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RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION

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A LETTER

To M. JEAN BAPTISTE BAY, on the comparative expense of Free and Slave Labour. By ADAM HOBSON.

Sir.—It is with much concern that I observe, in your excellent and popular work on Political Economy, the sentiments you express on the subject of the comparative expense of free and slave labour. Accustomed to respect you highly, as an enlightened advocate of liberal principles, and to admire the philanthropic spirit which pervades your writings, I cannot but regret deeply, that opinions so much calculated to perpetuate slavery should have the sanction of your authority; and that, while you denounce the slave-system as unjustifiable, you admit that in a pecuniary point of view it may be the most profitable.

As this subject is of peculiar importance at the present moment, when efforts are making both in this country and in France, to effect the gradual abolition of slavery in the Colonies, I will not apologise for addressing you. The same regard to truth and candour, which secured your reluctant assent to an opinion little in unison, I am sure, with your feelings, will lead you to examine with impartiality any facts or arguments which I may adduce in my attempt to controvert it. Many of them I am aware, must be familiar to you, but possibly even these may appear in a new light, and derive some additional force from their connection with others which have not fallen under your observation.

The expense of slave-labour resolves itself into the annual sum which, in the average term of the productive years of a slave's life, will liquidate the cost of purchase or rearing, and support in old age, if he attain it, with interest, and the sum annually expended in his maintenance.

If we omit the case of purchased slaves, and suppose them to be bred on the estate, (and as breeding is now admitted to be, under ordinary circumstances, the cheapest mode of supply, your argument will gain by the supposition,) the expense of free labour will resolve itself into precisely the same elements, since the wages paid to free labourers of every kind, must be such as to enable them, one with another, to bring up a family, and continue their race.

Now it is observed by Adam Smith, "The wear and tear of a free servant is equally at the expense of his master, and it generally costs him much less than that of a slave. The fund destined for replacing and repairing, if I may say so, the wear and tear of a slave, is commonly managed by a negligent master, or careless overseer. That destined for performing the same office with regard to the free man, is managed by the free man himself. The disorders which generally prevail in the economy of the rich, naturally introduce themselves into the management of the former; the strict frugality and parsimonious attention of the poor, as naturally establish themselves in that of the latter." The Russian political economist, Storch, who has carefully examined the system of slavery in that extensive Empire, makes the same remark almost in the same words. He expresses a similar opinion in decided terms; and I have now before me a statement from one of the slave districts in the United States, in which it is estimated, that, taking the purchase-money or the expense of rearing a slave, with the cost of maintenance, at their actual rates; and allowing fifteen years of health and strength, during which to liquidate the first cost, his labour will be at least 25 per cent dearer than that of the free labourer in the neighbouring districts.

It is observed by a planter, in a letter published by the Hon. Joshua Stagle, a member of the council in Barbadoes, under the signature of Philo Xyleus: "The truth is, that although we plant much more ground than should be sufficient to produce provisions to feed a labouring slave, yet the negroes, feeling that they have no direct property in those crops, and that we must buy more to supply them if those crops fall short, the cultivation is negligently performed by them, and the produce is afterwards stolen by the negro watchmen on their confederates, so that we seldom reap a third part of what should

be the natural and probable produce." But if we could depend on their diligence and economy, in cultivating rented tenements, and carefully storing their crops, they might undoubtedly be maintained better than they are, and at a much smaller expense than it costs us at present; not only by our wasting three times as much land as might be necessary for that purpose, but also by our cultivating it with a reluctant gang to our loss." From inquiries made with reference to this subject it appears that the average weekly expense in the Liverpool Workhouse, for provisions including ale, wine, spirits, tea, sugar, butter, &c. given to the sick, is 2s 6 1-4d per head, exclusive of rent; while the average weekly expenditure of seven families, taken from among the labourers of a respectable commercial house, is only 1s 5 1-2d per head, exclusive of rent.

From the preceding particulars, it appears highly probable, that the cost of rearing and maintaining a slave, would render his labour, under ordinary circumstances, at least as expensive as that of the free labourer. Let us next examine which is the most productive.

And here I shall again avail myself of the observations of Storch, the Russian economist:—"The slave, working always for another, and never for himself, being limited to a bare subsistence, and seeing no prospect of improving his condition, loses all stimulus to exertion; he becomes a machine, often very obstinate and very difficult to manage. A man who is not rewarded in proportion to his labour he performs, works as little as he can; this is an acknowledged truth, which this experience of every day confirms. Let a free labourer work by the day, he will be indolent; pay him by the piece, he will often work to excess, and ruin his health. If this observation is just in the case of the free labourer, it must be still more so in that of the slave."

