

NEGRO SLAVERY UNDER ENGLISH RULE.¹

BY FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN.

A BUNDANT experience has established in the cultivated men of Europe, as testified in European literature, the conviction that a fixed system of slavery is a deadly plague-spot in any national institution. Notoriously, it is fatally demoralising to the masters, and inevitably oppressive to the slaves. From an industrial aspect it is intensely wasteful; and by dishonouring labour, it propagates idleness and vice among poor freemen. Through the danger of insurrections it also conduces to military weakness. Notwithstanding the attempts in the American Union at a philosophic defence of the cruel and ruinous system but lately dominant there, and the deplorable support given to them in England by one eminent man of letters, we can happily say that the vile and hateful institution is now thoroughly condemned by the collective European intellect.

But unhappily English colonists and seamen in large numbers are unversed in our higher literature, are ignorant of past history, and, when out of reach of English law, are very apt to reconstruct both law and morals for themselves. In many of our colonies, as in the Mauritius and in Queensland, local laws are made which reduce Chinese immigrants to a state closely similar to slavery. In the English West Indies nothing but the strong hand of the Home Government stops the importation of coolies to be converted into virtual slaves; and the temper shown

by the whites of the Cape Colony towards the native Kafirs and Hottentots is anything but reassuring. It is but a little while ago since the excellent and humane Commodore Goodenough was killed on one island of the Pacific, and Bishop Patteson on another, because English merchant ships had carried natives away by fraud or violence. Fiji has narrowly been rescued from such lawless treatment, and Sir Alexander Gordon, the governor, without very ample and exceptional powers, would be quite unable to suppress our buccaneers, who with the arts of high civilisation and the enterprise of capital unite gross and heartless brutality. Unless knowledge in the English public reinforce our Government, which is *always* so overworked as to lean towards evil laxity, the British colonies are likely to use their early freedom in this pernicious direction. But (so many are the novelties and distractions of English politics) our young people in tens of thousands are totally ignorant of the history of negro slavery. Even those who cannot at all be called uneducated easily believe bold assertions—such as, that the liberation of West Indian slaves was an unfortunate mistake and a failure; that the anti-slavery party ought to have aimed at gradual abolition and did not; that they were fanatics; that the islands have never been so prosperous since the emancipation; and that as slaves the blacks were better off and better behaved than

¹ *Slavery and Freedom in the British West Indies.* By Charles Buxton, M.P. Longmans. 1860.

The Anti-Slavery Reporter.

The Slave Colonies of Great Britain. Hatchard and Son, 1826, second edition.

now. So widespread is ignorance of this great and melancholy history in the younger generation, that it is believed a retrospect in moderate compass may be timely and acceptable.

The first matter perhaps on which a distinct understanding is desirable, is the legal aspect of the slave trade and of slavery. The one and the other were from the beginning utterly illegal, and only gained a show of legality through the malversations and neglects of *Executive* officers, whose real duty was to denounce the system and suppress it wherever it lay in their power. The position of the English king and his chief ministers was in early days somewhat difficult, and a few words may be not amiss on this head. The power of Queen Elizabeth by sea was very puny in comparison to that of Spain; the supplies of her Exchequer scant. She rejoiced in the exploits of individual sea-captains, with little inquiry as to the legality of their proceedings, whether towards Spaniards or Africans. The English slave trade, in fact, began with Sir John Hawkins in the year 1562. He had obtained leave from the Queen to carry Africans to America *with their own free consent*; but he forced them on board his ships not without slaughter, and escaped without punishment; nay, a few years later, received high honour from the Queen. When Virginia attained a fixed condition as a colony—scarcely before 1615, in which year fifty acres of land were assigned to every emigrant and his heirs—the cultivation of tobacco instantly followed. Five years later a Dutch ship brought a cargo of negroes from the coast of Africa, whom the Virginians (a mixed body of very low morals) joyfully received as slaves. But neither the slave trade nor slavery had any legal sanction. King James was always in debt, and far

too much occupied with his own miserable pleasures to care about such a peccadillo, though in granting a new constitution for Virginia he reserved a veto to their laws for the Court in England. Under James I. and Charles I. the English Parliament was helpless, and the slavery once introduced became chronic; children and grandchildren were born in slavery, and the system spread to our new colonies on the Continent. Of the West Indian islands, most were occupied, and slavery introduced, by other European nations before us, so that England, in conquering them, found slavery existing.

No sooner had we got free from struggle against the Stuarts than King William III. involved us in Continental war. Our growing maritime power sufficed to enforce anything upon the colonies on which the Parliament was bent; but the mass of the people knew little about the negroes, and the religion of Protestants, being constructed too much on the mere letter of the Bible, was not at all shocked by the idea of slavery. It was otherwise with the slave trade. Man-stealing is denounced by name in the New Testament as an odious wickedness, and common sense taught everyone that to hunt and capture Africans for slaves or to buy them of the captors was as gross and indefensible a cruelty as if Algerines were to land on our coasts and carry Englishmen into slavery—a lot which did befall some of our seamen when intercepted by these pirates. Brydges, in his *History of Jamaica*, tells us that as many as 70,000 slaves were imported into that island during the ten years, 1751-1760. It is a popular error to suppose that Parliament passed a law to legalise the slave trade—an error propagated by the violent and unscrupulous men who engaged in it. But the law which undertook to 'regulate

the trade of Africa' (23rd of George II.) added a strict prohibition, under penalties, against taking on board or carrying away any African 'by force or fraud.' Fraud and violence were freely used; but the colonial authorities winked at it. The Home Ministry perhaps had no 'official information;' and even in this century we know that the President of the Board of Control and the Chairman of the Hon. East India Company professed in Parliament profound ignorance and disbelief of what was notorious to the missionaries and indigo planters, that the revenue over the greater part of India was collected by torture. Each Ministry in turn coveted the support of as many 'interests' as possible, and dreaded to make any great 'interest' its enemy.

