duties of slaves to their masters, and especial *believing* masters, whom, it is intimated, they were to serve the more willingly on that account. Then come the words which I have quoted, "If any man teach otherwise, and adhere not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words." The commentators say, that certain zealots, in those days, probably taught that, by the profession of Christianity, Christian slaves were emancipated from Christian masters. Against this principle the Apostle enters his strong protest, and always teaches, that the profession of Christianity makes no difference in the civil relations of men.—

(See 1 Corinthians, vii. 17 to 24.) A late commentator remarks, that "The Apostle, no doubt, well knew that the principles of genuine Christianity would eventually lead to the utter extermination of Slavery; but the progress was to be *voluntary* and gradual, not violent and immediate." To this remark I willingly subscribe; and the idea seems to me to receive confirmation from the Epistle to Philemon in favour of the slave Onesimus, who having, as is well known, deserted from his master, and been met with at Rome by Paul, who converted him to the Christian faith, was sent back to Philemon with that letter. And how beautifully does the Apostle solicit for the forgiveness, and, perhaps, for the manumission of the fugitive! "I beseech thee for my son, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, whom I have sent again; do thou, therefore, receive him as my own son. Whom I would have retained with me that he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the Gospel; but without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be, as it were, of necessity, but voluntary. Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord; refresh my feelings in Christ." The entire Epistle is written with uncommon tenderness and delicacy.

It is impossible not to contrast this language of an Apostle with that of the zealots of our day on a similar subject. I allude more particularly to a publication ushered into the world under the auspices of the London Committee for the Abolition of Slavery, entitled "Negro Slavery, or a View of some of the more prominent features of that state of Society, &c.," in the Preface to which, the existence of Slavery is spoken of as an *atrocious crime*, with which no measures can be kept. The expression, it is true, is taken from the Edinburgh Review, where it is applied to America only; but the writer of the Preface to the Pamphlet applies it to the Slavery of the British Colonies. "Every reproach," says he, "which the passage contains, applies to the United States with an accuracy that admits of no cavil, and with a force that cannot be resisted. May it produce its due effect on the population of that rising empire! And may they be induced while yet they may, to avert from themselves, by repentance and reformation, the judgments which, if the Word of God be true, must sooner or later overtake such cruel and impious oppression.

‘The people of the land have used oppression, and have vexed the poor and needy; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully; therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath. Their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.’—(Ezekiel xxii. 29.) The writer then asks, “If it be true (as he conscientiously believes it to be) that the existence of Slavery in America is an atrocious crime, whether it is possible to contemplate its existence within the British Dominions in a less fearful light?”

I would ask further; if the existence of Slavery be, in a national point of view, an atrocious crime, is not the holding of slaves by individuals a crime equally atrocious? And I would put it to the Edinburgh Reviewer, and to the author of this preface, who adopts his sentiments, whether they really mean to charge the holding of slaves by individuals, in all cases, as an atrocious crime? The latter, in another place, says the contrary. “Let it not,” says he, “be supposed that we mean to prefer against the West Indians, as a body, any charge of extraordinary criminality, or to intimate that they are peculiar objects of public reprehension. It is not so much *they* who are in fault, as the system with which they are in many, perhaps in most, cases involuntarily connected.” This is softening, and, in a great measure, explaining away what has gone before; so that the strong expression of “an atrocious crime,” seems, at last, to be nothing more than a figure of speech, condemning Slavery as a bad system. In this all will agree. The quotation from Ezekiel (in which, if the reader will take the trouble to look at the context, he will find the Prophet no more intended to denounce the holding of slaves, than the Apostle, in his address to the Athenians, before considered, intended to preach up the “rights of man”) admits, I presume, of a similar qualification. The denunciations are general against the corruption of all orders of men, and have no particular reference to Slavery; and the extract may have been used in the present case by way of accommodation merely, as Scripture language often is—not as literally applicable, but as an ornament of discourse. Many, however, will consider the

passage so quoted as an actual denunciation of God's judgments against the holders of slaves, and view them with a sort of horror, as labouring under the curse of the Almighty. On this ground I consider such a use, or rather abuse, of Scripture language to be very reprehensible. I call it a real perversion of Scripture, by applying it in a sense which the sacred writer never intended.

I flatter myself it will be sufficiently apparent, that I have not been guilty of any such perversion, but, on the contrary, have applied the passages I quoted, in reply to the *Liverpool Mercury*, in the true and genuine sense of the Apostle. And the conclusion I drew, that Slavery being a civil institution, Christianity does not interfere with it, will, I presume, follow, if we admit St. Paul's authority. The Editors of the *Mercury*, indeed, cavil at the term civil institution, as applied to Slavery. They will allow, however, that it is an institution of some sort, a thing instituted or established; and they will hardly say it is a *religious*, therefore, I presume, it must be a *civil* institution. If this view of the subject wants confirmation, I may appeal to the accurate and judicious Paley, who thus expresses himself:—  
 “Slavery was a part of the civil constitution of most countries when Christianity appeared, yet no passage is to be found in the Christian Scriptures by which it is condemned or prohibited. This is true; for Christianity, soliciting admission into all nations of the world, abstained, as behoved it, from intermeddling with the *civil institutions* of any.”

What I have further to say I shall reserve for a future letter; and I shall conclude, at present, with the assurance of my respect.

T. F.

November 28th, 1823.

To JAMES CROPPER, Esq.

SIR,

HAVING, in my former letter, sufficiently vindicated myself, as I conceive, from the charge of perverting the Scriptures, I come now to your argument, that "if Christians are bound to do to others as they wish others to do to them, then Christianity does not steer clear of Slavery, but clears Slavery away." Undoubtedly this is the precept of Christ, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." For its excellence, it has been called the golden rule, and it cannot be too much admired and remembered. It should, in fact, be always in our thoughts; but, like many other of our Lord's precepts, it ought not to be understood too literally. It is not what we might fondly wish our neighbour to do to us, were we in his circumstances and he in ours, but what we could reasonably expect from him in that case, that is to be the rule of our conduct towards him. An esteemed commentator says on this text, (Matthew vii. 12,) "Christ here orders us to do to others that which reason tells us we might not unjustly demand from them." Any other interpretation would lead to the most absurd and injurious consequences. If the *wishes* of men were to be the rule, the judge must pardon the criminal, the master overlook the faults of the servant, and the rich man give away all his property to the poor. But, if reasonable expectations are to form the rule, no such consequences follow. Let us see, then, how it applies to the case before us. Will the master, putting himself, in imagination, into the place of the slave, say, "I should expect my master to set me free?" I think not. But he may say, "I should reasonably expect, as long as I did my duty, kindness, protection, and comfortable subsistence, and not to be punished harshly for slight faults, nor to have labour imposed upon me beyond my strength; therefore, in all these points, I will thus act towards my slave." Then, observe, the rule applies also to the slave. Let him consider and



answer truly to himself what he would expect if he were master. Would he not expect that service which the laws authorize the master to claim from his slave in return for the subsistence which he affords him? The slave, then, should perform those services for his master which, if he were himself a master, he would expect from his slave. So far this excellent rule will carry us, and, I apprehend, no further; and with this interpretation the Apostolic precepts, concerning the relative duties of master and slave, exactly coincide.

