

John B. Adger

REVIVAL of the SLAVE TRADE

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A REVIEW

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OF

REPORTS TO THE LEGISLATURE OF S. C.,

ON THE

REVIVAL OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

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BY JOHN B. ADGER.

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FROM THE APRIL NUMBER OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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THE

# REVIVAL OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

*Reports of the Committee to whom was referred the Message of Gov. JAMES H. ADAMS, relating to Slavery and the Slave Trade.* Ordered to lie upon the table and be printed together for distribution. Columbia, S. C. Steam power press Carolina Times. 1857; pp. 88. 8 vo.

The history of opinions relating to African Slavery and the African Slave Trade, is very remarkable. About four centuries ago this trade was commenced by the Portuguese. In 1481 they erected their first fort at D'Elmina. Gradually, the English, Dutch, Danes, French and our own New Englanders, rivalled the Portuguese in their zeal for this traffic. About ninety years ago the Rev. Mr. Searle, a native of Connecticut, a student of Divinity under the great and venerable Jonathan Edwards, and a man of note in his day,—for a time a pastor in the neighborhood of Boston, and subsequently, till his death, in Vermont,—preached publicly in justification of the slave trade. We may consider this *the First Chapter* of the history of opinions in respect to this subject, embracing a period of about three hundred years, during which the traffic, afterwards so odious, had established itself firmly in the respect of most Christian nations. All along, however, from the beginning, there had not been wanting individuals who objected to it as inhuman. In New England itself, no doubt, some such were to be found; and about the time when Mr. Searle publicly advocated the traffic, such persons in Old England began to make their voices heard. Pope, Thomson, Shenstone and Cowper, among the Poets, and Warburton, Baxter, Whitfield, Wesley, and others among Divines, uttered their condemnation of the trade. Granville Sharp began his public efforts in 1765. The Quakers, in England, had uttered their censure as early as 1727; in America, they had, indeed, done this long before—viz.,

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in 1696. It was not, however, until about 1787 that Clarkson and Wilberforce began their earnest, determined and combined efforts.

That very year, the General Assembly of South Carolina, anticipating the action of Congress and of Great Britain by twenty years, forbade the introduction of any more slaves into this State, under the penalty of forfeiture of the slave and an additional fine of £100. After the severest struggles, and with infinite difficulty, Clarkson and Wilberforce and their coadjutors, succeeded in persuading the British Parliament to abolish the slave trade, Congress having passed a similar act a short time before. In France, the wildest radicalism—the most desperate assertions of universal liberty, equality and fraternity—the most reckless denial of all authority, human and Divine—began about this time to shew themselves, as the results both of that profligacy of the nobles, that rapacity of the courtiers, those disputes and vices of the clergy which had sapped the foundations of social order; and of those arguments, and that ridicule, by which able and eloquent writers had, for some time, been assailing all the ancient establishments, both of Church and State, and laboring to introduce, as they hoped, a better condition of affairs. Yet, France did not then, nor for a long time, apply her new opinions to the question before us. Not till Bonaparte returned from Elba did the French abolish the slave trade.

We may consider this event as terminating *Chapter the Second* of this remarkable history. From a general advocacy of the traffic, and a general participation in it, opinions have so far worked round as that all the chief maritime powers have declared the trade to be piratical. Henceforward we see them united in efforts to put it down. England, pre-eminently zealous against the traffic, (with how much honest unselfishness it is hard to determine,) declares publicly that her aim is not only to put down this trade, but to abolish slavery all over the world. She does actually abolish it in her West India possessions. And there arises and is carried on in connection with these movements of the governments, (and in fact as partly producing them,) a most excited and furious anti-slavery

crusade in England. This crusade, our Northern States, gradually are led to engage in with a fury even surpassing that of the English; and the whole civilized world is "agitated" with a view to a universal emancipation of the African slave. But there arises out of all this agitation a counter result! There is developed in the slaveholding States of this country a complete revolution of sentiment. From a state of doubt and anxiety in regard to their position, that was very general among the religious and intelligent classes of the community, they pass, by a careful examination of the Scriptures, to a calm and quiet conviction that their slaveholding is not condemned by the Christian religion. In the meanwhile, England perceives the ruinous error of her West India policy; and France also discovers that a fresh supply of African labor is a great necessity to her colonies; and both together with our own Government, despair of being able to put down the slave trade by their combined fleets. And *Chapter Third* of the History, which we have been endeavoring to trace, is closing now, with an open and determined resort on the part of France to the African coast for *slaves* under the name of *apprentices*; with feeble objections by England to the course of her "faithful ally," preparatory, it would seem, to her engaging as a partner in the same business; and with a frank and manly avowal, amongst ourselves, of the necessity and rightfulness of re-opening the slave trade, (which certainly makes conspicuous the upright and honest spirit of the Southern slaveholder,) as well as with some actual steps towards this end on the part of some of the South-Western States!

Before proceeding to a review of the very able, though not perfectly thorough discussion of the question of re-opening the slave trade, which is presented in the Majority and Minority Reports, named at the head of this article, we must refer again to that "complete revolution of sentiment," which has taken place in these slaveholding States; and to that "calm and quiet conviction," in which we have asserted that the conscience of the most scrupulous appears to have found repose. That sentiment, so calm and quiet because so deep and settled, is the most important feature perhaps in the present attitude of the

South regarding this whole matter of slavery. Extending, as we judge it does, to men of every religious creed, and uniting, as we judge it does, the whole body in every church in all this fair, broad Southern land, it constitutes an element of prodigious strength in every possible aspect. It prepares the whole people to stand as one man. It is a conviction that will make patriots, and if need were, martyrs. There is no earthly power that can overcome a whole people when animated by such convictions!

But what is this conviction of which we speak? What is the position of the South? We apprehend it is often misconceived both here and at the North. *There*, if we mistake not, it is often understood that the South maintains slavery to be essential to the best form of social organization; to be the form which God has ordained as the best form; and that therefore the South desires out of pure love and blind reverence for the institution, to propagate it every where. And *here* too, if we mistake not, some regard this conception, not only as the prevalent but the only true view of the case. Slavery is the best form of society, and God has ordained slavery, especially the slavery of the African race, and therefore it is even impious not to enslave them. Now, it appears to us, that this is not the ground upon which the South is standing up with a unanimous and profound conviction that they never can give back one inch. Whether slavery be or be not the best form of society in general; whether we ought or ought not to make positive efforts to extend it over or amongst people where it is not already, this is a question which, we judge, that our Southern people do not claim to have investigated, much less decided. The South, and especially the great Carolina statesman's late immediate constituents, are often charged with delighting in "abstractions." But this certainly is one "abstraction" which we have not agreed either to receive or reject. It may have occurred to many of us a thousand times, that equal rights to equal things for all men, is neither a possible nor a desirable form of the social state; that all communities have actually to use the involuntary labor of most classes of their people; that capital and labor are constantly carrying on their mutual strug-



gle in every country; and that in our Northern States there are likely to arise some very peculiar embarrassments and dangers to the peace and safety of society, as soon as capital and labor have both grown somewhat bigger and stronger, and the war between these now infant giants shall have begun to be carried on in earnest; but certainly we have not undertaken to decide how these States should regulate these affairs of their own. The South never has meddled with such questions, because not pertaining to her. We are not a meddling, impertinent people, given either to asking questions or volunteering advice about other men's affairs. We have no theories of government to propagate abroad. As to the whole matter of slavery we have all along been *on the defensive*. The only questions which we have endeavored to settle are such as concern ourselves, and our own duties and rights. Accordingly the position of the South, as we understand it, is, that whatever may be true in hypothetical cases, the actual case before us is a clear one. Whatever may be true or false of other nations generally,—whatever of other Africans,—as concerns those Africans who live amongst us, they are justly held by us in bondage. Towards them we have duties, over them we have rights. The existing relation between the white and the black man in these Southern States is a necessary, and a just, and a good relation. It is the best form of society possible amongst us. It is good not only for us, but good for them. Evils, and some of them great ones, evils to us and evils to them, are no doubt connected incidentally with the relation, (and what human relation is without incidental evils?) but the relation itself, is the very best possible for both the races, thus strangely brought together in God's mysterious Providence. Existing as they do in the midst of us, the end of this relation would necessarily be the end of all their wonderful progress—the beginning of their retrogression, very rapidly, into the barbarism out of which we have been God's agents in partly reclaiming them; and existing as they do in the midst of us, the end of this relation would be the end of all ability on our and their part to dwell peaceably together. Therefore the relation is good. And born under it, we and they both like it; and