How soon 'the planting interest' became powerful it is hard to say, but it is certain that in the middle of the last century they were a compact political body, and that there was a permanent connivance on the part of the British Ministries, who did not choose to risk incurring the planters' enmity. Besides, since the Crown had reserved for itself a veto on colonial legislation, which abounded with Acts assuming slavery as legal, and with severe enforcements on the oppressed victims, all the Ministries in succession implicated themselves in the guilt by not advising the Sovereign to use the veto. Moreover, as time went on, the English Crown had slave colonies of its own, in which was no Colonial Legislature. These were counted as four, viz. two in Guiana (Demerara and Berbice), St. Lucia, and Trinidad. The Cape and the Mauritius were soon added. Thus while no Parliamentary sanction was given to the slave trade or to slavery (further than the careless use of the word *slave*, perhaps by the cunning amendment of planters sitting in the House), the Executive Government both at home and in

the colonies treacherously and by *lachesse* established it in fact, though this could not make it legal. Americans of the Southern States have often reproached England with 'forcing slavery upon them.' It is very certain that they were glad to be 'forced;' but their plea suggests that some of our Ministries went beyond connivance, and actually promoted the pernicious and horrible institution. One glaring fact may here be pointed at, as showing against what a power in Parliament itself an English Ministry had to struggle in the first quarter of this century. St. Domingo or Hayti had effected its actual liberation from France, but was often threatened by the French arms. During our many wars with France or Spain, we had zealously seized Canada and Acadia on the continent, and among islands the Mauritius, Grenada, St. Vincent, Dominica, and Trinidad, yet we rejected all the overtures of free Hayti, and would in no way acknowledge her independence. The Haytians were ready to make every concession for the advantage of our commerce and our acknowledgment; many said they would have even adopted our language; but to their earnest entreaties for friendship we replied by an Act of Parliament which prohibited all intercourse between Hayti and Jamaica! When Mr. Canning recognised the independence of Spanish America, no mention was made of Hayti, which at last was in consequence forced to compromise with France. As late as 1825 an Act was passed declaring the forfeiture of any British ship, with its cargo, which should sail from Jamaica to St. Domingo or from St. Domingo to Jamaica, and forbidding any foreign ship that had touched at St. Domingo to enter any port of Jamaica. So powerful was West India sentiment in both Houses of Parliament! Yet the planters never dared to try to ob-

tain any Act that should directly legitimate slavery.

The American lawyers who wrote and spoke in the interest of the slaveholders were well aware that slavery rested on no other basis than *custom* and *local law*. Henry Clay, in 1839, summed up the argument thus: 'Two hundred years of legislation have sanctified (!) and sanctioned negro slaves as property.' But no early American colony passed any enactment to originate the relation of master and slave; they did but *assume* the relation and make laws to secure or regulate it. No slaveholder was able to prove in court that a particular man or woman was his slave according to law. Hence Mr. Mason, of Virginia, when the Fugitive Slave Bill was pending, resisted the claim of trial by jury, because it would bring up the question of the legality of slavery, *which* (he said) *it would be impossible to prove!* On this ground, Congress struck out the jury trial!

When the question came on in the British Parliament concerning the slave trade, Mr. Pitt cited the Act (23 George II.), and insisted that it was a direct *prohibition* of the slave trade in the fact that it prohibited fraud and violence; and it gradually became impossible to hold any other view. Mr. Canning, in 1799, signalised himself by his usual eloquence, of which some sentences must be here recorded: 'Trust not the masters of slaves in legislation for slavery. However specious their laws may appear, depend upon it they must be ineffectual in their operation. It is in the nature of things that they should be so. Let then the British House of Commons do their part themselves. Let them not delegate the trust of doing it to those who cannot execute that trust fairly. Let the evil be remedied by an assembly of freemen, by the Government of a free people, not by the masters of slaves. Their laws can never reach the

evil. There is something in the nature of absolute authority, in the relation between master and slave, which makes despotism in all cases and in all circumstances an incompetent and unsure executor even of its own provisions in favour of the objects of its power.' Of course, this presumed that the masters did not wish to get rid of their despotism. Mr. Canning knew the West Indians too well. His words were sadly justified in the sequel. Yet it was not given to the Tory party to abolish even the slave trade. The West Indian interest was to them then nearly what the Publican interest is now. Mr. Pitt died, in January 1806, broken-hearted by the successes of Napoleon, and Lord Grenville succeeded him as Prime Minister, with Fox (ever the advocate of peace) as Foreign Secretary, who, in June, moved a resolution against the slave trade. But he was already in very bad health, and died after being in office eight months. 'Two things,' he said on his death-bed, 'I wish to see accomplished: peace with Europe, and the abolition of the slave trade: but of the two, *I wish more the latter.*' He had to bequeath the completion of this work to his successors. Lord Grey (then Lord Howick) passed the Bill triumphantly through the Commons, and Lord Grenville with difficulty carried it to a final issue on the 25th of March, 1807, a few minutes before the Ministers resigned, disgusted with the King's obstinacy concerning the Catholics. Next year the United States declared the slave trade to be *piracy*, herein going beyond England in severity.