Your argument supposes, in direct contradiction to St. Paul, that it is obligatory on the master as a Christian to emancipate the slave: if so, there could be no obligation on the slave to obey the master. But you endeavour, curiously enough, to qualify the Apostle's language. You say, "the non-resisting doctrine of Christianity relieves the oppressed, not by encouraging them to resistance, but by its operation on the hearts of the oppressors." I must here object to the term "non-resisting doctrine of Christianity." This is a doctrine peculiar to your own sect, and therefore not to be assumed, without proof, as a doctrine of Christianity. Besides, St. Paul's language is not at all in accordance with your representation. He does not say to slaves "submit to your oppressors, be patient under your wrongs;" he exhorts to active and zealous service. To the words I before quoted he adds, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." Will this exhortation bear the construction which you would put upon it? I think every impartial person must say, No. Does it not mean—in serving your masters faithfully, you are doing your duty as Christians? But admitting, for the sake of argument, your position, that the non-resisting doctrine of Christianity relieves the oppressed, not by encouraging them to resistance, but by its operation on the hearts of the oppressors, (though I must protest against the application of this term to the West India Planters in general,) I would seriously ask, if you think your present proceedings are in accordance with this view of Christianity? Can holding men up publicly as tyrants and oppressors (to say nothing of its effect on those subject to

them) tend to soften their hearts? You and your friends are, indeed, acting in a way diametrically opposite to your own principles. You are endeavouring to force upon the Planters measures which they think not merely destructive of their pecuniary interests, but absolutely incompatible with the preservation of peace and tranquillity in the Colonies, and with their own personal safety; and to accomplish this purpose, I think you are attempting to overawe the Government itself. This, certainly, is not the manner in which, even by your own account, Christianity clears Slavery away.

The charge of attempting to overawe the Government is a serious one, and some proof of it may be required. I observe, then, that the Committee of the London Society for the Abolition of Slavery, who appear to esteem themselves a *power* in the country, (of which Committee you and other friends are members,) published, in August last, a *manifesto*; notwithstanding the pledge given by his Majesty's Ministers, and the resolutions of the House of Commons in the last Session of Parliament, purporting that all safe and practicable measures should be taken for the gradual melioration of the condition and character of the Slaves in the Colonies, and for admitting them finally to a participation of those civil rights and privileges which are enjoyed by other classes of his Majesty's subjects, (resolutions which go far enough in all conscience, and, one would have thought, might have satisfied every reasonable man;) notwithstanding all this, that Committee, by way of preparing their adherents for a renewal of the contest, published, I say, soon after the recess of Parliament, a *manifesto*, of which the following are extracts:—  
 “ Nothing which has occurred ought to have the effect of relaxing, in the very slightest degree, our vigilance and activity. On the contrary, the success already obtained should only stimulate us to increased exertion. In this persuasion the Committee would particularly recommend that *associations* should be formed in every part of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of co-operating to diffuse information, *to procure the requisite funds*, and to call forth the distinct expression of public opinion on the subject. The Committee feel that their cause owes much to those petitioners

who, in the last session, addressed Parliament with such promptitude and effect. They trust that the same earnest pleadings will be renewed at an early period of the next session. They trust that not only from the same places which have already raised their voice in the sacred cause of justice and humanity, but from every *county* and every *town* in the United Kingdom, one energetic and concurrent appeal will be made to both Houses of Parliament in behalf of our enslaved fellow-subjects." —What is this but an attempt to carry their imprudent schemes into effect by the force of popular clamour? And, not contented with the circulation of this inflammatory matter by the press, it appears that an emissary, well known to be connected with the Committee in question, is now going round the country to stir up the slumbering zeal of the people.

Ministers went as far in the last session of Parliament as they thought safe, and further, perhaps, than strict prudence warranted, in their concessions to the feeling which had been excited in the public mind; but, because they did not quite lose sight of a rational policy, this violent Committee are not satisfied, and are thus endeavouring to renew and increase the clamour, and, as I said before, absolutely to overawe the Government. In opposition to all such intemperate proceedings, (the natural result of which has already been too fatally experienced at Demerara), I would call upon the prudent, the peaceable, yes, the truly benevolent and Christian public, to discountenance them; to have no concern in them. The business is fairly in the hands of the Ministers and of Parliament, and, no doubt, what can be done consistently with safety and with justice will be done. To suppose otherwise would be putting an affront upon both. The question is of an extremely difficult nature, and to meddle with it at all demands the utmost wisdom and circumspection; it must not be decided by the acclamations of an inconsiderate multitude. I trust in the good sense of Englishmen that they will reflect on these things, and not be carried away by the clamours of a few heated enthusiasts or interested speculators.

But, though such proceedings as these, the natural effect of which, as Dr. Paley observes, is to let loose one-half of mankind

upon the other, are, in my opinion, at variance with the spirit of Christianity, and adverse to its positive precepts, I am well aware, that Christianity has a tendency to improve the civil as well as the moral condition of mankind: in fact, when moral improvement is general, civil and political melioration must follow of course. A good Christian cannot be a tyrannical ruler, nor a harsh and oppressive master; and if all men were thoroughly inspired with Christian benevolence, bad political institutions would be comparatively harmless. Yet nothing forbids our improving them to the utmost of our power; and every benevolent mind must wish for such improvement. "Does it follow," asks the celebrated divine and philosopher before quoted, "from the silence of the Scriptures concerning them, that all the civil institutions which then prevailed were right, or that the bad should not be exchanged for better?" But he adds, "Christianity can only operate as an alterative. By the mild diffusion of its light and influence, the minds of men are insensibly prepared to perceive and correct the enormities which folly, or wickedness, or accident have introduced into their public establishments. In this way the Greek and Roman slavery, and since these, the feudal tyranny have declined before it. And we trust, that, as the knowledge and authority of the same religion advance in the world, they will banish what remains of this odious institution."

In this sense I have no objection to your position, that Christianity clears Slavery away; for I, too, am for its ultimate abolition; but it must not be a *forced* measure. To be beneficial, it must be cautious, extremely gradual, and carried on with the voluntary consent of the proprietors. There are, indeed, peculiar difficulties in the present case, which did not exist in regard to the abolition of Slavery in ancient times, arising out of the differences of colour and of race, which did not then prevail. And, after every possible precaution, it seems very doubtful what the issue will be. But be it what it may, there must be a full indemnity to those whose property is sacrificed. To attempt the measure in any but the most cautious, gentle, and gradual way, would be as inconsistent with justice, humanity, and, I am bold to say, Christianity also, as it would with prudence, policy, and common sense.

The occasion calls for strong language, and I have expressed myself strongly; but, I hope, without personal disrespect to you.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

T. F.

*Liverpool, 4th December, 1823.*

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*To the EDITOR of the TUESDAY'S ADVERTISER.*

SIR,

I SHOULD, perhaps, not have thought it necessary to trouble you further on the question discussed in my two letters to Mr. Cropper, but a friend having favoured me with the subjoined letter, which expresses the sentiments of a calm, well-informed, and impartial observer, respecting this question, it is my wish to make it public, and I have no doubt the perusal of it will be interesting to your readers. At the same time, I hope you will indulge me with the opportunity of making a few explanatory observations.