under it, all things taken into view, we and they constitute together, perhaps, the happiest people in the whole world! Such we conceive to be the position which the South takes. And to that portion of our Northern brethren who have so much desire to teach us how unfortunate and miserable our lot is, and also how sinful is the relation of master and slave, we say, you neither know the facts nor comprehend the principles of the case. It is you that need instruction, concerning every part of the subject. And there are thousands of you, whom a single winter spent at the South, would be sufficient to emancipate from the thralldom of your prejudices and your erroneous conceptions. What judgment will history pass on men, who suffered themselves to be deceived by misrepresentations about things not three days' journey from their own homes? These deceived thousands are victims to those systematic efforts for manufacturing public sentiment, which have been carried on by the self-confident reformers of society at the North, during twenty-five years past, and under the influence of which the younger men of the present generation there have been educated. But there are thousands of these deceived people, whom a journey of three days might undeceive! No such short and simple process, however, would suffice for purging the vision of the authors of this system of misrepresentation and delusion. Theirs is the total blindness of a dogmatizing fanaticism.\*

As religious editors, we have no apology to offer for discussing in our pages, a question which in several important aspects is manifestly a religious as well as a political question. That the question has been raised, we very much regret, because

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\* To those in England who sympathized with the ferocious and disorganizing principles of infidel France at the Revolution, Burke gives the name of "new fanatics of popular arbitrary power." "Extraordinary questions of law," (like the *dethroning*, or as they called it the *cashiering* of a King,) "which are always pre-eminently questions of dispositions, of means, of probable consequences rather than of positive rights," these men settled without any difficulty, for being blinded by their fanaticism they saw no difficulty. Not one of them doubted but that "nature had qualified him to administer in extremities this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion (of Revolution) to a distempered State."

while its discussion cannot be expected to answer the practical end it contemplates, it will certainly divide public opinion amongst us, and this division must tend to alienate from one another, those who ought to stand shoulder to shoulder. Why then, it may be asked, do you agitate the question, if you apprehend such consequences from the very discussion? We answer, because the discussion is begun, and upon one side is going on continually; and because we would see our Southern people not abandoning their now impregnable position for one which they cannot hold. We have the highest respect for the majority of the committee. Their report is able. Their motives are pure and patriotic. But we fear that, for uncertain results and doubtful advantages, they are relinquishing the most valuable fruits of our past victories in this mighty conflict with the whole civilized world; as well as, the most indispensable necessities for further conquests by us, in the struggles which remain. We stand already on a very high vantage ground. Our position is one that has proved, to us and to the world of our assailants, its impregnable strength. The South must not forsake that position. We feel impelled, as her sons, to speak to our mother! We shall strive, on our part, in speaking, not to wound the feelings of one of her children.

The occasion of these reports was furnished by certain suggestions to the Legislature of South Carolina, contained in Gov. Adams' Message, December, 1857. The late Governor's argument for the re-opening of the trade, as quoted by the majority of the Committee, is, briefly, that the demand for cotton is greater than the South can meet, not for want of land, but labor; and that the immediate consequence must be a still higher price for cotton, by which the growth of the article in other countries will certainly be so much stimulated as finally to furnish a foreign supply of it, and in time to destroy our now partial monopoly. England and France are already making systematic efforts to produce cotton in the East Indies and in Algeria. The present high price of the article helps them to succeed in these efforts. The true policy of these Southern States is to have the price reduced. We must make up for this reduction by making larger crops. To do this, we

want more labor; and to be able to get more labor, we must cheapen labor by getting more slaves from Africa. To the objection that this would be *wrong*, Gov. Adams replies that slavery has benefited those now here, and would benefit those to be brought. To the objection that opening this trade will lessen the value of slaves, and ultimately destroy the institution, he replies by asserting that unrestricted immigration has not diminished the value of labor in the North West. He maintains that the Act of Congress, which declares the slave trade piracy, is a brand upon us that ought to be removed; for, if the slave trade be piracy, then our slaves must be plunder. And, accordingly, he urges the State to withdraw her assent to this act, which is, in fact, a direct condemnation of ourselves. He regards more slaves to be necessary to a restoration of the South to an equality of power in the general government, as well as to the full development of our peculiar form of society; and, therefore, considers that we are bound by a most sacred obligation to give that form of society the means of expansion, and to press it forward to a perpetuity of progress.

Reporting favorably to the Legislature upon these views and suggestions of his late Excellency, the majority succinctly review the whole course of British policy on this subject; the vastness of England's former colonial resources for procuring a supply of those tropical productions, which are the great demand of the age; her now acknowledged error in ruining her West India Islands; the failure of her "apprentice" system for the manumitted slaves, and also of her "free emigrant" and "coolie" system; and the now, more than ever, manifest failure of her gigantic efforts to obtain cotton in the East Indies.\* They maintain, that failing to obtain any actual release from the dilemma into which she has fallen, England now seeks a comparative result. She would embarrass, jeopardize and cripple us, who have not followed her example; have not abol-

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\* The gentlemen of the majority appear to differ from Gov. Adams upon the question of fact, regarding the past success and the probable future success of Great Britain in growing cotton in the East Indies.

ished slavery ; and so are continuing to supply commerce with the products which civilization demands as the necessaries of life. Brazil and Cuba she also includes in her crusade against slavery, which is simply a scheme for self-compensation for injuries she has done to herself. If she can succeed in abolishing slavery in these three countries, but especially amongst us, then will all other countries be reduced to the same *relative productive capacity* with herself.

In tracing the history of British efforts to procure the abolition of slavery by these, the only three slaveholding powers of America, the Majority's Report dwells upon the grounds which England certainly had, at the time she abolished the institution in her colonies, to believe that her example would be followed in this country. The hope was reasonable. Confined then to but a few States; debarred from increase by importation; unpopular at home; denounced abroad; who could have foreseen that in a single generation, slavery would live down all these obstacles to its progress? The reasonable hope of the British was blasted. Shortly and unexpectedly, but by some mighty impulse, the tide of abolition was checked in the border States of Virginia and Kentucky; and slavery in these Southern States is now vindicating the majesty of its power in the very necessities of all mankind.

But not only did the original slave States continue to be such, but Florida and Louisiana added four to their number. Texas also, notwithstanding all the earnest and artful efforts of England to make out of her a rival cotton producing country at our very door, which should use free and not slave labor; preferred to hearken to nature's voice, and the cry of the blood in her own veins, and joined herself to her sister States. This *last direct* effort of Great Britain to embarrass slavery amongst us having failed, she has ever since been resorting to indirect means. She is stimulating the blind fury of Northern Abolitionists. Our domestic and our foreign foes are in league together. And both by treaty stipulations with this foreign nation, and by legislative enactments on the part of our own government at home, is it attempted to undermine and overthrow our Southern institutions; as well as by a domestic

popular agitation which has long been stirring up all the evil passions of the nation, and filling the country with discord and dissension. Thus the most powerful maritime nation of Europe, has been for half a century, and still is striving to ruin us; while, at home, the section that is conducting in a like spirit towards us, is soon to have the complete control of this government! What then shall the South, the whole united South do? The report answers, that they must shape their course, so as to convert our enemies into friends, through a double conviction of their own interests and our rights.