The agitation against the slave trade, carried on in Parliament by the eloquence of Wilberforce, and aided by the learning and zeal of many eminent talents, was a great enlightenment to England; but it was not the first step towards

emancipation. A first-rate judicial sentence had already pronounced against slavery: which was the more remarkable and the more important, since English judges in general, as other civil officials, had indirectly sanctioned the institution. Under the circumstances it was to be expected. In the colonies where slavery existed, every man of importance held slaves; the income of all the educated classes depended on slavery. The very men appointed as protectors of slaves were generally slaveholders, and the judges as well as the clergy were implicated in the same interest. When the colonial lawyers and judges recognised slaves as property, and their documents were produced in an English court, where no advocate stood up to protest in the interest of the blacks that men and women were not and could not be property, no one could expect an English judge to open this question of himself. As he could not effect the freedom of the human beings called 'property,' he would seem to himself to be injuring a white person with no benefit to the blacks. In the result the slave-owners were able to claim that their right of property in slaves had been again and again acknowledged by English judges. Yet, as hinted above, a critical case had already occurred, which deserves here special detail.

A planter brought to London a slave called James Somerset, in 1772, and when he fell ill, inhumanly turned him out of doors. Mr. Granville Sharp, a philanthropic barrister, found him in the street, placed him in a hospital where he recovered his health, and then got him a situation as a servant. Two years after, his old master arrested and imprisoned him as a runaway slave. Mr. Sharp brought the case before the Lord Mayor, who ordered Somerset to be set at liberty. But the master seized him violently in presence of the Lord Mayor and

Mr. Sharp; on which the latter brought an action against the master for assault. The question of law was finally referred to the twelve judges, in February and May of that year, who decided *unanimously* that no man can be accounted a slave on English territory. This decision is often quoted, as though the *soil* of Great Britain made a slave free; but that is a legal fiction. Evidently, it is only when a slave (so called) comes *within the reach of an English court* that his freedom is declared. At that time the American colonies were beginning their quarrel with Great Britain, but had not renounced allegiance. All the colonies were subject to the common law of England; and if in Virginia and Jamaica there had been a judge as upright and able as Lord Mansfield and a philanthropist as zealous as Granville Sharp, it would seem that slavery might have been dissolved by a few judicial trials.

This decision was of vast importance in opening the eyes of the British public to the essential illegality of a system morally so iniquitous. Honest, plain men were emboldened to look to the bottom of the case, when the shield and screen of law was removed. What if Parliament were to enact that in some county in England five persons out of six should become the property of the sixth, just as horses and cows are, and that the progeny for ever of these thus enslaved should be slaves? Would it be within the competence of Parliament so to vote? Or if by mere violence a part of the community were enslaved to another party, and Parliament and the courts were infamously to connive at it, would *custom* ever make the iniquity equitable, and vest in the violent oppressors a right of compensation when no longer allowed to defraud men of their dearest natural rights? Every freeman who justified insur-

rection against royal tyranny was necessarily led to justify slave insurrection against their masters, however he might shudder at possible fierce retaliation for past injuries. Thus the mental revolution of England was begun, and in spite of the distraction of two dreadful wars—or we may say three—against the American colonists, against the French Republic, and, after the short peace of Amiens, against Napoleon I., the movement was at length carried to completion. But the interval between the decision concerning James Somerset and the Act of 1833 which emancipated the slaves, just exceeded half a century. This largely depended on the vicious implication of the English Ministry in the system.

Most of the colonies had independent local legislatures, and the apparent power of the British Ministry was limited to vetoing their Acts. Not but that they generally stood in such awe of insurrection that a force of British soldiers was needful to them, which force any Ministry could withdraw if they were contumacious. But they made sure that no Ministry would dare to expose them to possible massacre; insomuch that the Jamaica Legislature, in a pet, threatened to send the English soldiers home. In every practical sense the power of our Ministers was certainly limited in striving against the desperate mischief which the connivance of their predecessors had established. But there was one recently acquired colony in which the power of the Crown was not restricted—Trinidad, a considerable island, ninety miles long, fifty broad, opposite the mouths of the Orinoco. It belonged first to the Spaniards, then to the French, and was captured by Abercrombie so late as 1797. Mr. Pitt was then in full power. A glorious opportunity was offered to this advocate of freedom to annihilate

slavery in Trinidad; but apparently he had not the heart to carry out his own principles, even where he had no need to court votes. He was probably as afraid to encounter the ill-will of the West Indian planters, as Mr. Lincoln to meet the frown of Kentucky. Not only was this precious opportunity lost, but the Ministry were put afresh into the very evil position of themselves acknowledging, regulating, and establishing slavery in an island where neither the English Parliament nor any old routine hampered them. This false position they bequeathed as an evil legacy to their successors. Those who were themselves 'regulating' a strictly illegal inhumanity in Trinidad and Guiana, could do nothing but seek to regulate and soften it in the other colonies. To declare for freedom was to condemn their predecessors, and some of themselves. Thus they were (so to say) constrained to justify slavery as such, to censure only any extremes of cruelty, and to maintain that the master had earned by the long custom of fraud and oppression a right to compensation (just as did Mr. Bruce, now Lord Aberdare, concerning the publicans—the renewal of their licences by negligent routine had given them a *moral right* to continued renewal!)—and these Ministers were to conduct the process by which alone freedom could be established. A most unpromising conjuncture!