Mr. Cropper thinks he has answered me by leaving it to the common sense of the public, "Whether the golden rule of doing to others as we would they should do to us, can be so twisted and managed as to sanction *T. F.* in the purchase of a slave whom he knew to have been obtained by the most diabolical means, and when he had so purchased him, still to withhold from him his just and natural rights?" I did not say it could sanction such a purchase. My argument related to a system of servitude, established by prescription and law, and to which time has given a certain sanction, (however it may have originated,) the habits and characters of men having been formed upon it. He takes an individual possessed of freedom, supposes him reduced by force or fraud under the power of a master, and then offered for sale. The cases are very different. Mr. Cropper's proposition evidently refers to the Slave Trade, which, as to this country and its Colonies, has been abolished many years, and has nothing to do with the present discussion. I never vindicated that trade, and I

believe, I rejoiced as much as most people at its abolition. I would not have originated such a traffic, nor have been engaged in it. But, as to retaining its victims in the state of Slavery, which, I suppose, is what Mr. Cropper means by the expression of withholding just and natural rights, it is another question. Granting that many of them may have been originally obtained by the most unjustifiable means, they *must* be continued in the situation into which they have been brought, unless something better for themselves, and safe for others, can be done with them. If it were the case of one or a few individuals, the task would be easy; but so to dispose of such numbers, might puzzle wiser heads than mine or Mr. Cropper's. So that his appeal to common sense will not serve his purpose.

The Editors of the Liverpool Mercury also, in defiance of fact and propriety, persist in confounding the existence of Colonial Slavery with the Slave Trade, though it is evident enough, by the miserable attempt\* they made to vindicate this perversion of language, they knew better. I must protest against such misrepresentation; and I hope the public, if they feel any interest in the matter, will look to what I have myself written, and not take their opinions about it from the inaccurate statements of adversaries. I could say more, but my correspondent's letter renders it unnecessary, and to that I beg to refer your readers.

T. F.

24th December, 1823.

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COPY OF A LETTER ADDRESSED TO T. F.

DEAR SIR,—I think you have not done yourself justice in your letters on the West India question, i. e. that you have not sufficiently guarded yourself from the imputation of fostering the system of Slavery. None of your planter advocates have put the question precisely on its true footing. The public talk and think

\* See Mercury, 25th November.

as if it were an affair of a single Slave, whereas it is a question as to the management of hundreds of thousands.

Your object was to prove, and no one has been hardy enough to controvert the proposition, that the mere holding or possessing of slaves does not impeach the title of an individual to the character of a Christian. Indeed, to controvert this was impossible, otherwise St. Paul would never have addressed the slave-holder, Philemon, as his "fellow-labourer." You maintained, and, I think, successfully, that the same Apostle, in prescribing to slaves their duty *as slaves*, has recognised what the juriconsults call the *status* of Slavery, as constituting part of existing civil institutions, which institutions he was not, as a disciple of Christ, called upon to disturb. Nor need you shrink, in this case, from the close application of the precept of Jesus, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." The question ought, indeed, to be tried by this very rule, but let the rule be applied fairly. In deference to this rule, I am sure you would not *begin* the system of Slavery; you would not enslave a single man, either white or black. But here we have to deal not with a new, but with an inveterate system, which we found existing when we entered on the affairs of life, and which has subsisted for 200 years. The question involves a consideration of property of prodigious magnitude, of national interests of no small complexity and importance. But, waving these topics, and referring simply to the Negroes, do Mr. Cropper and his associates, applying the above-mentioned precept of Christ, profess to wish for their immediate emancipation? They say, No: they virtually say, that, if the black population in a body were to press this precept, and call for immediate freedom, wisdom and kindness would not grant it them. But they wish them to be *prepared* for emancipation. In this proposal you will agree with them; but are they fully aware of the difficulties attendant on this process? Before it is completed, the blacks must be, to a considerable degree, enlightened; and is it not the most difficult of all problems in this case to administer instruction without sowing the seeds of rebellion? The blacks of Demerara were much more impressed by the war-like history of the book of Joshua than by the sermon on the

Mount. It would be easy to multiply, to a great extent, this statement of difficulties; but these are acknowledged by the African Institute itself. How then are they to be surmounted? The answer is—not by the blind efforts of those who are ignorant of the facts of the case, nor by the plans of those who look only to “a consummation devoutly to be wished.” Time and judgment are requisite to this process. It cannot, therefore, be well conducted by hasty measures, urged by the importunity, however well-meaning, of an enthusiastic multitude.

In conclusion, I think you should protest against being misrepresented as the partisan of a system of Slavery which you never would have begun, and which you wish, as soon as possible, to be terminated.—I am yours, &c.



## APPENDIX B.

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EXTRACTS FROM

### THE LETTERS OF VINDEX

(WHO WRITES WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO JAMAICA)

*Addressed to JAMES CROPPER, Esq.*

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(*From Vindex's Letters of Nov. 13, 1823, and Jan. 10, 1824.*)

YOU say, "The labour of the slaves, for nearly half the year, lasts for one-half the night, as well as the whole day." Now the fact is this. Upon all the cotton, pimento, and coffee estates, which constitute a great proportion of West India properties, there is *never any work done in the night*, and the labour in the day is barely sufficient to keep the Negroes in exercise. On sugar estates the period of crop does *not* endure for half the year, nor in fact for one quarter, if the number of days be counted in which the cutting and grinding of canes is carried on. Long intervals of complete rest perpetually occur during the gathering of crop, which, indeed, (to whatever use you may pervert my expressions,) on a great proportion of the estates, lasts the whole of the year round. On most of the properties powerful steam engines or water mills are now erected, which generally grind as many canes during the day as supply the coppers through the night. To attend the boiling of

the coppers, not half a dozen Negroes out of two or three hundred are required; and *these* only "in spells," so as to relieve one another. Even in cases where some little grinding is done at night, the number of Negroes does not exceed eighteen upon such an estate. These are always trusty men, proud of being selected to the office of boiler, and anxious to attain it. If *any* persons have a right to complain, it is the *white* book-keepers, who certainly are under the necessity of working much during the night. To sum up with regard to sugar estates, the hours of labour upon them do not endure nearly so long (one day with another) as those of the working classes in England, and the quantity of work actually performed does not amount to one-third.

You say, "The Negroes are often branded with a hot iron."\* Now the fact is, that this practice has long ago ceased. It prevailed during the continuance of the Slave Trade, for the obvious purpose of enabling the purchaser to identify those who were designated "New Negroes," and also of leading to a more prompt discovery and apprehension of such as became fugitives, and who, of necessity, could not be known in the country. At that period, also, many persons marked their Creole, or native slaves. But in neither case was it done, as you have asserted, with a hot iron; nor could I have believed, if I had not seen it, that any anti-colonist could be found so silly as to mistake the iron brands sent out from England to mark the sugar hogsheads, for instruments of torture and degradation for the Negroes.† At present, the case stands thus. If any proprietor were wantonly to brand his slave, and *that* slave should complain of the act to a neighbouring magistrate, an investigation would follow, and such branding would be considered as bringing the master within the terms "wantonly maltreating" in the 25th section of the Consolidated Slave Law, and subject him to an indictment in the Supreme Court of Judicature, or any assize court of

\* In the pamphlet entitled "Negro Slavery," it is asserted, (p. 94.) that "slaves are commonly marked with the owner's name, like sheep or cattle. The operation is performed with a heated brand."