It then proceeds to shew that slavery became popular at the South when the culture of cotton, rice, tobacco, sugar, hemp, &c., became profitable; but that it became also, at the same time beneficial through these productions, both to the North and to Great Britain. Slavery thus depends on commerce and manufactures, and commerce and manufactures, in their turn, depend on slavery. For the rescue of slavery then from its impending dangers, the ways and means of supplying the steadily increasing demand for cotton, claim our earnest consideration. The abolition of slavery, hitherto, has been prevented by the necessity of its fruits. If it should not continue to make itself necessary hereafter, it must be abolished. Now, if the demand for cotton increases and slavery cannot proportionably multiply its hands and arms, so as to furnish the needed supply of this article, mankind will be forced to find a supply elsewhere, and slavery will thus become less and less a necessity. Our present partial monopoly of the cotton trade, therefore calls for a more abundant, and thus a cheaper supply of labor, and this necessitates the re-opening of the slave trade.

The report then takes up a discussion of the question, whether the true interests, *first* of South Carolina, and then *secondly*, of the whole South, and then *thirdly*, of the whole world, demand an increase of slaves in these States. It is urged that in this State alone, we have 5,000,000 acres of good land not in cultivation, of which, 1,300,000 acres are rich, but unreclaimed swamp and river-bottom, lying in the malarious section of the State, where no agricultural labor but that of the



negro ever can subsist. But instead of our having the requisite amount of negro labor for the cultivation of these rich lands, not less than 130,000 negroes have been removed to the west since 1820. Dividing the sixty years of the United States census into two equal periods of thirty years, our slave population increased during the former 140 per cent., but during the latter period only 49 per cent.;—while the increase in the south western States has been from 300 to 900 per cent. But the majority insist, that even looking at the South as a whole, there is not, now, a supply of the labor, and there is not the natural prospect of a supply, hereafter, of the labor which is required. But if South Carolina, and if the whole South, need an increase of slaves; so does all the world need that this supply be furnished. Why should all the world be required to pay us fifteen cents per pound for cotton, when with abundance of cheap labor we could profitably to ourselves, raise it for them at ten cents? Is it worth while for the world to shut Africa out of its only sphere of usefulness, simply, that *they* may be compelled to pay us five cents more for every pound of cotton, making in a crop of three and a half millions of bales, a difference of \$78,000,000? And then the report dwells on the well known tremendous consequences which agitate England, whenever her manufactories have to work “short time;” and asks, what will be the effects on England and the North, when “short time” shall be made a permanent necessity by reason of the increased price of cotton? Shall Africa be left in her barbarism and all to ruin Europe and America?

A mere glance is taken in this Report at the leading object of Northern policy, which is to settle our Territories as hireling States and to bring them, as such, into this Union, more rapidly than the South can introduce slave States. They have a smaller original area and a larger original population, and besides, they receive, annually, from four to five hundred thousand European emigrants to swell their numbers, while we have not, received for fifty years a single negro! And if in the existing struggle, this advantage is to be preserved by our own consent and co-operation, the Report says, it would be wise

for us to enter into a calculation of the number of our days, and to bespeak from some chosen historian a becoming record of our decay and subjugation.

The remainder of this able report is occupied in urging that this State should exert its influence with Congress, through its Senators and Representatives, for the repeal of all acts prohibiting the slave trade, and of all treaty stipulations whatever on the subject: because, we do by our own acquiescence in those acts, denounce ourselves as pirates, since time cannot sanctify wrong, and since if the slave trade is piracy then slaves are plunder;—because again, these treaty stipulations are unjust to the South as taking away from her the ability to use the new territories acquired by this government; and as at the same time helping to stigmatize and hold us up to the execration of mankind;—and because, also, these treaties do constitute one of those entangling alliances with a foreign nation against which the Father of his country has warned us.

There is also, in the concluding part of this Report, an incidental and very brief reference to *four* objections to the slave trade, viz: the general inhumanity and injustice of it; the sufferings it involves in the involuntary separation of the negro from his relatives; the sufferings it involves in the horrors of the passage across the Atlantic, and the sufferings it involves in the interior wars which it occasions. The *third* of these is the only one which we understand the Report to admit as having any real force. The others are referred to as “alleged” or “supposed.” This *third* one, the sufferings of the passage, it is said, could all be reduced by proper arrangements to the mere ordinary inconvenience of the sea voyage to which emigrants from Europe are all subjected.

We have thus, as briefly as possible, and we think in the spirit of candor and fairness, stated the contents of the Majority’s Report. Before proceeding to a statement of the contents and scope of the Minority’s argument, we take occasion here to remark that while we admit the eloquence and force with which many of these views are put forth, yet we are constrained to regard the Report as a signal failure, viewed simply as the discussion of a great question of State policy. It seems to us

that the whole argument lacks the quality of practical wisdom. It theorizes too much. Take, for example, the long and minute explanation of the British scheme respecting us. They have ruined their own Islands, and now they go round about continually in all manner of circuitous ways with a view to reducing these slaveholding States to the same *relative productive capacity* with their Islands. Not being able to procure any actual release from the dilemma into which she brought herself by abolishing slavery in the West Indies, she now seeks this comparative result. This is the key to her policy. Now, we say this whole theory is as *circuitous* as is the policy it charges on England! The simple explanation of all Great Britain has done or would do regarding us, is just this: She acts from the instinct of British abolition sentiment and from the instinct of British commercial jealousy. She is mad with fanaticism about African Slavery; but there is a method in her madness. She wants cotton, free grown if she can get it; but, any how and by any means, cheap; and to get it cheap she must have more markets for it than one. How can this Report maintain both that cotton is the great necessity of the world, and yet that England, who is at once the mistress and the merchant for a very great part of the world, is actually desirous to destroy our capacity to produce the article?

We submit also, that the same lack of practical good sense appears to characterize the plan suggested for preventing the world from finding out a substitute for slavery as its cotton producer. The Report seems to imply that if the price can only be kept from rising too high, the world will leave to us the business of growing its cotton, but that otherwise a substitute will be summoned to take our place. Can the British government, or can the French government (for these constitute *the world* in regard to this matter) do any thing more that they are not now already doing for the supply of this substitute? Are they now so content with their condition of dependence upon our market for cotton, that if we will but open the slave trade again and so cheapen cotton somewhat, they will no longer seek to raise cotton in the East Indies or Algeria? If we get rich whenever short-staple cotton is worth ten cents,

will they not think it might be, even at that price, profitable to their subjects?

But it is with the utmost gravity, that the authors of this report set forth this plan. It is presented not simply in the light in which we have just been considering it, but as the distinct and definite answer to "the great question, What is to be done?"—to the "great question, What measures should be taken by the South to rescue slavery from its impending dangers?" (See pp. 17 and 18.) Now, inasmuch as a great issue is "presented to the South and the South alone,"—the issue made with us by "the most powerful maritime nation of Europe, leagued with that section of the United States which is soon to have the government in its own hands," (see p. 17);—this great issue being made with the South respecting the continuance of slavery, do these gentlemen seriously mean to say, as wise and practical men, that they consider "the only rescue for slavery from its impending dangers" is to seek to re-open the slave trade? They do say it, if we have not totally misapprehended the meaning of their language. Now, for ourselves, we are not men of war, but of peace. Yet looking forth from our quiet retreat upon the turmoil with which this controversy has filled the country, and regarding the real issue that is before us in the light of all history; we say, that no such scheme as this can rescue slavery from its dangers, and that, in our poor judgment, nothing can hinder this controversy from being finally referred to the "bloody arbitrament of the sword," except, in the mercy of God to our country and the human race, there should be brought about a great change of moral sentiments and opinions at the North.