To these difficulties of the position was added a religious controversy. It could not be pretended that either the Old or the New Testament forbade slavery as a national institution; it was a manifest fact that Paul exhorted slaves to obey their masters, 'as service to Christ;' nay, that he sent back the fugitive slave Onesimus to his Christian master Philemon, and did not command the master to enfranchise the slave, nor to pay up all the wages of which he had

defrauded him, but contented himself with begging forgiveness for the slave if he had stolen anything, and urging his reception as a brother in Christ, since Paul had converted him. Liberal interpreters may give excellent reasons why the conduct of the Apostle cannot be a law of life. But of course the slave-owners, both in the West Indies and on the American continent, triumphantly claimed the great Apostle as on their side; and, what is remarkable, they carried with them in their advocacy of 'the letter which killeth' (to use St. Paul's own words) not the ignorant vulgar, but the more educated and refined, who ought to have discerned the broad principles of justice and morality preached by the Apostle as paramount over isolated texts and detail of conduct. It cannot be doubted that sympathy with wealth and aristocracy was the cause: thus the more accomplished clergy of the Episcopal Churches became apologists or advocates of slavery, while the less educated Nonconformists stood up for freedom and right. Yet each party claimed the Bible as on its side. In Jamaica, by far the largest of our West Indian islands, there was already a bishop, and it is only too clear that he drew his inspiration from the planters. What is more deplorable, our bishops in the House of Lords were never on the right side. In 1852 Sir George Stephen, writing a short retrospect, observes that reformers in England had one advantage over the American Union—namely, in titled leaders. 'Royalty lent us countenance in the person of William, Duke of Gloucester; Lord Lansdowne, Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, and many peers of minor note gave their unqualified support. The bishops—No! the less we say of their Right Reverend Lordships in connection with slavery the better.' John Wesley

had seen slavery in America, and called it *the sum of all villainies*. The Methodists, the Baptists, the Independents, and the Episcopal Low Church (to which Wilberforce belonged), and eminently the Quakers, were zealous for freedom, and chiefly from these *religious* circles the mass of our abolitionists came, despite of Onesimus. Zeal for missions arose chiefly from the same ranks. The High Church in the colonies desired to be on pleasant terms with the colonists, and succeeded; but the Nonconformist missionaries were always on very unpleasant terms with them. It could not be hidden from the planters that these missionaries pitied the sufferings of the slaves, and were trusted by them; out of which a belief arose that they fostered disaffection, and ran as close as they dared to stirring up resistance. In every insurrection the white men, through panic, became ferocious and uncontrolled. The home authorities never knew how to deal with an insurrection; for while they dared not justify it, their consciences did not condemn it, and they abhorred the indiscriminate cruelty of the planters or their agents. Two outrages against missionaries excited violent indignation in England. The one was the destruction of a Methodist chapel in Barbadoes, as a part of the persecution of the missionaries. This was about 1825. The white population of all orders were guilty. The magistrates exulted in the outrage, some of them were said to have taken part in it. When Mr. (afterwards Sir Fowell) Buxton brought the matter before Parliament, Mr. Canning, as Ministerial leader in the Commons, reprobated the conduct of the whites most severely, and moved a vote of address to the Crown (which was unanimously adopted by the House) assuring his Majesty of their readiness to concur in every measure

needed for securing ample protection and religious toleration in all his Majesty's dominions. Yet no white man was punished or censured, though in 1816, when there was an insurrection of the blacks, numbers were massacred in cold blood.

The other outrage was in Demerara during the panic of an insurrection, October 1823, against the Rev. John Smith, a missionary from the Congregationalists (London Missionary Society). In time of actual peace he was tried, not by a jury, but by a court-martial at the drum-head, and condemned to death as having incited the slaves to an insurrection—an entirely false charge. They did not dare to execute their own sentence, but they threw him into a hot and pestilential prison,—treatment of which he died before the free pardon from England was able to reach him. A burst of indignation had come from this country, Churchmen and Non-conformists uniting to demand justice; yet Mr. Brougham's motion in the Commons concerning it was voted down, as the Ministry would not break with the planting interest.

Yet in a circular from the Government, attributed to Mr. Canning, 'mitigating measures' were recommended to the colonies, such as might prepare the negroes for freedom. Especially the discontinuance of flogging females was urged. The last proposal was discussed in each colony separately, and voted down in every one. Young lads were set to whip their own sisters. Mr. Charles Buxton gives an extract from a Jamaica newspaper, to show how the planters of that island received these mild and very partial recommendations of the Home Government (*Jamaica Journal*, June 28, 1823): 'We will pray the Imperial Parliament to amend their origin, which is bribery; to cleanse their con-

sciences, which are corrupt; to throw off their disguise, which is hypocrisy; to break with their false allies, who are the saints; and finally, to banish from among them all the purchased rogues, who are three-fourths of their number.' The excessive cruelty with which the whip was often used, could not be kept secret; but from the nature of the case, it was easy to reply that any facts attested were exceptional. In the Crown colonies an overseer was allowed at his own discretion to inflict twenty-five lashes (each lash generally drawing blood) on any negro, male or female; in the other colonies thirty-nine lashes were allowed. The evidence became worse and worse, the more it was inquired into; the papers laid before Parliament in 1824 were full of frightful details. Mr. Charles Buxton, in his excellent little book, observes that according to the sworn returns from the four Crown colonies, there were 68,921 floggings in the two years 1828-29; and according to general report, the full legal number of stripes was ordinarily inflicted. But what could not be explained away, was the awful fact of the dying off of the population. This is only to be expected where eighteen hours of work are exacted in the sugar harvest. However, in eleven islands, which also sent returns, the slaves decreased in twelve years from 558,194 to 497,975. Everywhere, we now know, field labour thus destroys a slave population which is not recruited by a slave trade.