† Vide Liverpool Mercury.

the island, and upon conviction, to fine, or imprisonment, or both. In order to show that these laws are carried into execution, the following cases are referred to. In the year 1818, an individual, of the name of Boyden, had cohabited with a female slave, the joint property of himself and his brother, (who was not, however, implicated in the charge,) and, being influenced by jealousy, had branded her on the shoulders and breast. She applied to a justice of the peace, who instantly removed her from the further control of the master, and called a meeting of the justices, and vestry of the parish in which the parties resided, who, by virtue of an authority given to them by law, caused a prosecution to be instituted against the master at the expense of the parish. The woman was brought into court, and the marks exhibited to the jury, who found, without hesitation, the defendant guilty. He was sentenced, by the court, to six months' imprisonment in the common gaol, (a punishment which, considering the effects of confinement in a tropical climate, may be fairly deemed equivalent to twelve months, or more, in England,) and was deprived of all property in the slave; for she was declared, by the court, to be for ever discharged from servitude, agreeably to the powers given to the judges by the Island Slave Act of 1816. Another case occurred on the 14th of August last, on which day Judge Scarlett passed sentence upon Jno. Baptiste Cadore, for branding a slave, viz., to pay a fine of one hundred pounds, out of which sum, £10 per annum were adjudged for maintenance of the party injured, who was declared free from that day. This prosecution was instituted by the magistrates of Kingston. The slightest inspection of the Jamaica Gazette will show, that the greater part of the *branded Negroes are imported Africans*, and that upon multitudes of vagabond and runaway *Creoles* no mark whatever can be found. This last circumstance leads me to suppose, that the old law for branding, as a punishment for vagrancy and other minor crimes, if not repealed, (as it has recently been in England,) has at least become obsolete in Jamaica. It must always be kept in mind, that the Negroes, so advertised, are the outcasts and refuse, as it were,

of the black population, and afford no criterion whereby to judge of the remainder. *Throughout the estates, generally, no marks whatever will be found on the Creole slaves.* Upon this head you are referred to the Registry Office, in London, to which, I believe, a return is made from one or two of the Colonies of the *marks*, (inter alia,) which will show you, by contrasting the last with the former returns, first, whether any marks have been recently inflicted, and secondly, whether any marks have been imposed upon the objects of your research.

In reply to your assertion, that Negroes can be sold in such a manner that "the nearest ties in life are rent asunder," it is proper to inform you, that they *are never so sold*, and that, by the Slave laws now in force, "they are to be sold *in families* under writs of venditioni."\*

In cases where no such writ has been issued, the almost invariable practice is this: when a Negro is to be sold, he is furnished by his master with a note or ticket, authorizing him to travel about the country for the purpose of inquiring into the character and dispositions of such as he may be informed wish to make purchases; and when he has fixed on any one who may be willing to buy him, he returns to his owner, and informs him of the chosen individual. The first questions put to a slave, who offers a ticket of sale, are the following: "Have you any family connexions from whom you are unwilling to be withdrawn? Do you think you should like to live with me?" If he reply, that he has relatives or connexions who he is desirous should be sold with himself, an offer is made for these relatives, and in the event of a refusal to sell them, the holder of the ticket remains unsold; or should his master (this is a case not likely to exist) insist upon the disposal of him by public outcry, he would, upon this circumstance being known, (and it could not well escape the knowledge of bidders, who never fail to interrogate the slave,) obtain a very inadequate price. Interest therefore, independently of humanity, forbids the practice of disjointing families. To show the late feeling

\* Consolidated Slave Laws of Jamaica.

of the Colonial Assembly on this point, I will refer you to an Act which was passed in November, 1821, (2d George 4th, cap. 17,) in consequence of its having been deemed expedient to dispose of all the slaves which had been purchased, by the public of Jamaica, in his Majesty's name, for the use of the Governor's house. These domestics, from their increase, had amounted in number to 57, and formed a most expensive establishment. In order to relieve the Governor, the above law was enacted, and in it will be found the following proviso: "provided always, that the said slaves shall not be sold otherwise than *in families*."

Again you say, "They are compelled to work on the Sabbath day for their own subsistence." The direct answer to this allegation also is, that it is *absolutely untrue*. You must know, that "one day in each fortnight is by law allowed to slaves, besides Sundays;"\* that an additional day is very frequently allowed; that cooking is provided; and that the owner is compelled by law to furnish every Negro with sufficient clothing, and with herrings, salt, &c., to season his ground provisions. To raise these ground provisions, with abundance of pigs, poultry, &c., only two or three hours in a week are requisite in West India climates. Of these articles the Negroes possess such a superfluity, that the markets of the West Indian towns and villages are almost wholly supplied by them.

You have, Sir, been already publicly informed of these facts; yet you persevere in your endeavours to make the people of England believe, that the Slaves in our Colonies are actually starved, and worked beyond their physical powers.

In answer to your assertion, that "the advantages of religious instruction and of the marriage tie are almost universally withheld from them," I refer to the following extract from a pamphlet

\* Consolidated Slave Law of Jamaica. For the sake of brevity, the illustrations are taken from the law and practice of the great Colony of Jamaica. Each Colony has its own laws and customs; but, generally speaking, the condition of the Negroes in the smaller Colonies is upon a par with those of Jamaica—happy and contented.

lately published by the Rev. G. W. Bridges, Rector of Manchester parish, in Jamaica :

“ I have actually baptized 9,413 Negro slaves, many of whom attend Church ; some have learnt the Lord’s Prayer and Ten Commandments.”\* Again, “ I have myself married one hundred eighty-seven couples of Negro slaves, in my own parish, within the last two years, all of whom were encouraged by their owners to marry. In another parish, St. Thomas in the East, I have reason to know, that there have been three times that number married during the incumbency of the present Rector, Mr. Trew ; and, though not speaking from numerical information, I can safely affirm, that the labours of the clergy, in the remaining nineteen parishes, have been equally active, and, doubtless, crowned with the same success.”†

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(From *Vindex’s Letter of November 29, 1823.*)

The obstacles most likely to retard emancipation will arise from the precipitate and theoretic measures of half-informed persons, who mislead themselves and others upon so delicate and important a subject.

Great, indeed, have been the difficulties anticipated on this head, by those of our distinguished countrymen who exerted themselves in accomplishing the abolition of that disgraceful traffic, the *Slave Trade*. Amongst these may be enumerated Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Mr. Windham, Lord Grenville, Lord Holland, &c. Two of these authorities only, for the sake of brevity, shall be here adduced—but they shall be powerful authorities—Pitt and Fox.

\* Bridges’s Voice from Jamaica, p. 27.

† Ditto, p. 22 and 23.

On the 19th April, 1791, the late Mr. Pitt said in the House of Commons—

“One thing he must touch upon, which was rather a delicate point—the question of *emancipating the slaves* in the West Indies. A *rash emancipation, he was clear, would be wrong and mischievous*; in that unhappy situation to which our baneful conduct had brought both ourselves and them, it would be no justice on either side to give them liberty. They were as yet incapable of it, but gradually their situation might be mended. They might be relieved from every thing harsh and severe, raised from their present degradation, and put under the powerful protection of law!—*Till then, to talk of emancipation, was insanity.*”—Wright’s Parl. History, vol. xxix. p. 340.

On the same occasion, Mr. Fox thus expressed himself:

“With regard to the *emancipation* of the Negroes already in Slavery, his own doubts of the efficacy of an act of the British Legislature for this purpose was a reason for not entering into it. He himself *did not think such a measure could be suddenly ventured upon*; and though every man had a right to freedom, yet it should be observed, that men inured to Slavery all their lives felt certainly less degraded by it than those who were born to independence. It might be dangerous to give freedom at once to a man used to Slavery, on the same ground as, in the case of a man who had never seen daylight, there might be danger of blinding him, if you were to expose him all at once to the glare of the sun.”—*Ibid*, p. 354.