This leads us to remark, that by far the greatest fault we have to find with the Report applies to its general *tone* in regard to the moral and religious aspects of the question. Not only does it make light of all objections to the slave trade on such grounds as its inhumanity and injustice, speaking of the cruel wars of the interior, and the forced separation of the captives from children or parents as "supposed evils," (p. 41,) but it broadly asserts that "it is now conceded throughout the Southern States that the slave trade does not violate the prin-

ciples either of humanity or justice." (P. 39.) It also affirms that "No element of morals or religion enters into the question whether South Carolina needs a further importation of slaves from Africa. It stands recorded in our statutes, that we have no scruples of this sort. And the undivided opinion of South Carolina is that the importation of negroes from Africa, and their being made to cultivate our soil under the equitable laws which control and protect our commonwealth, would violate no law of God nor any principle of justice." (P. 20.) We regret, exceedingly, that the majority should have been led in the earnestness of argument and in their patriotic zeal, to make such strong statements. That they are far too strong is sufficiently manifest in the history of these very Reports. Their being laid on the table, without discussion, and ordered to be printed together for distribution, shews that there was *something* in them, respecting which the opinion of South Carolina was not undivided. One part certainly of that "something" is this very point of the immorality of the slave trade. Our people do, undoubtedly, make the distinction which Gov. Adams and the majority repudiate, between slavery and the slave trade. As respects even the *former*, public sentiment amongst us is better than some of our laws, and makes some of these laws a *dead letter*, because they were suitable only to the barbarous character of our slave population at the time they were made. But as respects *the latter*, public sentiment amongst us regards certain features, which appear to be inseparable from it, with horror. Those "wars, to which the trade undoubtedly gives rise in Africa," and also those "involuntary separations of the negro from his relatives," are not estimated as mere "supposed" evils. Those "involuntary separations," when they occur amongst our slaves here, our community does not regard with any thing like indifference. There is not one member of this Majority, we are sure, who so regards them; or, who would for any reason short of imperious necessity or else flagrant crime, consent to such a separation amongst his own slaves! And though we all know that our slavery has made the negro, in respect to his social feelings, a very far superior being to what the negro is in Africa; still, we all know and we



all feel, that there, also, he is a man, and that though a very degraded savage, the mother, at least, loves her child!

We object, therefore, very strenuously, to there being ascribed to South Carolina any such attitude on these moral questions, because it is both unjust to the State and injurious to us in our battle with the world. Let it never be forgotten for a moment, that although it may terminate in an appeal to force, this has been from the first and still is a *moral* conflict. We lose strength whenever we abandon the ground of justice and of truth. The South cannot afford in such a struggle as this, to lose the approbation of the King of nations and the support of His Word against all her foes. We feel sure that the gentlemen of this Majority do not really entertain the sentiments which these portions of their Report would seem to imply. We feel equally sure that the respected writer of it has not intentionally given to his eloquent production that air it wears, of coldly and carelessly determining grave questions of humanity and of justice upon mere grounds (and those doubtful grounds at best) of State policy; that air it wears of representing Dollars and Cents, or any other material interests to be the great interests of society amongst us! He knows as well and doubtless feels as sensibly as we do, that great as is the value to the South of her partial monopoly of the cotton trade, great as is the value to her of her present enviable (and we think envied) condition of prosperity and peace in all her borders and amongst all classes of her people; yet, she has a higher and nobler and more valuable interest to preserve—namely, her interest in honor and duty and truth.

The Report of the Minority begins by stating the stand point from which in the judgment of the writer, (J. Johnston Pettigrew, Esq.,) the recommendations of Gov. Adams were to be viewed. Had he been considering them as a member of the King's council for Ashanti or Dahomey; looking at the degradation of the miserable Africans there, as compared with their four millions of enslaved descendants here, robust, fed, clothed, cared for when sick and aged, instructed in the elements of religion and surrounded on all sides by the enlightenment of an advancing civilization; he might, as a friend of Africa, have

advocated the revival of the slave trade. But objects nearer home have profounder claims upon his sympathy. He views the subject as a legislator of South Carolina bound to legislate for her good, and not that of the African Continent. Looking at the subject from this point of view, he finds it necessary first to remove certain obstacles to a clear vision, which under the guise of arguments stand in the way of our true perception of our interest and duty. It is the more necessary to get rid of these illusions, because our habit of repelling with indignation the impertinent attacks of our enemies, renders it difficult for us to regard any question connected with slavery in that light of impartial and dispassionate reason, which and which alone the emergency demands. *The first* of these is the opinions on one branch or on another of this whole question of slavery which the outside world may entertain. Their information is not correct; their judgment not impartial. Neither the Absolutists nor the Democrats of Europe,—neither the fanatics of England nor those of the North, should have any influence upon us, when for one or for another reason they denounce us and our institutions. And very necessary is it for us now, not to follow the false lights which England and France are holding out to us in respect to the slave trade. The lesson we should learn from the vices and the crimes of our enemies is not that of imitation. Never was any system entertained by enlightened nations so disgraceful to humanity and so devoid of any mitigating features, as their system of Coolie and Apprentice traffic. Even in its most barbarous days, the slave trade had some redeeming features; there was room to hope for eventual good. But this traffic is worse than the worst West India Slavery, for the hirer of these apprentices is not restrained either by the kindness which every man naturally feels to his own family, black and white, or by that impulse which always prompts a man to preserve his own property. For the first time in the history of the world, a system has been devised which encourages the master to work his slaves to death in a specific number of years. Far from following their example, the conduct of these Abolitionists should rouse in us only a horror of their systematic cruelty and their hollow hypocrisy.

The *second fallacious idea*, which the Minority brush out of their way, is the idea suggested by Gov. Adams that the epithet piracy, applied to the slave trade, stigmatizes our property in slaves as plunder. The distinction is a broad one between *malum in se*, and *malum prohibitum*. That law of nations which makes the slave trade piracy has no reference, and can in no way apply to our slaves. Washington and the other great Southrons of his day were equally removed from the two extremes of stigmatizing their own property as plunder, and of ascending the same platform with the heroes of the middle passage. The fraud and violence which there may have been in the inception of our title to this property no more vitiates that title, than is the title to perhaps every particular acre of land in Europe vitiated by the tears of despoiled widows and orphans which have bedewed some one or other of its links. To impugn the title to these acres, in the present possessor, is to fall into the slough of socialism. There is little reason, therefore, for this sensitiveness on our part at the epithet of piracy which our fathers affixed to the slave trade.

A *third idea* calculated to influence the question upon other grounds than its merits is, that if the trade were now open we would be unwilling to close it, and therefore it should be re-opened. The report controverts the premise of this argument. The considerations unfavorable to this traffic which put an end to it amongst us in 1787, would probably prevail now to put it down. But granting the premise the conclusion does not follow. Governments are, with reason, chary of meddling with labor, the most delicate of all questions they have to touch. If the trade were in operation we might hesitate to revolutionize our system. Our ancestors however did cautiously close the trade. South Carolina anticipated the action of Congress by twenty years. Every member of Congress from this State voted for the measure, save one, and he differed on a point of detail. The proper inference to draw from their conduct would be to leave our system of labor in its present flourishing and prosperous condition.

The main question is now before us—Will the re-opening of the Slave Trade benefit South Carolina?

The *first argument*, considered by the Minority, is the one

detailed pretty fully above, regarding the necessity of cheapening the price of cotton. The report admits that the re-opening of this trade would cheapen laborers, but denies that this is the same thing as to cheapen labor and so cheapen cotton. The increase of labor would not be proportionate to the increase of laborers, because of the manifest inferiority of what would be imported. Not only the specified number, deemed necessary to be added to our laborers, must be imported, but an additional number to give the additional amount of labor demanded. Add to this a still further additional number to compensate for the deterioration in character and efficiency, on the part of our own educated and civilized negroes, to be certainly produced by the introduction amongst them of many thousands of idle, slovenly, insubordinate barbarians. The nett profits of this deteriorated slave labor would therefore be less than of slave labor as at present amongst us;—for, a plantation of slaves would eat, drink and wear as much after, as before the revival of the slave trade, and the cost of medical advice would be as great as ever. The actual running expense, then of growing a certain amount of cotton would be greater, and the nett profits (which are all that benefit a people who produce to export) would be two degrees less. Thus, the re-opening of the slave trade would not cheapen cotton. But it would reduce the value of our slaves, according to the plain and fundamental doctrine of political economy, that when a certain quantity of any article is in the market, the natural effect of introducing an additional quantity of the same is to diminish its previous value. Thus, if to the 400,000 slaves which we now have in this State 100,000 more from Africa were added, the loss in market value of the 400,000 would be many hundreds of thousands of dollars. And then as soon as the demand for labor should be supplied, there would inevitably ensue an instantaneous and a vast depression, till the extreme point were reached where capital invested in the trade would yield no greater return than if invested in any other branch of commerce. The report then discusses at some length the question who would benefit by cheap cotton; shews that the price of our great staples is not much higher than we may reasonably demand, the price of every thing else in the

commercial world having risen also through a combination of causes, some real, some fictitious and transitory;—that the increase of a few cents in the pound is a matter of no great importance to the manufacturer, the prime cost of the article being only a small portion of the price he imposes on his customers for the manufactured goods;—that the objection to slave-cotton with the vast majority of Europe is really from their apprehensions as to the stability of slavery, their prevalent idea being that Southern society slumbers on a volcano;—that England and France can never deprive us of our monopoly;—and that not only is no great evil impending over us which a reduction in the price of cotton could avert, but that if the price were reduced it would be the British manufacturer alone who would reap the benefit.