Meanwhile the popular movement was becoming irresistible. From 1772 onward, Granville Sharp had continued to exert himself, and in 1787, became chairman of a committee of twelve persons, the nucleus of the Anti-Slavery Society. All but two were Quakers. Sharp began the colony of Sierra Leone at his

own expense, by sending thither a number of negroes whom he met in the streets of London. Till his death in 1813 he continued such philanthropic action. But the Society thus formed was soon strengthened by eminent and zealous coadjutors. The names of Clarkson and Wilberforce, Lushington, Denman, Mackintosh, Stephen, Zachary Macaulay (editor of the *Anti-Slavery Reporter*), Henry Brougham, live in honoured memory. Sir William Dolben began with the claim that the slave trade should be 'regulated and conducted with humanity'! On approaching the problem practically it was soon found that nothing but total prohibition could succeed. So it is, when avarice and wealth have organised any huge scheme of mischief. The same thing was experienced in 'regulating' slavery, simply because the masters were adverse. But here, for a little while, the Spanish colonies, it seems, held out to us a false light.

These colonies had been formed under a monarchy practically absolute. The marvellous and execrable enormities of such men as Cortes and Pizarro had presented the Kings of Spain with Transatlantic dominions; but Charles V. rather shuddered at Cortes, and felt no gratitude for a valour which so little respected royalty. By his laws of the Indies he sincerely intended to protect the unfortunate native Americans who had become his subjects, and the stronger African race imported to fill their places. The royal power did effectually prevent the chronic slavery under Spain from ever being so bad as under freer States—England and Holland. One very important point alone shall here be noticed. To this day in Cuba, the nobler parent determines the rank of the offspring: the child of a freeman is free, though the mother be a slave. One might have thought that na-

tional pride would have claimed the same privilege for the children of an Englishman. But terrible to say, with us avarice overpowered both parental instinct and personal pride; our colonists decreed that in the case of mixed blood the children were all slaves. Thus the male profligacy, which tended to advance freedom in the Spanish colonies, tended in ours to multiply slavery in its most hateful and demoralising form. A man's own children became his slaves—his *cattle*, and could be seized for his debts; his beautiful daughters might be sold as articles of voluptuousness. As an old overseer in Louisiana said to Mr. Olmsted, 'There is not an estate here, but the grandchildren of a former proprietor are whipped on the field.' But in the Spanish colonies, despite of plentiful cruelties where men were despots, the sentiment was far better than in ours, and there was no enmity against colour. Hence, as soon as they attained liberation from Spain, the problem of emancipation was started by themselves, and solved differently in different colonies. One method was, to allow to the slave one day in the week as his own (in addition to any previous arrangement), and to fix a maximum for his price; then to enact, that when he could earn and pay a fifth part of his price, he should have a right to buy a second day free, leaving only four days in the week for his master. Thus an active and strong man bought first his own freedom, and afterwards that of his wife, and one helped another. In a climate where wants are few and the crops abundant, the slaves so rejoiced in the process of self-liberation, as not to brood over the injustice which withheld immediate unbought freedom. A second method was to declare all children born after a certain day to be free; or, indeed, both methods might be combined. The practical result was, that, in

one way or other, all the Spanish colonies got rid of slavery. Mexico, which had an arduous struggle against Spain, and scarcely established a firm government until 1824, immediately proceeded to abolish caste and slavery, and effected the latter finally in 1829. Reports of the proceedings in the Spanish colonies, no doubt, reached the English Ministers, although neither by commerce nor by politics was there for a while any regular connection with them. Hence arose various schemes for gradual emancipation. The simplest and most plausible was to decree freedom for all children born after a certain day. This very measure was proposed by Lord Melville in the beginning of the century, but he did not succeed in carrying it, and apparently it was not renewed; yet it is evident that the Ministry from 1820 onward were bent upon some *gradual* form of emancipation, which should save the interests of the planters, and be in harmony with the principles and action of their predecessors. They did not understand, that when masters desire freedom for their slaves, many modes are open which will give mutual satisfaction; but that when the masters stubbornly resist, then only one method can succeed—total and immediate freedom, followed by regulations which make the freedmen socially, industrially, and politically independent of the master's resentment. The more the Ministers exerted themselves to 'regulate' the slavery, the more bitter and violent did the planters or their substitutes become. Those who now say that the freedom ought to have been graduated, and that immediate emancipation was fanatical, simply show their total ignorance of the history—their folly and presumption.

