

NOTES ON THE SLAVE TRADE.

IT may not be necessary to repeat what has been so fully declared in several modern publications, of the inconsistency of slavery with every right of mankind, with every feeling of humanity, and every precept of Christianity; nor to point out its inconsistency with the welfare, peace and prosperity of every country, in proportion as it prevails; what grievous sufferings it brings on the poor NEGROES; but more especially what a train of fatal vices it produces in their lordly oppressors and their unhappy offspring. Nevertheless for the sake of some who have not met with, or fully considered those former publications, and in hopes that some who are still active in support of slavery may be induced to consider their ways, and become more wise, the following substance of an address or exhortation made by a sensible Author, to the several ranks of persons most immediately concerned in the trade, is now republished.

“ And first, to the Captains employed in this trade. Most of you know the country of Guinea, perhaps now by your means, part of it is become a dreary uncultivated wilderness; the inhabitants being murdered or carried away, so that there are few left to till
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the ground; but you know, or have heard, how populous, how fruitful, how pleasant it was a few years ago. You know the people were not stupid, not wanting in sense, considering the few means of improvement they enjoyed. Neither did you find them savage, treacherous, or unkind to strangers. On the contrary they were in most parts a sensible and ingenious people; kind and friendly, and generally just in their dealings. Such are the men whom you hire their own countrymen to tear away from this lovely country; part by stealth, part by force, part made captives in those wars which you raise or foment on purpose. You have seen them torn away, children from their parents, parents from their children: Husbands from their wives, wives from their beloved husbands; brethren and sisters from each other. You have dragged them who had never done you any wrong, perhaps in chains, from their native shore. You have forced them into your ships, like an herd of swine,* them who
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* *The following relation is inserted at the request of the author.*

That I may contribute all in my power towards the good of mankind, by inspiring any of its individuals with a suitable abhorrence for that detestable practice of trading in our fellow creatures, and in some measure atone for my neglect of duty as a christian, in engaging in a wicked traffic, I offer to their serious consideration, some few occurrences of which

had souls immortal as your own. You have stowed them together as close as ever they could lie, without any regard to decency or conveniency—And when many of them had been poisoned by foul air, or had sunk under various hardships, “you have seen their
 “ remains delivered to the deep, till the
 “ sea should give up his dead.” You have carried the survivors into the vilest slavery, never to end but with life: Such slavery as is not found among the Turks at Algiers, no, nor among the heathens in America.

May

*“ which I was an eye witness. That being struck with the
 “ wretched and affecting scene they may foster that humane
 “ principle, which is the noble and distinguished characteristic
 “ of man.*

*About the year 1749; I sailed from Liverpool to the coast of Guinea, some time after our arrival, I was ordered to go up the country a considerable distance, upon having notice from one of the Negroe Kings, that he had a parcel of slaves to dispose of, I received my instructions and went, carrying with me an account of such goods we had on board, to exchange for the slaves we intended to purchase; upon being introduced, I presented him with a small case of spirits, a gun and some trifles, which having accepted, and understood by an interpreter what goods we had, the next day was appointed for viewing the Slaves; we found about two hundred confined in one place. But here how shall I relate the affecting sight I there beheld, the silent sorrow which appeared in the countenance of the afflicted father, and the painful anguish of the tender mother, expecting to be forever separated from their tender offspring; the distressed maid wringing her hands in preface of her future wretchedness, and the general cry of the innocent, from a fearful apprehension of the perpetual Slavery to which they were doomed. I purchased eleven, who I conducted, tied two and
 two;*

May I speak plainly to you? I must. Love constrains me: Love to you, as well, as those you are concerned with. Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution: A state wherein the just God will reward every man according to his work. Then what reward will he render to you. O think betimes! before you drop into eternity: Think how, “He shall have judgment without mercy, that shewed no mercy.” Are you a man? Then you should have a human heart. But have you indeed? What is your heart made of?

two, to our ship. Being but a small vessel (ninety ton) we soon purchased our cargo, consisting of one hundred and seventy Slaves, whom thou may'st reader range in thy view, as they were shackled two and two together, pent up within the narrow confines of the main deck, with the complicated distress of sickness, chains and contempt; deprived of every fond and social tie and in a great measure reduced to a state of desperation. We had not been a fortnight at sea, before the fatal consequence of this despair appeared, they formed a design of recovering their natural right, Liberty, by raising and murdering every man on board; but the goodness of the Almighty rendered their scheme abortive, and his mercy spared us to have time to repent: The plot was discovered; the ring leader tied by the two thumbs over the barricado door, at sun rise received a number of lashes; in this situation he remained till sun-set, exposed to the insults and barbarity of the brutal crew of sailors, with full leave to exercise their cruelty at pleasure: The consequence was, the next morning the miserable sufferer was found dead, fixed from the shoulders to the waist. The next victim was a youth, who from too strong a sense of his misery refused nourishment and died disregarded and unnoticed till the hogs had fed on part of his flesh.