The *second argument* is, that we suffer under a deficiency of negro labor, by reason of the transfer of our slaves to the West. The Report denies that any such ruinous consequences appear as are ascribed to this cause. Instead of mansions crumbling and plantations gone to ruin from want of labor, every where prosperity is visible, every where lands have risen in value, every where wealth is accumulating; and were it not for the drafts on our resources by *summer-absenteeism*, the invested capital would be immense. But admit the statement—does the slave trade offer a remedy? Our agricultural staples are Rice, Sea Island Cotton and Upland Cotton. The two first are necessarily confined to a small territory, and constitute a real monopoly. The cost of labor is a small item—the consumer pays for it, not the producer. The idea, then, of moving elsewhere to cultivate these two staples is preposterous. As to the third staple, viz.: Upland Cotton, the Report shews that three elements enter into price. 1. The passive element, land, &c. 2. The active element, labor, &c. 3. Transportation; but, that only one of these can be concerned in causing the transfer of our labor to the West. That one is the greater productiveness of some of the lands there. Now, will the revival of the slave trade afford us any remedy for this? It would not. Time is the sure remedy, for it will work the two-fold operation of raising the price of lands in the West, and of wearing them



out. It should be the ambition of our statesmen, however, to apply another remedy, and that is the adoption of measures for rendering some one or all three of the elements of price more efficient at home. Improve the soil, improve the slave, improve the means of transportation—these constitute the remedy suggested by the Minority.

*The third argument* is, that to re-open the trade will be for the advantage of the poor non-slaveholder. This is, of all arguments, the weakest. The poor man, who holds no slaves, has no source of wealth but his own labor; and the effect of this trade, it is maintained, will be to cheapen labor. If it cheapen the labor that is to be bought, it will also, in like proportion, cheapen the labor that is to buy. It would be hard to shew how this can benefit the poor man that holds no slaves.

These are all the arguments for re-opening the trade. Let us now consider objections to this scheme.

The *first objection* arises from the number of Africans it will require. The end proposed is to reduce the price of slave staples, say to one-half. Then you must double the amount of labor, which is now, say four millions slaves, by importing four millions of negroes from Africa. But, you must add something to make up for their want of efficiency. Three American negroes are certainly equal to four Africans; the number, then, to be imported will be four-thirds of four millions. But the value of our four millions will be reduced by contamination at least one-fourth, which will require an additional importation of four-thirds of one million—making the whole number required, in order to double our labor, equal to four-thirds of four millions added to four-thirds of one million. But labor is but one element of price. To reduce the price of slave produce, the slave trade must affect the cost also of land and transportation. Now, allow that land and transportation contribute two-fifths to price, and leave for labor the other three-fifths. The reduction upon this two-fifths of the price, (which two-fifths equal, of course, two-thirds of the labor element,) will call for an additional importation of two-thirds of four millions of American slaves, equal to four-thirds of two-thirds of four millions of African slaves. The grand total, therefore, of importation to

accomplish a reduction of one-half in the price of slave staples will thus be four-thirds of four millions *plus* four-thirds of one million, *plus* four-thirds of two-thirds of four millions, equal to ten and two-ninths millions! Those who are surprised at the result must remember that political problems involve more than one condition, and are not to be solved by simple arithmetic. The calculus would be a much more suitable instrument for investigation. The project, of course, never could go so far. Long before it could reach this point the market of slaves would be glutted; slave labor worthless—nay, an incubus; cotton down to five or six cents; the English manufacturer bloated with wealth; the planter not able to buy provisions or clothing for his slaves!

The *second objection* is derived from the character of the population with which it is proposed to fill the land. So far from being that paragon of all virtues which Abolitionists, in their cant, represent the African in his native land to be, he is rather a sanguinary barbarian, with whom polygamy, theft, violence and deceit, are virtues. Such is the population which, chattering a foreign tongue, is to be distributed in millions throughout the land!

The Report proceeds to consider the effect of this importation *upon our present slaves*, not in the economical point of view before looked at, but in the moral aspect, which does also so directly influence their pecuniary value. We have a succinct, but clear statement of the powerful operation of our civilization and of our Christianity upon this Barbarian race, during the half century which has elapsed since the slave trade ceased to bring in its "New Negroes." The American Negro is hardly recognizable as the same being he was. Labor is no longer so repugnant to his disposition as to require the constant terror of the lash to impel him to undertake it. He feels an interest in the soil he cultivates, and recognises the solidarity uniting himself and his master. Whenever kindly treated, he is attached to the family; is proud of his young master and mistress; and there are none to greet them with a warmer welcome, or a face beaming with more joy, when they return home at their school vacations, than the old servants of the household. He is unac-

quainted alike with the pleasures and the pains of freedom; and in most cases sees nothing either to envy or to respect in those of his own color whom he sees in that position. He regards the white man as belonging to a superior order of beings. Obedience to the white man has become a part of his nature,—he obeys not from fear but education. His moral nature is instructed. He is no longer a mere work-animal. He knows the difference between right and wrong, and that although a slave he is still a responsible moral agent. Into the midst of this people whose moral as well as physical guardians we are, it is proposed to introduce a class of creatures who will do, not what they are commanded, but what they are forced to do; who recognize no duties; who have never heard of laws; to whom industry is unknown; who are yet to learn that treachery and bloodshedding are wrong; who have been torn from their native land, and transferred to a strange soil and climate, to obey the behests of a strange master! What must be the effect upon our slaves? Those who anticipate only the elevation of the new slaves, forget, how evil communications corrupt faster and more easily than good examples improve. The great improvement we have, under Providence, been the means of effecting, is due very much, to the fact that the slave trade never did flourish much in this country, and has for many years past been suppressed. Re-open this flood gate of impurity, and all that we have accomplished in half a century would be lost and the cheapest defence of our institution sacrificed to a mere experiment.

The effect of this importation *upon masters* and upon the *State at large* are described with so much force and eloquence, and the views expressed, do so justly and completely reflect the feelings which every citizen of South Carolina finds in his own breast, that we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of laying them in full before our readers.