Sir Fowell Buxton had become in Parliament the avowed leader of the Abolitionists, when Mr. Wil-

berforce, through growing infirmities, withdrew from public life. On May 15, 1823, he brought forward a motion that 'slavery ought to be *gradually* abolished' (so little of obstinate fanaticism was there in the Abolitionists): but the Ministry was frightened at being pledged to anything, and put forward Mr. Canning (an eloquent speaker for freedom) to oppose Mr. Buxton. Yet his 'amendment' was nearly to the same effect. The matter was to be left in the hands of the Ministry, but the House was to profess its anxiety for emancipation at the earliest moment compatible with the welfare of the slaves themselves (!) and the pecuniary interests of the planters. Mr. Canning plausibly stated, that 'in the colonies the British Constitution was not in full play.' The Ministry, in fact, did not know how to enforce the ordinary rights of *free* negroes. But his liberal intentions were believed to be so sincere, that it was thought wiser by the Abolitionists to trust him, and hope for the best. No one had attributed to the Tory Ministries of this century any superiority of talent. Mr. Canning was their only brilliant man; but many of them were highly respectable and worthy in private life, and were sincerely shocked that human beings should be deprived of the most elementary rights, and have no security against fantastic cruelties. The most despotically inclined of them, Lord Castlereagh, was driven to self-destruction in 1822 by a creditable sensitiveness that his Continental policy had issued in nothing but mischief to Italy and Sicily, with the near prospect of the undoing of English work in Spain. The death of Lord Castlereagh (who had very recently become Marquis of Londonderry) was just in time to stop Mr. Canning from sailing to India as Governor-General, and installed him as Foreign Secretary. Though he

could not save the constitution of Spain from the armies of France, while the Spanish King was treacherous, with Russia and Austria as allies in reserve, yet he sent a little army into Portugal, and told the combined sovereigns, in the hearing of Europe, that England by the stamp of her foot could raise up war against them in the heart of their own kingdoms. He likewise acknowledged the independence of the Spanish American colonies, all favourable to negro freedom, by which act (as he incautiously boasted) he 'called into existence a New world to redress the balance of the Old.' He also successfully instigated President Monroe to issue the celebrated declaration, that the American Union could not be unconcerned at any attempt of European Monarchy to establish itself on that side of the Atlantic. In short, this year 1823 was the first severance of England from the despotic Continental policy; it sent a throb of pride and confidence through the nation, and was a potent reinforcement of free sentiment in the ranks of the English gentry. Lord Sidmouth, Lord Bathurst, Sir George Murray, Mr. Huskisson, and of younger men Mr. Peel and Lord Palmerston, were all scandalised by the details which the Government received of West Indian cruelties, which not only went unpunished, but did not lower the credit and honour of the perpetrators.

To rehearse the dreadful accounts of intense cruelty and harassing miseries revealed to the Colonial Secretaries in official documents, would require many painful pages. Different colonies differed in degree of atrocity, yet everything seemed possible everywhere, and prevention or redress nowhere. Starvation and flogging were quite ordinary; but far more exquisite cruelties passed unproved. The

planters in the Bahamas, in reply to the circular of his Majesty's Colonial Minister, passed Acts to amend their slave laws and improve the condition of the free coloured people; but when their new code reached Lord Bathurst (1824), he pronounced the injustice of many of the enactments to be so manifest, that he 'assured himself' the Colonial Legislature would remove them. But that Legislature replied by impugning the English suggestions as injurious to them, and avowed that 'a strong sense of the great impolicy and absolute danger of change compelled them to refuse to alter their laws any farther.'

In Barbadoes, Mr. Moe, Speaker of the Assembly, in transmitting their new code to England, called it 'a splendid work, which would endear their remembrance to posterity;' but Lord Bathurst was highly dissatisfied with the new code. Yet Jamaica and Demerara, with the Mauritius, seem on the whole to have been the worst colonies. The missionary Smith well earned his murder from the planters by his plain remonstrances against the cruel treatment of slaves. 'If it be asked,' said he, 'are there not authorities to whom the injured slaves can appeal for redress? Yes; but many of these are owners of plantations, and perhaps allow their managers to practise the same abuses. It would seem that some of them consider it a greater crime in the negroes to complain of their wrongs, than in the master to inflict them. The complainants are almost sure to be flogged, and frequently before the complaint is investigated, unless indeed listening to the master be called investigation. But even where the justice of the complaint is undeniable, the result is often such that the negroes cannot tell whether the law is made to protect the oppressed or to indemnify the oppressor.' No wonder that the planters did not like mission-

aries! The Rev. Mr. Austin of Demerara, a respected clergyman, who was made a member of the Court of Inquiry concerning the insurrection, attested that the instructions given to the negroes by Mr. Smith had eminently tended to prevent bloodshed; indeed, had actually saved the lives of men who were now seeking Mr. Smith's life. Yet, on the whole, the judgment of Mr. Knibb, a Baptist missionary in Jamaica, seems to be sound. He said that where a negro accepts the Gospel spiritually, it softens and tranquilises him; but the enlightening power to the intellect, which all teaching gives, goes wider abroad than the spiritualising power. To learn something of the outer world, of its nations and its powers; to reflect on themselves and their slavish relation to one equally mortal, equally responsible to God; to see and feel how different was the missionary's behaviour to them from that of their master—had all an electric effect, not contributing to the stability of slavery. The planters of Demerara answered Lord Bathurst's circular defiantly: declared that their right in their slave property was as complete as anyone's right to any property, and claimed to send deputies to England to argue to this effect before the King in Council. Lord Bathurst and his colleagues would probably have been satisfied if they could have won for the slaves just the most elementary rights, such as, that a husband should have his own wife sacred to him, that the honour of girls should be safe, that the whip should not be used indiscriminately, nor cruelly, nor at all to females, that young children should not be taken away from the mother, that the evidence of slaves and black men should be heard in court, that all judicial sentences

should be strictly just, and no punishment excessive or peculiar, such as rubbing pepper into the eyes and salt into wounds: but not one point could be made sure. The planters were willing, for instance, to concede to slaves a nominal marriage, but only with the addition, 'provided that in no way it prejudice the owner's rights.' Of course to make the wife an object inviolable to the owner's will, or to forbid his selling her away, *did* prejudice his fancied rights. Slaves were heard in court, but not only were not believed when they complained; they were far oftener punished for complaining: while if a pretext were wanted for punishing (perhaps hanging) a slave for an alleged scheme of insurrection, the evidence of a single slave was greedily accepted and acted upon. Thus the Ministers were checkmated in their schemes of *gradual, moderate, judicious* reform, and perhaps lamented too late that Lord Melville's scheme of freeing all children born after a near date had been opposed.