"Whilst the ancient Romans cultivated their lands themselves, Italy was renowned for fertility and abundance, but agriculture declined when abandoned to slaves. Then, the land, instead of being brought under the plough, was transformed into meadows, and the inhabitants of this fine country became dependent for their subsistence on provinces situated beyond the sea." The small proprietors and farmers disappeared, and the same country which had formerly presented the smiling aspect of a crowd of villages, peopled with freemen in easy circumstances, became a vast solitude, in which were scattered here and there, some magnificent palaces, which formed the most striking contrast with those miserable cabins and subterranean dens in which the slaves were shut up. These facts related by the Roman historians, are attested and explained by Pliny, Columella, and Varro. "What was the cause of those abundant harvests?" asks Pliny, speaking of the early periods of the republic. "It is, that at that time, men of consular dignity devoted themselves to the cultivation of their fields, which are now abandoned to wretches loaded with irons, and bearing on their forehead the brand of their degraded condition." The superiority of free over slave labourers, is even acknowledged by the masters, when they have sufficient intelligence to judge of the difference, and sufficient honesty to avow their sentiments. Recollect, on this subject the passage of Columella, which I have already quoted, and in which he depicts the negligence and perverseness of slave labourers; in the same chapter, he advances as a fundamental principle, that whatever be the nature of the cultivation, the labour of the free cultivator is always to be preferred to that of the slave. Pliny is of the same opinion.

"Observe, that this testimony in favour of free labour, is given by Romans; who were at once proprietors of slaves and the most eminent writers on agriculture of their time." In manufactures, the superiority of the free labourer over the slave, is still more obvious than in agriculture. The more manufactures extend in Russia, the more people begin to feel the worth of this remark. In 1802, Mr Pabeloyev a manufacturer in the district of Moscow, gave liberty to all his workmen who were slaves; the number of them employed in slaving four. The same year, Mr. Allon did the same.

(To be Continued.)

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS,

Delivered on the Celebration of the Abolition of Slavery in the State of New-York, July 5th, 1837. By N. PAUL, Pastor of the African Baptist Society in the City of Albany.

"Among the many who have vindicated the cause of the oppressed, within the limits of this state, we are proud to mention the names of Eddy and Murray, of Jay and Tompkins, who, together with their fellow-philanthropists embarked in the holy cause of emancipation, with a zeal which well expressed the sentiments of their hearts. They proved themselves to be inflexible against scorn, persecution, and contempt; and although all did not live to see the conflict ended, yet their survivors never relaxed their exertions until the glorious year 1817, when, by the wise and patriotic legislature of this state, a law was passed for its final extirpation. We will mourn for those who are gone, we will honour those who survive, until time extinguishes the lamp of their existence. When dead, they shall still live in our memory; we will follow them to their tombs, we will wet their graves with our tears; and upon the heart of every descendant of Africa, their deeds shall be written, and their names shall vibrate sweetly from ear to ear, down to the latest posterity. From what has already taken place, we are encouraged to expect still greater things. We look forward with pleasing anticipation to that period, when it shall no longer be said that in a land of freemen there are men in bondage; but when this foul stain will be entirely erased, and this worst of evils, will be forever done away. The progress of emancipation, though slow, is nevertheless certain, because that God who has made of one blood all nations of men, and who is said to be no respecter of persons, has so decreed; I therefore have no hesitation in declaring from this sacred place, that not only throughout the United States of America, but throughout every part of the habitable world where slavery exists, it will be abolished. However great may be the opposition of those who are supported by the traffic, yet slavery will cease. The lordly planter, who has his thousands in bondage, may stretch himself upon his couch of ivory, and sneer at the exertions which are made by the humane and benevolent; or he may take his stand upon the floor of Congress, and mock the pitiful generosity of the east or west for daring to meddle with the subject; and attempting to expose its injustice; he may threaten to resist all efforts for a general or a partial emancipation, even to a dissolution of the Union; but still I declare that slavery will be extinct; a universal and not a partial emancipation must take place; nor is the period far distant. The indefatigable exertions of the philanthropists in England, to have it abolished, in their West India Islands, the recent revolutions in South America, the catastrophe, and exchange of power, in the late Hayti, the restless disposition of both master and slave in the southern states, the constitution of our government, the effects of literary and moral instruction, the generous feelings of the pious and benevolent, the influence and spread of the holy religion of the cross of Christ, and the irrevochable decrees of Almighty God, all combine their efforts and with united voice declare, that the power of tyranny must be subdued, the captive must be liberated, the oppressed go free, and slavery must revert back to its original chains of darkness, and be forever annihilated from the earth. Did I believe that it would always continue, and that man to the end of time would be permitted to usurp the same divine authority (over his fellow) I would likewise say all things, or I should have added to my former resolutions, many resolutions that I loved to see, for my country I would deny the superstitious tenets of Divine Providence in the affairs of this life; I would ridicule the religion of the enemies of the world, and treat as the worst of men the ministers of the everlasting gospel; I would consider my bible as a book of fables and fables, and admit it to be the same as the Bayal, and the Koran, and the other books of the heathen.