“As masters we would have still less reason to be gratified with the result. In the present condition of South Carolina, agricultural life is preferred by the great majority of her citizens, and is recommended by many other considerations than mere pecuniary interest. They are loth to yield up or desert the homes of their forefathers. They find

that their natural feelings of independence are gratified, by treading habitually their own grounds; that their children grow up in a pure atmosphere, far from the temptations of city life. The Commonwealth, too, derives an advantage in the possession of a hardy, self-reliant, refined and educated body of citizens, who are, perhaps, more warmly attached to her soil, from owning it, and directly superintending its cultivation. But, to the existence of this class of population, the certainty of security to isolated families is an absolute requisite. Hence, it exists only in countries such as England and the United States, which have generally been free from the curse of foreign invasion and internal violence, while in France, Spain, etc., it is unknown, with the occasional exception of some feudal Baron, who still keeps up an army of retainers, sufficient to ensure his castle against surprise. One of the charms of plantation life consists in the pleasant intercourse between master and slave; characterized, as it generally is, by kindness of feeling on both sides. The introduction of half a million raw Africans, such as have been described, would quickly alter this state of things. The idea of leaving one's family, even for a day, amid a mass of barbarians—vicious, unruly, discontented, accustomed to the rule of force, speaking a different language, and never having learned to regard their master as their friend—would be revolting to human nature. We should gradually come to live as in the West Indies and Europe; proprietors would cluster in cities and villages, paying only occasional visits to their property; plantations would soon be held in copartnership, as investments, and the only interest felt would be in the factor's balance. The owner would cease to disturb himself about the moral or physical condition of his slave. How could he sympathize with creatures with whom he could not even converse? How could he expose his children to a gang of savages, accustomed to poison or to murder; or, if he had been so unlucky as to purchase out of a nation of that description—to cannibalism? If perchance his servants were to die from cruelty, or overwork, in his absence, the slave trade would offer a cheap substitute, and there would be no neighborhood of gentlemen to brand him with public opinion. We should soon be driven to all those appliances which are necessary where force is acknowledged to be the only lever of government. That such a change would take place cannot be doubted. To pronounce it desirable would be to offer a senseless indignity to every owner of a plantation; for though, in argument with strangers, we frequently treat the bond between master and slave—ensuring protection to the one and obedience to the other—as merely pecuniary; yet, we confess to ourselves, that this mode of defending the institution is forced upon us by the necessity of selecting such considerations as will be appreciated by our opponents; while every slaveholder would be indignant at the thought that those by whom he had been surrounded from his youth have no other claim upon him than his horse or his ox. The injurious effect of the Slave Trade, under this aspect, would be more severely felt in the parishes than in the hill country—owing to the great

preponderance of the slave population, which always has existed there, and from the nature of the climate, always will exist.

“If the relation of individual owners towards their slaves would be affected, not less would be the change in the relation of society to the subject masses in its bosom. It is a universal opinion abroad, that we retain our authority through the ignorance of our slaves as to their real strength; exactly the reverse is the case: we hold it undisputed—because of their *knowledge* of their real strength. An ignorant man is controlled only by the visible exhibition of power; it requires education—and a considerable degree of education—to enable him to comprehend obedience to the law, as such; to enable him to see, in the sheriff, not an individual man, nor the leader of an armed *posse*, but the representative of the latent force of a whole society. This is an idea inculcated by knowledge—not ignorance. Prussia is a striking instance of the power of education, in causing a nation of brave men to submit to an unlimited military despotism. Were our slaves ignorant savages, we should, indeed, hold our individual lives by sufferance. Visible power and authority they would respect and nothing else; hence, it would be necessary to render power visible—unseen, it would be despised. Moreover, nations, as well as individuals, can be educated to obedience, and the opposite. An African, whose ancestors have delighted his youth with tales of war and resistance to control, grows up with this sentiment strong in his breast; the American slave, who has never heard, save of peaceable submission, is naturally inclined to submit. Some nations, by being often conquered, have been thus rendered permanent cowards, and flee at the sight of soldier or a policeman. We suck in rebellion or obedience with our mother’s milk. The Americans afford an illustration of this principle. Perhaps no nation on the globe is more high tempered, restless, excitable and violent in resistance to illegitimate authority, than the inhabitants of these Southern States; yet, none submit with more cheerfulness and alacrity to the commands of the law, however disagreeable. The American General at the head of a conquering army in Mexico, with a prostrate nation at his feet, was ordered to lay down his command and appear before a court martial; he unhesitatingly obeyed the mandate. Mexicans were unable to comprehend such conduct; an American would have been incapable of comprehending any other; the one had been educated to law, the other to anarchy. Our slaves have been subjected to the same influence as ourselves,—they obey, without question, the law of their position; and as a remarkable consequence there has not been a commotion in the slave population of this, the most decidedly slave State in the Union, since the suppression of the trade, with the single exception of 1822, which was entirely owing to emissaries from the West Indies; and was, moreover, much exaggerated in the reports of the time. Nor is it probable that another will ever take place. A partial outbreak they, of course, will not make; and the same knowledge which would fit them for a general insurrection, will



most effectually deter them, by showing its utter futility. With the introduction of savages, a new night would descend; the very ignorance by which they would be incapacitated for a grand scheme, would urge them to outrages, individual and concerted, of a minor character, for which an unknown tongue would afford convenient means of concealment. Thefts, murders, plantation riots, would be the order of the day, until the old West India system was introduced, to which we should soon be driven.

“Such would be the natural effect of the realization of this project upon slaves, slaveholders and the community at large. Experience corroborates these deductions. The awful character of Roman slavery, where the bond of duty was not correlative, and where it was consequently not considered improper to expose such slaves as had outlived the period of actual labor, to starve on an island in the Tiber, is well known; and it is also well known that its worst features were developed by the wars of the Republic, which, by reducing whole nations of barbarians to captivity, produced effects similar to those of the modern slave trade. But it is useless to investigate a system, which in its practical operation, has so little similarity to our own. The West India system, in its origin and general features, offers many more points of contact, yet we know that, there, the slave was considered a mere instrument of labor; that the problem was at a given price, to extort from him the greatest amount of work; that the average length of his life, was seven years, at the end of which his place was supplied by another African; that the idea of any other than a mere economical relation between the master and the slave never entered into the brain of either—the negro exchanged an African for a West Indian master, whether the change was beneficial depended upon circumstances; that one desideratum was to prevent his killing himself or his master, being from his barbarous nature, prone to do both; that the means of control were suited to the nature of the authority; chains, cart-whips, swords, barracons were in ordinary use on every plantation. Certainly there was an essential difference between their system and ours.

Nor is the history of Carolina devoid of the teachings of experience to those who are willing to be taught. One peculiarity of the ante-revolutionary system, was the great apprehension manifested of certain offences, which now rarely occur; or if so, are not attended with serious consequences. Runaways seem to have been, as in the West Indies, great objects of dread; every variety of punishment was invented to deter them,—and perhaps not without reason, as contemporaneous narratives shew them to have filled the woods, and to have been of the most desperate character, recognizable only by the brand of their owner burnt in upon them. Another was the continual fear of insurrection, for which there was ample justification. Another, was the cruel corporeal nature of the punishments prescribed. A glance at the statute book will bring these facts into relief.” (Pp. 25, 26, 27, 28.)

The Report then proceeds to some detail of the various Acts

of Assembly in 1690, in 1712, in 1751, etc., etc., for the punishment of negro crimes. The punishments were such as splitting the nose, cutting off the ear, branding, gelding, cutting off one leg, &c., &c. All these were very different from what are now inflicted upon slaves, or what were then inflicted upon the whites; in the one case the appeal being to the body, in the other to the moral nature. But what is the cause of this difference? Doubtless some portion of it is due to the progress of the age. But the main cause of difference is not this; our ancestors were not so much more cruel than ourselves. On the contrary, these punishments were at that time so revolting to their general feelings, that legislative wisdom was compelled to impose in these very statutes, heavy penalties upon the masters who did not thus punish runaways, rebels and other criminals, in order to provide for the security of the State. What, then, is the chief cause of all this amelioration of our discipline? The Acts, referred to, make the answer plain. "Forasmuch as the negroes are of barbarous, wild and savage natures, prone and inclined to rapine and inhumanity, laws and orders should in this province be made for the good regulating and ordering of them, Be it therefore, &c., &c." Here we have the mystery revealed. Accustomed, as the African was, to obey only the visible manifestations of brute force, it was necessary to appeal to his physical senses. What did he know of duty? What did he care for a rebuke addressed to his moral feelings? He must see his blood flow.