In the year 1828 a judicial sentence was pronounced that much afflicted Abolitionists. A negro woman of Antigua, called Grace, had visited England and returned to Antigua; and the question arose, whether after becoming free by touching English soil (such was the faulty way of putting the case) she could be seized as a slave in Antigua. It fell to Lord Stowell, a revered and venerable Judge in the Admiralty Court, to pronounce on this matter.² He was elder brother of the Lord Chancellor Eldon, both of them intense haters of novelty, under whatever pretext of reform. If the advocate of the woman had alleged that the fact of English courts accounting her free proved that her original slavery *was an illegal piece of violence*, Lord Stowell

² It is called 'his last decision.' He retired from the bench in 1828, aged eighty-three.

might have been forced to another decision; but, conveniently for him, that topic was not mooted. He argued in his award, that 'Innumerable Acts of Parliament that regulate the condition of slaves tend to consider them as mere goods and chattels constituting part of the value of estates;' that 'Colonial slavery has been favoured and supported by our own courts, which have liberally imparted to it their protection and encouragement' (an astonishing imputation on English Judges); he further said: 'he trusts that he shall not depart from the modesty which belongs to his situation, and (he hopes) to his character, when he observes, that ancient custom is generally recognised as a just foundation of all law.' When a judge of exemplary fairness in all international disputes shut his eyes to the main question, whether the violent detention of a woman in slavery, which was pronounced lawless in England, was not equally against English law in our colonies; when he further made custom and connivance a just basis for hideous iniquity, this sent a thrill of indignation into Abolitionists. In fact, Lord Stowell proceeded to call slavery a *crime*! 'Emancipation,' he said, 'can only be effected at the joint expense of both countries (the colonies and England), for it is in a peculiar manner the CRIME of this country.' Marvellous judgment! Our population were in no complicity with it, but only certain planters of the West Indies, the Ministry, and (if we believe Lord Stowell), the Judges, who, he says, 'liberally protected and encouraged it.' Therefore he followed them in promoting 'crime.' However, the slave-owners were jubilant, and felt themselves in a legal sense much stronger than before. It became abundantly clear, that neither the Tory Ministers nor Tory judges were willing to treat a purely moral

question from its moral grounds. The same thing was soon to appear in a Whig Ministry.

In one important matter Tory Ministers had acted the Abolitionist with a high hand. In our American War of 1813-14, our Ministry invaded the American continent and called the slaves to liberty. They could not more emphatically disown the doctrine that slaves were private property; this was remembered by the English Abolitionists. The bold claims of the West Indian planters further opened the weakness of applying to their case schemes of gradual abolition such as had suited in some of the Spanish colonies. Men are not willing to have one-sixth part of their 'property' taken away; of what use is it (asked the Abolitionists) to require the planters to give to the slaves one day in the week free, if they regard the slaves as their property? Again, as to the slaves buying themselves and their wives or children, may not the planter say he prefers to keep his property, and will not sell it at any price? It became more and more manifest that the nucleus of the whole controversy lay in the questions, 'Can *innocent* men be justly made the chattels of other men? If a felon be ever so justly enslaved for life, would it be just on that account to make his children and children's children slaves? Can that be just concerning the children of men who are cruelly torn away from their native land, which would not be just concerning the children of felons? Can any long duration of such oppression confer a right of continued oppression? If there is to be compensation, is it not due from the oppressors to the oppressed?' No doubt, all these considerations were as clear as daylight to the earliest Abolitionists; but inasmuch as freedom could only be gained through the Parliament and the Ministry,

they did not wish to run too far ahead of those who had to be convinced. When the Quakers and Nonconformists took up among the people the argument for freedom which Wilberforce and others pleaded in Parliament, the zeal of lecturers and speakers from the platform was ever on the increase. Scarcely any of these earnest men were paid for their services. Only at the last, in a few exceptional cases and for special reasons, was anyone paid; yet for many years no advance adequate to the necessity was made—apathy prevailed with the public. The reason at last appeared: no sufficiently broad principle was laid down. To force the planters to limit their stripes to twenty-five instead of thirty-nine, or to bring the slave to a magistrate to be flogged instead of by the overseer, public instinct felt, could bring no permanent result. At last the broad truth was promulgated (a Quaker lady is said to have originated it)—‘Man by his moral nature never can become a chattel, therefore to uphold slavery is a crime against God.’ ‘Until then’ (testified Sir George Stephen) ‘we found the people apathetic and incredulous of our success, when the press, the Parliament, and the bishops were against us; but at last we had sounded the right note and touched a chord that never ceased to vibrate.’ This may be called fanaticism; but it is only by those who do not know what justice means, and are most superficially acquainted with human nature.