To these high names I may add that of the virtuous and immortal founder of American independence, who was repeatedly urged to liberate his own slaves at Mount Vernon. On this subject, also, it is not generally known, that a most powerful and eloquent appeal was made, shortly before his death, in a letter from that ornament of Liverpool, the late Edward Rushton. Washington, however, was immoveable, although the dangers of emancipation were fifty-fold slighter in the State of Virginia than in our West Indian Islands. About the same time a gentleman of Norwich, who had brought letters of introduction to the General, was walking with him over his estate, when the Negro huts came into view. “I am concerned,” said the venerable Washington, “for these poor people; but how to better their condition at present I know not.”

With one authority more I will conclude; it is that of one of your own coadjutors. On the 2d of April, 1792, Mr. Wilberforce spoke thus :

“ Freedom was a blessing the most valuable in nature—but it could be enjoyed only by a nation where the faculty of thought had been for some time employed. True liberty was a plant of celestial growth, and none could perceive its beauties but those who had employed the nobler faculties of the human soul in contemplating the goodness of the divine essence from whence it sprung. He hoped the day would arrive when all mankind would enjoy its blessings; but this neither was nor could be the case at present with the unhappy Negroes in the West Indies; and from these reflections he was led to believe, that *no man could in reality be their friend, who proposed any thing that could lead them to hope for their emancipation.*”—*Ibid.* p. 1061.

And on the 18th March, 1807, “ he deprecated the discussion of the question of *emancipation*, because he looked to the gradual improvement of their minds, and to the diffusion among them of those domestic charities which would render them more fit than, he feared, they now were to bear emancipation.”—Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates, vol. ix. p. 146.

These opinions, Sir, from such men, ought to carry weight. You may perhaps say, that they were delivered many years ago. True; but the greater portion is applicable to all times and all circumstances. Every one of them tends to this conclusion; that a *grand moral reform must be accomplished in the minds of the Negroes before emancipation can with safety be held out to them.* Towards the accomplishment of *this reform*, you and your coadjutors have done nothing. At once you proclaim your grand recipe—Emancipation. By this mode of procedure, therefore, you place yourself in the horns of this dilemma. *If you contend, that the moral condition of the Negroes is such as to qualify them for the reception of freedom, what becomes of your reiterated charge against the West Indians, that they keep their slaves in ignorance, debasement, and barbarism? On the other hand, if their minds are NOT in such a state, why do you, in so precipitate and premature a manner, hold up emancipation to their view?*



(From *Vindex's Letters of December 5th and 12th, 1823.*)

With regard to the Rev. Mr. Bridges's allegation respecting the marriages which he has solemnized in Manchester parish, Jamaica, there seems no doubt of its correctness; but whether any or what law exists in the colony, enjoining the clergy to transmit to Government transcripts of their respective registers, is to me unknown. The answer to this question would, perhaps, solve the difficulty you have raised. In the mean time, to convince you of the inaccuracy of the Parliamentary return which you quote as your authority, you may refer to the self-same document, where you will find, (page 144,) if your credulity will carry you so far, that during the last eleven years, in the parish of St. Elizabeth, comprehending a population of 23,000 Negroes, *only two deaths* have occurred!

One of the most striking features of your policy is the art with which you have studiously kept out of view every iota of evidence which might tend to show, what was asserted in my last letter, that *a great improvement has been for some time progressively taking place in the moral and physical condition of the Colonial Negroes.* You had it in your power, and, I have reason to believe, it was proposed to you, to obtain direct testimony from persons lately arrived from the Colonies, who would have set you right as to many points which you have mistated: but you appear to have made no such inquiries. Your *only* evidence that can be called *recent* is that of the Rev. Thomas Cooper, who left Jamaica in 1820, and of which something may be said hereafter. It is true, that you refer to what have the *semblance* of authorities for the enormities which you describe; but, will the reader believe! they are for the most part *books published thirty or forty years ago, or subsequent writings grounded upon such works.* Thus you charge the present race of the West Indians with the misdeeds of their fathers, and add, with infantile simplicity, that "It remains yet to be seen whether the colonists will ameliorate the treatment of the slaves in accordance with the resolutions of the House of Commons."\*

\* Note to your "Impolicy of Slavery," as published in the Liverpool Mercury of the 31st October.

Permit me now, Sir, to ask what *you* would think of the candour of an author, who, in replying to your allegations respecting the present *free* and *happy* state of East Indian sugar-growers, should bring forward the publications issued thirty or forty years back, denouncing the cruelties and oppressions of the East Indian traders of that day?

At the head of your authorities stands Mr. Ramsay, who published his writings, to which you refer, in 1784 and 1788, and who was admitted to have gone beyond the reality in his account of West Indian Slavery. Amongst other charges, many of which were too true, he alleges, that the Negroes, at that time, "had their eyes beat out—their bones broken—that unceasing labour starved them—that they had only barren spots of ground to cultivate, and only the Sabbath on which to cultivate these—that they had no warm clothing, no linen to wrap the newborn babe," &c. &c.\* If such be not a fair account of the condition of the Negroes at this present time, (as you know it is not,) why do you bring forward the authors of it to fill up the exaggerated pictures you have drawn?

Only one other mistatement shall now be commented upon, viz. that which you have made respecting manumissions. You say, "Manumission is nearly prevented in most of the islands by large fines."† In confutation of this shameful allegation, his Majesty's Privy Council shall speak in the following official report:

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL IN 1788-89.

"It was not uncommon for masters to manumit their slaves, when they had become infirm and no longer able to bear the burden of servitude. This filled the country with wandering Negroes, who were first an annoyance and then a burden to the public. If Negroes were not turned adrift in the decay of their strength, but were rewarded with freedom while in health, for some particular merit, it still happened that such persons, not unfrequently, became a charge upon the public for maintenance, either occasionally or at the close of their days. This experience induced the Legislatures, in all the Islands, to provide that no manumission should be valid, unless measures were taken to secure the public against such consequences; this was by the master assigning some lodging and maintenance

\* Ramsay's "Objections, with Answers," &c. 1788, p. 33 and 34.

† Your hand-bill, entitled, "Slavery in the West Indies," printed by James Smith in April last. Also, "Negro Slavery," p. 111.

for such slave, or, more commonly, by making a deposit of money with the vestry of the parish, and, in some cases, giving likewise a security that the slave should never be a burden to the parish. In one island the deposit was £100, and the security £200. Such slave is entitled to £4 or £5 per annum, to be paid by the vestry out of the interest of the deposit."—Part 3d, 4 N. 6.

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It appears to be the anxious desire of yourself and the other anti-colonists to persuade the public, that little or no improvement has taken place in the condition and treatment of the West Indian Negroes; and the method which you have followed has been but too well adapted to the propagation of such an error. Those, however, who understand colonial affairs know the direct contrary to be the fact. To others not so well acquainted with them, it is now intended to offer *proofs of the great progressive improvement* that has been for some time going forward, and which the colonists are desirous, by every means in their power, to promote. It is first, however, necessary to revert to the earlier period of colonial history; and, in so doing, I shall seek for testimony as to their *then* state from those very publications to which you unfairly refer as evidences of their *present* condition.\*

The first Planters in our Sugar Islands, and their successors, even to the middle of the last reign, considered these poor creatures as *property merely*, and their various enactments and usages were made solely with reference to them *as such*, and scarcely in any degree as rational and immortal beings. A slight sketch shall now be given of some of the laws which were in force within the recollection of many persons now living; and my illustrations and proofs shall (as before) be principally applicable to Jamaica, both for the sake of brevity, and because your allegations and attacks have been chiefly levelled against that island.