The next point discussed is the effect of this importation upon the *increase of the slave population*. To the British West Indies not far from 200,000,000 Africans were carried; after 178 years not more than 780,993 remained! To St. Domingo, from 1680 to 1776, there were carried 800,000 negroes; at the latter date only 290,800 remained! In Cuba competent authorities estimate the annual decrease now to be from five to ten per cent. Thus, in climates similar to their own, and surrounded by tropical abundance, despite the constant fresh supply, this African population has decreased at the rate of hundreds per cent. in a century! In the United States a gratifying difference meets our view. The whole number im-

ported was about 400,000 ; now they number about 4,000,000 ! Now, why should the slave population decrease in a country and climate like their own, and increase in one that is very different? There must be some radical difference in the two systems—that difference is, that amongst us, the slave trade never existed to any great extent, and was suppressed almost entirely from the year 1790, while in the West Indies it flourished without limitations. The Report says well :

“There also the various considerations, already alluded to, debarred the African from the benefit of his master’s solicitude, while his cheapness deprived him of any hold upon the inferior motives. His original vices were not eradicated, they were merely accommodated to the new society, in which he was placed ; polygamy became promiscuous concubinage ; brutal debaucheries undermined his health, and continued labor completed the work of ruin. In America, the promptings of nature and self-interest alike contributed to produce the opposite result. Surrounded in his manhood by the descendants of those who had cultivated the paternal acres in his youth, it was impossible for the American planter to be indifferent to their welfare ; the kind feelings of early days were exchanged on the one hand for the respectful attachment and obedience of age, and on the other for a benevolent superintendence—nature revolted at treating one in such a connection as a mere instrument of toil. The ties of marriage were acknowledged and respected ; the claims of helpless youth and feeble old age recognized, and not only moral, but physical wants supplied ; if the cares of a parent sometimes failed, those of a master were ever present. Hence this rapid increase, which would be impossible under the grinding rule of a tyranny ; the fact is at once the consequence and proof of the kindest treatment. Nor is the continuance of this state of the case dependant upon virtue alone, from the influence of which a considerable portion of mankind would be exempt, for the dictates of worldly advantage counsel the same course to those who are devoid of the finer sensibilities ; ill treatment is sure to be followed by a loss, for which there is no slave trade to afford a cheap compensation. Both classes of owners are thus urged by the motives respectively most congenial to their natures to adopt the same course. Revive the slave trade, and all this will vanish ; we shall again find it necessary to prescribe by statute the manner of feeding slaves, lest they be compelled from want of nourishment to seek refuge and subsistence in the forest.” Pp. 32, 33.

Next, there is presented in this Report a brief sketch of the early legislation of this State upon this question, from 1698 down to 1803, from which the following conclusions are drawn : *First*, that the idea of the injurious tendency of the importation

of Barbarism did not originate with modern Abolitionists, nor was forced upon the reluctant South as a stigma. It was recognized in Carolina as far back as 1714, and it grew out of the recognition by the sterling citizens of that day, in their eminent wisdom, of the difference between a system of civilized and of barbarian slavery. To the wise and patriotic legislation of these great historical Carolinians of 1789 and 1791, is due the present felicitous condition of our laboring population.

*Secondly*, this sketch discloses that the Barbarians themselves were not the only barbarous things introduced amongst us by the slave trade. It was accompanied by all manner of horrid diseases, plague, spotted fever, Sian distemper, and Guinea fever, which, like sharks, followed in the wake of the slaves from the Bight of Benin to the Bay of Havanna and the harbors of our own coast.

The Report concludes with a glance at the consequences to be apprehended from the mere agitation of this question. "It is undeniable that a large majority of the people of the South is opposed to the proposition, and that if put to the vote in this State to-morrow, it could not obtain one-tenth of the suffrages." Why sow dissension amongst ourselves upon a measure of hopeless execution and at best of doubtful policy? We must not suffer our judgment or our policy to be warped by a spirit of resistance, however natural and justifiable, to the impertinent assaults of our enemies. Combativeness is a quality capital in action, but in council most useless, nay injurious. In taking a false position we voluntarily move down from our strong hold and offer our foes an advantage. In all affairs, truth must eventually prevail. And more particularly would it be unfortunate for the South to take a false step, since all the propositions she has hitherto advanced have been sustained by the returning good sense of the American people; and since, the fight being moral as well as political, we must on every account continue to keep in the right. As to the mere repeal of existing statutes and treaty stipulations, why should this State strive to procure their repeal? The slave trade never was carried on by our citizens. Previously to 1808 it was conducted, mostly by New England men or New England capital,

managed by agencies in Charleston. Since that period it has had a clandestine existence only at the North. Why should South Carolina volunteer to throw her mantle round parties to a traffic, in which our people either through moral repugnance or through proud scorn of such an occupation, never have been and are not now engaged? Can we refrain from blushing at the mere suggestion, and shrinking in horror at the thought of such contamination! Never! Let our State preserve in jealous purity the high character which has been handed down to her from former generations; and if these men need an advocate let them seek him amongst those who were born upon the same soil and nurtured under the same influences!

Comparing these two Reports together, in the impartial and not invidious discharge of our duty as censors of the press, we would say that the latter appears to be more thorough; less forced and constrained in its manner and spirit by the outside influences that assail us; and makes its appeal less to mere prejudices. We wish this Report had more thoroughly handled the *non sequitur* of Gov. Adams, that if the slave trade be piracy, then our slaves are plunder. His Excellency should not have been so lightly given over to the favor of Abolitionists by getting, however undesignedly, upon their ground. The Report might well have dwelt more upon the Agrarian consequences, that would logically follow the adoption of the principle involved in this statement. Is it so that no man's property now is any thing better than plunder, if so be that in any remote age some holder of it got it by fraud? Who knows that he ever owned a dollar which may not often have passed through the hands of thieves into those of honest men? And who does not know that if the statement be just, then there is no good title to one foot of land on this wide continent? Did it not all or nearly all come dishonestly into the hands of the white man? Our slaves plunder because the slave trade was piracy, forsooth! As well might you call Queen Victoria a pirate because her predecessors on the English throne were, some, descendants and, all, inheritors of William the Conqueror, himself a descendant and an heir of that famous Norwegian pirate Rollo, afterwards

Robert, Duke of Normandy! We could also wish that this Report had taken up the objection to re-opening this trade based upon the certainty that in process of time our rapidly increasing negro population must furnish all the labor that we need, and that a redundancy of population (the curse of some parts of Europe) is a thing to be feared not coveted. But not to dwell on these points, while we gladly award to this Report the merit of a high tone as to the moral bearings of the question, we yet must express our regret that its author did not more fully develop these bearings. There lies the strength of his cause, and for that reason and also for the honor of our Legislature through its Committee, we could desire to have seen these high principles more formally and thoroughly vindicated.

It is no needless work we have endeavored to perform in bringing before our readers the contents of these two Reports. Of all men in the world, the Southern people ought to be, and to keep themselves, the best acquainted with every question concerning the negroes. Leaving out of view all the personal and selfish reasons which require us to know the whole case of this part of our social fabric, our very feelings demand the investigation of whatsoever relates to them. The true and real friends of the negro are, with a few scattered exceptions, to be found only herein the Southern States, where exist the best four millions of blacks on the face of the earth, and where exist also, in a real friendship with them, those who have been the playmates in boyhood of these four millions. We have been educated to a tolerance of them, such as our Northern brethren know they have not, and such as would not be found for them *as a class* among that proud, haughty, reserved English nation, where no class associates at all with the class below it. The outside world, ignorant of the true character and condition of the negro, has been running wild about his freedom for a considerable period, and now they are beginning to swing round again to the very opposite opinions. A new and *Fourth Chapter* in the history of opinions on this subject seems to be now opening, amongst all these *far-off friends* of the slave, whose benevolence for him has always been so cheap. Our readers ought to

know the signs of this coming change, and they ought to be warnings to them. We submit a few of them here:

A *Brochure* of five and fifty pages, written by a New York merchant, has just been published by D. Appleton & Co., dwelling on the "necessity of certain staple articles of commerce (which only the labor of the negro can produce) not only to the wants of men but to the furtherance of human progress and civilization." This writer but echoes the cry of many others both at our Northern and in the European centres of commerce, that "the world must have cotton and sugar." The *London Times* (that fickle, inconstant weather-cock of British national feelings) lately uttering its condemnation of the emancipation of the West India negroes says, "They have become free but also brutalized—free but not industrious. The West Indies are ruined. Immense tracts of the most productive soil in the world are left uncultivated for the want of labor, and other nations are making fortunes over the heads of British colonists. The emancipated negro will do no work at all. His needs are small and his exertions are small too. The climate enables him to dispense with refinements of shelter or apparel; almost spontaneously the soil provides him with sustenance, and vagrancy and indolence leave him at least as much like a beast as ever."