of? Is there no such principle as compassion there? Do you never feel another's pain? Have you no sympathy? No sense of human woe? No pity for the miserable? When you saw the flowing eyes, the heaving breast, or the bleeding sides and tortured limbs of your fellow-creatures. Was you a stone or a brute? Did you look upon them with the eyes of a tiger? When you squeezed the agonizing creatures down in the ship, or when you threw their poor mangled remains into the sea, had you no relentings? Did not one tear drop from your eye, one sigh escape from your breast? Do you feel no relenting now? If you do not, you must go on till the measure of your iniquities is full. Then will the great God deal with you, as you have dealt with them, and require all their blood at your hands. And at that day it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for you: But if your heart does relent; tho' in a small degree, know it is a call from the God of Love. And to-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart---To day resolve, God being your helper to escape for your life---Regard not money: All that a man hath will he give for his life. Whatever you lose, lose not your soul; nothing can countervail that loss.

Imme-

Immediately quit the horrid trade: At all events be an honest man.

This equally concerns every merchant who is engaged in the slave-trade. It is you that induce the African villain to sell his countrymen; and in order thereto, to steal, rob, murder men, women and children without number: by enabling the English villain to pay him for so doing; whom you over pay for his execrable labour. It is your money, that is the spring of all, that impowers him to go on, so that whatever he or the African does in this matter, is all your act and deed. And is your conscience quite reconciled to this? Does it never reproach you at all? Has gold entirely blinded your eyes and stupified your heart? Can you see, can you feel no harm therein? Is it doing as you would be done to? Make the case your own. “ Master (said a slave at Liverpool to the “ merchant that owned him) what if some “ of my countrymen were to come here, “ and take away my mistress, and master “ Tommy and master Billy, and carry them “ into our country and make them slaves, “ how would you like it?” His answer was worthy of a man: “ I will never buy a slave “ more while I live.” O let his resolution be yours! Have no more any part in this detest-

detestable business. Instantly leave it to those unfeeling wretches, “who laugh at
“humanity and compassion.”

And this equally concerns every person who has an estate in our American plantations: Yea all slave-holders of whatever rank and degree; seeing men-buyers are exactly on a level with men-stealers. Indeed you say, “I pay honestly for my goods; and I am
“not concerned to know how they are
“come by.” Nay but you are: You are deeply concerned, to know that they are not stolen: Otherwise you are partaker with a thief, and are not a jot honestier than him. But you know they are not honestly come by: You know they are procured by means nothing near so innocent as picking of pockets, house breaking, or robbery upon the highway. You know they are procured by a deliberate series of more complicated villainy (of fraud, robbery and murder) than was ever practised either by Mahometans or Pagans; in particular by murders of all kinds; by the blood of the innocent poured upon the ground like water. Now it is your money that pays the merchant, and thro’ him the captain and African butchers. You therefore are guilty: Yea principally guilty, of all these frauds, robberies, and murders. You are the spring that puts all the rest in
motion;

motion; they would not stir a step without you — Therefore the blood of all these wretches, who die before their time, whether in their country or elsewhere, lies upon your head. The blood of thy brother, (for whether thou wilt believe it or no, such he is in the sight of him that made him) crieth against thee from the earth, from the ship and from the waters. O! whatever it cost, put a stop to its cry, before it be too late. Instantly, at any price, were it the half of thy goods, deliver thy self from blood guiltiness! Thy hands, thy bed, thy furniture, thy house, thy land, are at present stained with blood. Surely it is enough; accumulate no more guilt: Spill no more the blood of the innocent! Do not hire another to shed blood! Do not pay him for doing it! Whether thou art a Christian or no, shew thy self a man; be not more savage than a lion or a bear.

Perhaps thou wilt say, “ I do not buy any NEGROES: “ I only use those left me by my father.” But is it enough to satisfy your own conscience! Had your father, have you, has any man living, a right to use another as a Slave? It cannot be, even setting R E V E L A T I O N aside. It cannot be, that either war, or contract, can give any man such a property in another as he has in his sheep and oxen: Much less is it possible, that any child of man, should ever be born a Slave. Liberty is the right of every human creature, as soon as he breathes the vital air. And no human law can deprive him of that right, which he derives from the law of nature. If therefore you have any regard to justice, (to say nothing of mercy, nor of the revealed law of G O D) render unto all their due. Give Liberty to whom Liberty is due, that is to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature. Let none serve you but by his own act and deed, by his own voluntary choice, away with whips, chains, and all compulsion: Be gentle towards all men. And see that you invariably do unto every one, as you would he should do unto you.