In case of a Negro slave striking any white person, except in defence of his owner's person or goods, he was for the first offence severely whipped by order of a justice of the peace; for the second, by the like order, he was severely whipped, his nose slit, and his face burnt in some place; and for the third offence it was left to two justices and three freeholders to inflict death, or what other punishment they thought fit.

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\* Ramsay's Writings *passim*. Report of Privy Council, &c. &c.

When any slave, by punishment from his owner for running away or other offence, suffered in life or limb, such owner was not amenable to the law for the same; but whoever killed a slave out of wilfulness, wantonness, or bloody-mindedness, was liable to three months' imprisonment, and to pay £50 to the owner of the slave.

If any person killed a slave stealing or running away, or found by night out of his owner's ground, road, or common path, such person was not subject to any punishment or action for the same.

When a Negro died in the custody of the Provost Marshal, or of any other person, for want of food or lodging, the person in whose custody such Negro was, paid the proprietor £50, recoverable by action or debt—but was liable to no other prosecution.

Every commission-officer was bound, upon notice given him of the haunt or hiding-place of any runaway Negroes, to raise a party of men, not exceeding twenty, and (under a penalty of £20) to pursue, apprehend, and take the said runaways, *alive or dead*.

Whosoever found a Negro slave wandering in his plantation, except furnished with a license or ticket, *and did not punish him by whipping*, was fined 40s.

The owners of Negro slaves were obliged by law to furnish them annually with the following clothing only, viz.:—For every man a pair of drawers and a cap, and for every woman a petticoat.\*

To enlarge upon the mode in which these sanguinary laws were executed would only disgust the feelings of the reader. It will be sufficient to give a single specimen of such barbarity, in the words of an eyewitness: "A rebellious Negro, or he that strikes a white man, is condemned to the flames; he is carried to the place of execution and chained flat on his belly, his arms and legs extended; then fire is set to his feet, and so he is burnt gradually up. Others they starve to death, with a loaf hanging before their mouths: I have seen these unfortunate wretches gnaw the flesh off their own shoulders, and expire in all the frightful agonies of one under the most horrid tortures. Perhaps, indeed, such severities may be in some sort excused, when we consider the state of the country, and how impossible it would be to live amidst such numbers of slaves without watching their conduct with the greatest strictness, and punishing their faults with the utmost severity."†

\* Repealed Laws of Jamaica and the other Colonies. Report of his Majesty's Privy Council.

† History of Jamaica, in 13 Letters, London, 1740, Svo, p. 39 and 40.

The concluding part of the above extract evinces the lamentable state of the public mind at that period among the white inhabitants, who were, for the most part, ignorant, brutal, and irreligious. It is unnecessary to add, that such lawgivers went, in practice, even beyond the bloody letter of their barbarous enactments. In a word, either the laws were silent, or if they spoke, it was only for the oppression of the miserable Negro.

It was not until the middle of the last reign, that any effectual improvement commenced in the moral and physical condition of these unhappy beings; and in this march of humanity, Jamaica, Grenada, and Dominica, took the head. Then it was that their tyrannical owners began to consider the slaves as made of the same flesh and blood as themselves, and from this period salutary and humane enactments have succeeded one another down to the present time. The improving spirit and manners of the whites have kept pace with these enactments, of which the following is a very short abstract :

“ Importation of slaves punished as felony, &c. Inquests to be held upon slaves in precisely the same manner as that pursued in case of the sudden death of white people. Any person wilfully killing a slave, whether his own property or another man's, to suffer death. Cruelly using or mutilating slaves, punished by a fine of one hundred pounds, and twelve months' imprisonment; and in atrocious cases, the slave to be manumitted, and allowed an annuity. Persons cruelly beating slaves, or keeping them in confinement without support, are to be punished by fine, or imprisonment, or both. The justices and vestry are appointed a council of protection for such slaves, and required to prosecute with effect the owners or offenders. No slave to receive more than ten lashes at a time for one offence, unless the owner, attorney, or overseer be present. And no owner, attorney, &c. nor any gaol-keeper shall, on any account, inflict more than thirty-nine lashes, nor shall this punishment be repeated, until the delinquent has recovered from the effects of his former punishment. No slave can be punished by having iron collars, weights, or chains put on him. Slaves to be allowed one day in every fortnight out of crop, exclusive of Sundays, to cultivate their grounds,

and are to have sufficient clothes allowed them, to be approved by the justices and vestry. All offences committed by slaves beyond petty delinquencies, which may be inquired into before the magistrates, are to be tried before a jury, and if the sentence be death, it must be by hanging by the neck, and in no other manner. No sentence of death pronounced on any slave, except for rebellion or rebellious conspiracy, shall be carried into execution, unless by *warrant under the hand of the Governor*, and in every such case, the evidence, and a copy of the charge upon which any slave shall have been convicted, and the sentence, shall be transmitted, forthwith, to the Governor, under the hand and seal of the senior presiding magistrate. Slaves are not to work in the field before five o'clock in the morning, nor after seven o'clock in the evening, and are to have half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner. Female slaves who have reared six children, are to be exempted from all labour, and the owner is to have the taxes remitted on slaves so privileged. A prohibition is placed upon the trafficking in slaves within the colony, or the purchasing of them with a view to resale.\* Slaves in the workhouse or gaol to have good and sufficient clothing, and to be provided daily with one herring and one quart of Guinea or Indian corn, or eight pounds of ground provisions, &c. Any Will, which is valid for passing personal estate, is sufficient to confer freedom without manumission deed. Magistrates are bound to summon special sessions of the peace, for the purpose of inquiring into allegations of freedom on the part of runaway slaves. And finally—the most ample and liberal provision has been made for the religious instruction of the Negroes.”

The above is a brief account of the laws now in force in Jamaica for the protection of that class whose condition we are now considering. The principal of these is dated 19th Dec., 1816,

\* In the United States of America (to use your own words) “ vast numbers of Slaves, bred in Virginia, are constantly sold to the Planters of the Southern States.” Letters to Wilberforce, p. 39; also your letter in this day's Mercury.

being revised, augmented, and renewed from former enactments ; and for this and other Laws respecting Slaves, the reader is referred to “ Lunan’s Abstract of the Slave Laws of Jamaica, 4to, 1819,” and to whatever acts have been passed subsequent to the publication of Mr. Lunan’s work.

I am aware, however, that you have contended, that these laws, though salutary, have not been enforced, and in this you are joined by Mr. Wilberforce and the “ Reporter” of the African Institution, who, by insidiously quoting gone-by authorities, represent the said laws as “ worse than nullities, and wholly and manifestly ineffectual to their purpose.”\* The falsehood of these allegations shall now be proved by such testimony as will shake the unbelief even of the most sturdy anti-colonist.

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(*Extract from Vindex’s Letter of December 19th, 1823.*)

The documents which follow establish, beyond doubt or cavil, what has been already asserted, that the humane disposition of the colonists has been commensurate with the amended laws, of which a brief abstract has just been given; and that a gradual melioration is going forward in the moral and physical condition of the colonial labourers. These documents are extracted from a number of depositions taken by order of the Assembly of Jamaica during the agitation of the Registry Bill. To bring forward the whole of these voluminous depositions would be impossible; but they now lie at the printer’s for inspection. Besides the names given in this letter and the last, you will discover other names of equal weight and respectability, well known, and such as the breath of calumny has never dared to sully. Several of these gentlemen are now come to reside in England; and some never had, or they have now ceased to retain, property in Jamaica.