"To complete the force of this case, while fertile estates are lying untilled for want of labor, and European manufacturers are anxiously looking for the cotton which such labor would supply, an inexhaustible store of the agency required is left unemployed and useless in other lands. But our embarrassment arises from the fact that if once blacks were known to be wanted and to be saleable on the coast for some sort of price, they would forthwith be kidnapped for consignment by their own chief! By transporting Africans from their own country to the West Indies we could benefit all parties together—the colonist, the laborer and the European consumer of tropical produce, but we are afraid to show our desire for such supplies lest man-stealing should be commenced anew. If we could but surmount this difficulty we should be not only restoring the prosperity of our own colonies with advantages even to the

blacks themselves, but we should probably be going far to suppress the slave trade as it survives. That free labor can beat slave labor is undoubtedly true, but unfortunately the free labor is not forthcoming and slave labor wins in default of opposition."

It is easy to see what the true meaning is of this cautious language. This is the way the *London Times* generally prepares to swing round to some new direction. It is trying, as sailors often do, to catch the breeze before it fully makes itself felt. It anticipates the adoption ere long of a new policy in England, who needs more African labor as much as France does, and is no more proof against selfish considerations.

From this glance at New York and London opinions let us look at those now held in Paris. France is not only thinking or talking about the matter, but acting. Lord Clarendon, in the House of Lords, denounced what she is doing as in fact the slave trade. The *Constitutionnel*, in three editorial columns, gave a semi-official reply. "The government had authorized French merchants to buy, on the coast of Africa, ten thousand slaves, but it had a functionary of the State in charge of the affair, and the negroes were set free; and after the term of the engagement as hired servants was over, should all, if they wished, be sent back to Africa. Our government, it continues, has recognized the immigration as alike useful and moral. Our enterprise is the very opposite of the slave trade. The code of British Abolitionists is not law for France. It is not by our fault that slavery and barbarism pervade Africa; we must take the social state of the native population as it is. In pursuing our own interests we act in a way to meliorate the lot of those who contract engagements with us; we christianize and we civilize." Every one of these sentences is pregnant with meaning. We commend to the examination of our readers these carefully deliberated words of France to England, in all their various important bearings. They are designed to settle several points, and, of course, *they are settled*, by imperial authority. Louis Napoleon constitutes himself a judge of morals above any dictation of England, and is practically carrying out his philanthropic plans for the benefit of Africa.



Not one of the ten thousand is to be forced to emigrate, and, every one of them has the word of Napoleon for it, that he will be sent back after a term of years to his old home! Meanwhile this contract between the savage African and the French Emperor, wherein the African acts so voluntarily and freely, is made through the chief whose slave that African is, and who has the absolute power of life and death over him! And if, in the progress of these benevolent negotiations of the French court with the courts of Ashanti or Dahomey, it should turn out that under the stimulus of the French silver which buys these slaves to set them free, the native wars that fed the old fashioned slave trade should break out anew, and the whole interior bleed again, why (says the philosophic, as well as philanthropic Louis, with a shrug of his shoulders) what is that to us, we must take the social state of the native population as it is!

Such are the indications of changing opinions outside of us. We regret to notice, to some slight extent, a corresponding movement at home. In this State we are persuaded there are few who would consent to any such proceedings. In the South-West, it is said, there have been already some actual importations. The New Orleans *Delta* says the trade is already opened, and that on some plantations negroes "recently imported from Africa are at their daily work." There has been some discussion of the question in the Legislatures of Mississippi and Louisiana, but we believe no action yet taken. The New Orleans *Delta* states that Henry Hughes and his party, in the Mississippi House of Representatives, "urge the labor immigration movement; not opening the slave trade, but legalizing the operations now already begun to be carried on." The same paper also gives rules and directions for the conduct of the business expeditiously, secretly, safely and profitably. The profits of the business are stated to be enormous.

In the name of the Southern people, especially of the religious class at the South, and still more especially of Southern Presbyterians, we raise our voice of protest against the re-opening amongst us of the African slave trade, whether openly or in disguise. And having brought to the notice of our readers the

total change of attitude assumed and being assumed by Abolitionists, we call on all true Southern men to abjure all present and future, as we have all past alliance, with their views and practices. We call on the press of the South to speak out and repudiate the doctrine of man-stealing. We call upon our fellow citizens, and most particularly our fellow Christians of the South-West, not to tarnish their honor and ours by following the base lead of France, or of England; and not to set Christianity and the Bible against the South. The New Orleans *Picayune* we are glad to observe, is protesting on the part of "five-sixths of that city against this revival of the slave trade by indirection, and this bringing into Louisiana gangs of pagan laborers fresh from the bloody and barbarous wars of the African coast." It objects not so much upon any humanitarian ground on behalf of the imported negro, since it will tend to his advantage; but "upon every ground of expediency and principle, and upon considerations of the interests and honor of the State." It objects, as it ought to object, distinctly on the ground of those "means of bringing about this transfer of the African to our shores which are abhorrent to every feeling of what is *right* and merciful; means which make the slave trade a horror to many who conscientiously uphold the institution of slavery as it exists among ourselves." It states that the French Government does not disguise the fact that it deals in slaves. It well says "there is no such thing to be had on the African coast as a negro willing to contract and able to contract understandingly for a free laborer. The whole country is a drive for the chiefs who monopolize the traffic, and whom the new French market has incited to new wars for the purpose of getting captives." This journal, to its honor, also says, "if the design really be to bring in free emigrants from Africa, such proceedings are contrary to all the laws of the State which have aimed to hinder the increase of free blacks. But if the contract is to be made a device, by which the slave trade is to be covertly practised under authority of the State of Louisiana, then the scheme is not worthy of the manliness and honesty which ought to pervade the legislation of a sovereign State."

In conclusion we have only to say that it is idle to deny the

cruelty of the slave trade, and the equal cruelty of the apprentice trade as it operates in Africa itself. There are too many witnesses to this cruelty for any man to contradict. Mr. Bowen, the Baptist Missionary from Georgia, resident seven years in Africa, and now on a visit home, says: "Forty years ago the Egba kingdom contained more than 100 towns, some of which were six or eight miles in circuit. In 1850 but one of these towns remained. All the rest had been swept away as a crop for the slave trade. The new system affords a safer passage across the Atlantic, but the "apprentices" are collected by the same system of destructive wars which have already depopulated some of the finest districts of Africa. No sooner was it known that apprentices would be bought, than the chiefs in different places began to *make war upon their weaker neighbors*. My last advices from Africa told of famishing sieges and bloody battles to supply the French ships with emigrants." Is it possible that any portion of our Southern people will stoop, like the French Emperor, to make themselves allies of those barbarian chiefs in Africa, who were ready to make war on their weaker neighbors as soon as they could get money by it? Shall we for cotton, and those chiefs for gold and silver, become partners in this business? Suppose it does benefit many of these negroes and their descendants—have we any right to employ those chiefs to kill other negroes in getting these, and to get these by capturing whole villages? And shall we aim to do this bloody work under a false pretence? The bare suggestion is insulting. We may be sure our countrymen of the South-West, if they have only time to understand the case, will decide it rightly. Mississippi and Louisiana will not covet a prosperity which shall be the fruit of crimes like this. They will not forget that States have a being as well as individuals, and therefore a responsibility for all their acts. They will not forget that there is such a thing as national honor and justice. They will not bring upon themselves, and indirectly upon their sisters of the South, the reproach of history and the frown of God.

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