A CLERIC

from a forth-coming work, by the author, "Traditions of Edinburgh," to be published "The Picture of Scotland." Mackintosh, a little inland parish, near the road between Kirkcaldy and Orkney, derives a sort of interest from connecting it with the name of one of the distinguished Scotchmen. James the First, in the course of a post-trip tour, through it is said to have come in disguise to Mackintosh, and to have called at the only place of refreshment then in the village, for the purpose of refreshing himself. The landlord had a parlour, and that was engaged by the clergyman and schoolmaster of the parish; but the King having no objection to the society of two so respectable persons, did not scruple to sit and seat himself at the same table. When some time, and a good deal of liquor, had been consumed, the reckoning called; and, as James had been present during above a third of the afternoon, the schoolmaster proposed that he should pay a smaller share accordingly. In this way of reasoning did not satisfy the clergyman, who vociferously declared that it had been the custom of Mackintosh, from time immemorial, to pay *higgledy-piggledy* without regard to the quantity of liquor which each individual might have drunk. The schoolmaster attempted to convince his bold companion of the justice and absurdity of this system; and particularly asserted the impropriety of carrying it into practice in the present day, inasmuch as the person in question was a stranger, and should be treated with hospitality instead of being treated as a regular customer. "No, no, Sir," replied the priest; "higgledy-piggledy" is the word in Mackintosh, and will as long as it is one thing to do with us as we will; and the Kings who had not yet been higgledy-piggledy, be it laid down in whole, share of the reckoning, until they are each and every man measured to the inch, and the minister of Mackintosh, an equal footing to a stranger, at least, and no generosity of the former, and to punish the sordidness of the latter; it is further said that the salaries of these two parochial dignitaries continued nearly equal the times mentioned, and that the schoolmaster of Mackintosh still falls better off than most of his brethren in that respect.

"This story is only a tradition, but it is somewhat better authenticated than the stories which have been handed down to us by the popular voice. It has the advantage of being very generally told, and almost always without the least variation. The substance of this work, in the course of his travels through Scotland, has for some time been in the thirteen several offices of different churches, of the churches of Scotland, where changes he was undertaken in different parts of the Kingdom."

HOW I CAME TO THIS

POETRY

THE GRAY HAIR

Come let me pluck that silver hair... The withering power of time... Hath nothing more, to be with thee!

DI TANTE PALPITI

Dearest, dry that tearful eye... Dearest, check that mournful sigh... Let not hope thy bosom fly...

VARIETIES

There is an inscription on the great bell at Rangoon... A very remarkable natural anomaly may now be seen at the house of Mr. James Burt...

Once, the cats have jointly suckled the little handlings in the most careful and tender manner... Strange conditions are the order of the day...

The longings of a dandy were lately robbed of a pair of stays, a smelling bottle, two pairs of artificial eyebrows... A sign, a token from above...

Ask alive, ho! or a New Creation... On Friday, in the course of a charge against a fish-hawker... The cunning fellows who were on the look-out for economical ladies...

A Westmoreland jury, at the last quarter sessions, acquitted a boy proved to have stolen a jacket... Singular and Rural... The Rev. J. L. Grant was met a few years ago...

See Adam's Course... A Scotch clergyman had via to London, and seen among other things a pulpit oratory... During his first sermon after his return...

HAMER & SMITH, STEAM SCOURERS... CONTINUE to cleanse and Dress Coats, Pantalons, Linings, Habits and Merino Shawls... Their mode of dressing Clothes is by STEAM SPONGING...

DR. THOMP, No. 18 Collet-street, INDIAN PHYSICIAN and BOTANIST... UNROY HOTEL, No. 182, South Sixth-street, below Pine... CHARLES SHORT, For the Purpose of accommodating Foreign or Colour, Strangers and Citizens...

NICHOLAS PIERSON, RESPECTFULLY informs the People of Colour, that his MEAD GARDEN, No. 13, Delancy-street, was opened on the evening of the first of June...

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