\* Report of the African Institution. Wilberforce’s Appeal in behalf of the Negro Slaves, 1823, p. 25 and 41.

Their present address may be obtained from any one connected with the Colony, and you are respectfully invited to apply to them, with a view of ascertaining whether they are now willing to confirm the testimony which they gave a few years ago, and whether the melioration therein asserted be not to this day progressive. The following extracts may, to some, appear diffuse and tedious; but, on a subject of such vital importance, and on which the public mind has been so shamefully misled, some degree of patience, as well as of candour, is requisite.

*Deposition of the Honourable James Stewart, Member of the Assembly and Custos of the parish of Trelawney.*

Saith that the food and clothing, directed by the law to be provided for the slaves, are such as they would themselves use, were they free and possessed of property; for, when any of them have become free, and have acquired property, they live, in these respects, much the same: slaves have also clothes, independent of their master's supply, consisting of what is of a finer quality and more respectable, and which are worn not only on Sundays and holydays, but often, when engaged in their master's work, as a matter of pride and distinction: at their burials and entertainments, the dresses of many of them are exceedingly costly and expensive: their food is chiefly vegetable, with salted or pickled fish to season it; and formerly, when there was an unrestricted intercourse with the United States of America, they were occasionally supplied with salted pork; this diet is so agreeable to their taste, that they differ very little in either, even after any of them become free; they, however, raise both hogs and poultry, which they sell or use, as they think proper, at their own discretion. The resources of Negroes, whose families or themselves have been long established on a plantation, are very considerable, and many of them are possessed of much wealth: these are circumstances, though well known by examinant and others in Jamaica as a real fact, yet he does not think they will be believed in England to exist to the extent he has stated; nevertheless, it is perfectly true, for there are hardly any slaves but have property, acquired by selling their superfluous provisions, pork and poultry, to the towns, or to the free inhabitants in their neighbourhood: the hours of labour are regulated by the Consolidated Slave Law, &c. \* \* \* \* \*

Saith that there is a constant progression in the ease, comforts, and general condition of the slaves, which accelerates their civilization: the law protects them: if there are grounds for complaint that are not or cannot be relieved on the estate, they apply to the magistrates, who are solemnly



bound to afford them protection, and it is extremely disreputable to a master or manager to be charged with cruelty or injustice to his Negroes: crimes, however, are not so frequent as formerly, or as they are in many parts of Europe. Examinant saith, that in the parish of which he is the Custos, there are nearly thirty thousand Slaves, and about three thousand free inhabitants, consisting of white persons and people of colour; that there are two sea-port towns in it; the principal one is Falmouth, where all the parochial business is transacted; that, notwithstanding so numerous a slave population, few instances occur of slaves being brought to trial for crimes, and it has but seldom happened, that the punishment of death has been inflicted on them for any other crime than for murder, poisoning, and Obeah, when the latter has been practised with the operation and effect of deleterious and poisonous drugs, to the injury or destruction of the object against whom the Obeah has been practised; that he has known instances, where a great concourse of this Negro population, with a great many others from adjacent parishes, had come to see races at Falmouth, that occasionally last about a week; that, notwithstanding such a numerous assemblage of Negroes, not a single culprit hath been brought to justice for stealing or any other crime, although the doors and windows of the houses in that town are frequently insecured: he considers the situation of the slaves on the estates to be superior in comfort to the labourer in a cold country, working at day labour, and who has a family to provide for; his mind is not so liable to painful reflections as that of the daily labourer in Europe, (from a dread that, from the causes of sickness, which may hinder his working for daily bread, for himself and family, and for shelter and clothing and fire, the indispensable want in a cold country, or other disability, that they might be exposed to want and wretchedness,) being sure of protection, support, and even comforts from his master; and he firmly believes, that the progress made, within the last twenty years, in bettering the condition of the slaves in this island, hath actually outstepped the effects of the endeavours which have been made in Britain towards the same object, videlicet, the improvement of the character and conditions of their own peasantry, manufacturers, and medicants; and examinant solemnly asserts, and he is confident the fact cannot be disproved, that the condition of the slaves in this island, in respect to their treatment, as slaves, and their advancement in civilization of manners, places them above the situation of the poor and lower classes of people in Ireland, who are more ignorant, more wretched and oppressed, than even the slaves of a *distressed* planter, &c.

(Signed)

JAMES STEWART.

*Deposition of David Richards, Esq.*

Saith that he has charge of sundry plantations, as attorney and receiver. When he first arrived in the country, Negroes were very severely punished, several in irons at times, and frequently many absentees, little attention paid to them when sick, indifferent medical attendance, little medicine used, but the simples of the country; since passing the Consolidated Slave Law, the condition of the slaves has been generally ameliorated, and their conduct progressively improved: of upwards of four thousand Negroes under his direction, not one is in a state of punishment, and not more than ten run away; their hours of labour are from half-past five in the morning to half-past six in the evening, in summer, during which they are allowed half an hour for breakfast, and two hours for dinner: that no part of that time is lost in preparing breakfast, as one cook is allowed, in every ten, to prepare their meals for them; that in the winter, their hours of labour are from six in the morning to six in the evening: that when he first came to the island, Negroes were worked before day an hour at least, and after dark a full hour, in making dung and carrying grass, and other work, so that they worked two hours more then, in the twenty-four, than they do now; for many years after he first came to the country, he never saw a pound of flour or rice given to an hospital; but now, whatever the medical gentlemen order, whether rice, flour, sago, oatmeal, arrowroot, or wine, it is given; and that these things are always on the estates for the purpose.

(Signed)

DAVID RICHARDS.

*Deposition of Joseph Green, Esq.*

Saith he has resided in this island twenty-four years, and has a general knowledge of the situation of estates in the parishes of St. Mary, St. George, &c.

Saith that the situation of the slaves is much ameliorated since he came to this island. They are much better fed, clothed, and lodged; their hours of labour are fewer; their punishments far less, and less frequent; these alterations have been regular and progressive, and he attributes them to the humane and wise policy of the proprietors and their agents, whose best interests are thereby forwarded, and who are aware that a different mode of management would reduce the number and effective strength of the slaves, on whom many depend for the support of themselves and families, having no other means but their Jamaica estates, which would produce nothing without a sufficient number of slaves to cultivate them.

Saith that he does most decidedly believe, that their situations are in a gradual course of melioration, and that they appear most contented and happy; they are well satisfied that they receive the full protection of the law; they generally live comfortably and many of them live as well as a great proportion of the white population.

(Signed)

JOSEPH GREEN.

*Deposition of William Shand, Esq.*

Saith that he is a planter, and hath the direction of the estates of sundry absentees. \* \* \* \* \*

That the general allowance of salt provisions and clothing has been extended, and the occasion for punishment less frequent than formerly. This he attributes to several causes; to the increasing humanity and liberality of proprietors; to men of better character and information having been employed as overseers and book-keepers on estates of late years; to the pains that have been taken to render the Negroes more industrious and less dependant on the master, or manager, for their subsistence; to this having been rendered easier by the gradual civilization of the slaves, in consequence of no Africans having been introduced, who were generally in a very savage state; to the gradual effect of the laws, that had been enacted some time before by the Colonial Legislature, compelling the ill disposed to pay the same regard to the comforts of their slaves, which before had been generally prevalent, and deterred overseers from inflicting arbitrary punishments. To coffee proprietors and other plantations, so far as examinant's information and observation extend since the year 1799, the same remarks are applicable, and the improvement in the condition of the Negroes has been gradually progressive during his knowledge of the country. \* \* \* \* \*

Saith that little labour is expected from women after they are reported pregnant, and *this* more with a view of preventing them from travelling abroad and indulging in not taking sufficient exercise, than any benefit to their owner expected from their work; for three or four months previous to delivery, they are only required to make their appearance before the overseer at stated periods. For all estates in his direction, calico or flannel is imported for infants, and on most properties a meal of victuals is prepared daily for the whole of the children who have been weaned and have not attained beyond the age of twelve or thirteen years; they are collected at noon, and their situation examined into, &c.

(Signed)

WILLIAM SHAND.

*Deposition of Francis Graham, Esq.*

Saith he has resided in this island since the month of April, 1797. Sees very clearly a great difference in the severity of enforcing labour, and is happy to say, that he does not think there is one-half made use of that there was when he first came to this country; he thinks that the situation of the slaves in every way has been made more comfortable than in former times; that the amelioration has been regular and progressive, and he attributes the same to the overseers and white people of the present day being a better informed race of men in general, of humane dispositions, and attending to the instructions given them by their employers, as to the comfort of the slaves, more strictly than was done in former days: the disposition of the slaves, and their progressive civilized state, having had for years no new Negroes brought among them, have tended much to their being more comfortable than was formerly the case.

For some years past, he has observed, that the slaves have shown a contented and quiet disposition, and a very considerable number of those under his care have, at their own request, been made Christians; that in every application of the kind he has forwarded their wishes; he does not know of one instance that the aggrieved Slave has not been protected by the laws, and justice done them; with regard to the comforts of life, the well disposed, industrious slave has more comforts about him than thousands and thousands of cultivators of land that he knew in Europe; that the class of slaves examinant has mentioned he has known at all times perfectly satisfied, having only a certain duty to perform, which they understand and do with ease to themselves; very little more rests on their minds, having no pay-day to think of, or family to provide for in case of death; that is left for the master to do, who provides land and habitations without rent, medicines, doctors' bills, taxes, nourishment, hospital, fish, and all other kinds of provisions, when necessary, clothing and every other necessary of life.

(Signed)

FRANCIS GRAHAM.

*Deposition of Doctor John Quier.*

Saith that he is a Magistrate, and hath been so for thirty years last past—he has likewise practised physic, &c. \* \* \* \* \*

Saith that he believes a great part of the decrease of Negroes has arisen from causes preceding the abolition, and arising out of the agitation of the question for abolishing the Slave Trade: a very great number of those slaves, that were imported at that time, were of such a description as would

not have been imported, if the Slave Trade had continued in the state in which it had been carried on previous to the agitation of that question; that a very large proportion of them were of a very bad description; that a very considerable number of the proprietors of plantations, conceiving that they would be precluded from future purchases, strained their credit to the utmost in purchasing new Negroes, for whom they had not the means of providing proper subsistence. Examinant knows that there was in his neighbourhood a very considerable augmentation from increased importation of new Negroes, for whose subsistence the purchasers were very scantily provided, and from which there was a considerable additional mortality. That he is happy to state, that this waste of human life has been repaired by natural increase, during several years last past, which has taken place on examinant's own property, and all the plantations under his care. He believes that the deficiency of Negroes will decrease annually.

(Signed)

JOHN QUIER.

*Deposition of Ralph Mountague, Esq.*

Saith that he came to this island, from Great Britain, about last Christmas, for the purposes of private business and family arrangements, &c. \* \*

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Saith that the slaves in this country do appear to this examinant to be a contented body of people; that in his judgment they have reason to be so, as they enjoy the protection of laws and the comforts of life necessary in their condition as cultivators of the soil, and are treated by their masters with kindness and humanity, &c.

(Signed)

RALPH MOUNTAGUE.

I will take the liberty of directing your attention to three works lately published, upon the first of which the anti-colonists lay considerable stress, and of which the author is far from being partial to the planters. "Many," says Mr. Stewart, "or most of the old abuses are removed: punishments are more rare and far less severe: the slaves are not worked at unseasonable hours, (excepting the night-work during crop, which will, probably, continue until methods are devised\* for expediting the work by day at that period :) labour is more mild: the slaves are better

\* Methods *have* been lately devised, (as mentioned in my first letter,) of which the steam-engine is the most effective.

fed, clothed, and lodged, and when sick, experience kinder attention, and are more amply supplied with necessary comforts: and, above all, the breeding women are carefully attended to, and receive every necessary indulgence and assistance. In consequence of these reformations, there are now few plantations which have not increase of slaves," &c.\*

The third publication is by Mr. Sells, a medical man, of the highest respectability, who left Jamaica in May last, after a residence of twenty years, and who has "no interest there, directly or indirectly, personally, or ortherwise." To the whole of this pamphlet your attention is solicited.†

I shall conclude this letter with remarking, that the alleged mitigation of Negro labour in this colony receives full confirmation from the fact, that only about the same quantity of Sugar is now produced there by 340,000 slaves, as was produced by 255,700 slaves at the period to which you unfairly refer your readers. In the year 1786, Beckford states the number of sugar estates at 1061; of other settlements, 2018; of sugar made, 105,400 hogsheads; and of slaves, 255,700.‡

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(*Extract from Vindex's Letter of December 26th, 1824.*)

THAT cross-examination which Mr. Cooper was not permitted to undergo at the late meeting of your Abolition Society, appears to be now going forward through the medium of the London news-

\* Stewart's View of Jamaica, 1823, p. 230 and 231.

† Remarks on the Condition of the Slaves in the Island of Jamaica, by William Sells, Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, and many years Practitioner in the parish of Clarendon, in the Island of Jamaica. London, 1823, 8vo, price 1s. 6d.

‡ Beckford's Account of Jamaica, 1790, p. 29.

papers, which circumstance renders it superfluous to say much here. Upon one topic, however, it becomes necessary to make some inquiries; and it is *that* topic which, perhaps, of all others presents the greatest difficulties to the legislator, and to those who have had the misfortune to inherit West India property. It is respecting the use of the whip. Mr. Cooper's assertion, that "he never saw a Negro who, when uncovered, did not exhibit marks of violence, that is to say, traces of the whip," has been commented upon in my last letter but one. But it remains for him to explain how it happened that, during a residence of three years and four months upon a large sugar estate, he witnessed himself no very severe punishment. "One overseer *told him* (p. 62 of 'Negro Slavery') of a woman who had received at one time twice thirty-nine lashes;"—in the next leaf, "one of the book-keepers *tells him*" of another case of cruelty; and at p. 61, "*he has heard of* as many as sixty Negroes being flogged in one morning, for being late." Did he make no personal examination into cases of such atrocity? But on one occasion he *did see* an old man, who appeared to have been recently flogged, standing in the public street at Lucea with his posteriors bleeding. Now Mr. Cooper is respectfully called upon to say what the names of these persons were; what their offences had been, and more especially the offence of the last; and who was the captain that was in company with him (Mr. Cooper) at Lucea when he saw this Negro. But he is most particularly requested to state, whether the most severe flogging that came under his personal knowledge was not inflicted, *by his own order*, upon John Harden, a poor Negro lad who had been guilty of some neglect to his horse.

Of the internal regulations of Georgia estate as to labour, &c. I know nothing—but will simply ask the Rev. Gentleman which of the Negroes were heard by him to complain with just foundation, of *what* they complained, and which of them were in any danger of "being reduced to absolute want."\* He will, perhaps, also mention what Negroes were to his knowledge removed con-

\* Negro Slavery.