Mr. Canning died, much lamented, after being for a few months Prime Minister, in 1827. In his short term of Premiership he achieved the Treaty of London, out of which sprang the deliverance of Greece (a little Greece, truly) from Turkish oppression. All England had sympathised deeply with the oppressed, and the voices

of praise for brave insurrection had echoes reaching to the West Indies. An enfranchisement of Nonconformists in 1828, and of Catholics in 1829, followed. English newspapers were eagerly read in the West Indies, and the slaves became interested. In 1830, Charles X. of France, after conquering and keeping Algiers, because of an insult to his ambassador, violated his coronation oath, and was ejected from the throne by a popular rising.

The success of this French insurrection set all England agog; for we did not like to be behind the French in liberty. An insurrection of Belgium against the mild and equitable rule of the King of Holland followed, simply from the dislike of Catholics to a Protestant sovereign. Next came the uprising of Poland against the tyranny of the Archduke Constantine and against his brother the Emperor Nicolas: the Polish Constitution had been violently overthrown some thirteen years earlier by Alexander I. That by the way. The important thing was, that the slaves in many of the West Indian islands became greedy for the public news of Europe. Some one was generally found able to read out the newspaper to the rest. When they learned how vehemently brave insurgents were praised, a warm zeal for freedom was kindled in many hearts. Happily they read also that the people of England abhorred slavery, and were exerting themselves for their emancipation. The hope of obtaining freedom peaceably¹ restrained them from violent action. The Reverend John Barry, a Wesleyan missionary, who had resided twenty-seven years in Jamaica, attested that zeal for freedom had become an unquenchable passion there; and that when a number of them were executed after a recent insurrection, most of them died glorying in their fate,

saying that if they had ten or twenty lives they would sacrifice all sooner than return into slavery. The Duke of Wellington, in the close of 1830, seeing the storm of liberty rising upon him, resigned on a trivial pretext; Lord Grey came to the front, and at once pronounced for Parliamentary Reform.

King William IV. and the Court yielded at first, but the House of Lords was obstinate, and a dangerous two years' struggle ensued. Meanwhile, matters grew worse, especially in Jamaica, which alone was equal to all the other West Indian colonies. In 1831 parochial meetings were openly held, in which the planters declared in violent words, that they would rather renounce allegiance to the British Crown than allow the slaves to be freed. After this, they complained in a memorial that their slaves had been deceived into the belief that their freedom had been decreed in England, but withheld by their masters, and that this had led to insurrection. If it was true that this notion had been propagated among the slaves, evidently nothing so much propagated it as the conduct of the planters. But some insurrection there certainly was in 1832, which was speedily suppressed and cruelly punished. In Montego Bay alone, near a hundred slaves were hanged or shot, and one Baptist slave was flogged to death by five hundred lashes. Even magistrates assisted to pull down the chapels of the missionaries, as previously in Barbadoes. All these events could but embitter the negroes in other colonies, on the news reaching them. The Marquis of Sligo, a Jamaica proprietor, about this time, wrote thus to Sir Fowell Buxton: 'When I went out to Jamaica, I thought that the stories of cruelty were merely the emanations of enthusiasts; rather a caricature than a truth. But before I had been very long in Jamaica, I had reason

to think that the reality has been far underrated. This, I feel convinced, is the fact.' As soon as the new Ministry could gain free action for colonial affairs, it found the question of slavery in a truly critical state. According to a modern phrase, the relations were severely strained. Expectation among the slaves was intense. Any rude disappointment of hope might have caused insurrection, spreading as a flame from island to island. Public opinion in England would not endure the extinguishing of such a conflagration in blood, if the Whig Ministry could have lent themselves to it. The planters collectively might quickly lose, not their 'property' only, but their lives; as many as were not absentees. The Ministers saw themselves forced to act, and that, quickly. The Abolitionists in that first Reform Parliament were numerous, but the Ministry had an enormous preponderance and could not be outvoted. The Colonial Minister, 'Mr. Secretary Stanley,' afterwards Earl of Derby, was fluent of speech, ardent and flighty, vain, inexperienced, and utterly superficial; yet on him chiefly rested the conduct of this great measure. On reading his speeches at this distance of time, the weakness of the Government measure amazes one. In the preface to his first Bill, he avowed that 'the only point to be discussed was, what is the *safest, speediest, happiest* way of effecting the final abolition of slavery; since the nation had now loudly and for a length of time declared, that the disgrace of slavery should not be suffered to remain part of our national system.' He went on to recount, that after a unanimous vote of the House in 1823, certain 'ameliorating measures' had been suggested to the colonists; but these had been 'unheeded and disregarded by ALL the Colonial Legislatures.' 'Eight Bills were sent to

them in 1826 by the Secretary of State, and not one colony would adopt a single Bill out of the whole eight; nay, they expressed lofty indignation at our interfering with what was their exclusive business.' He proceeded to quote Mr. Burke on the inutility of trusting the Colonial Legislatures in the matter of the negro, because they will never *execute* the law. 'The law does not 'carry with it the *executory principle*,' in Mr. Burke's words. Who would expect, after this, that the speaker was about to give to the colonists the task of training the negroes for freedom in a seven years' apprenticeship? As an apprentice, the negro had no motive to work; for he was not to receive wages, and the whip was taken from the overseer. Sad experience had proved in Jamaica and elsewhere, that if a humane master, fresh from England, put a sharp limit on the stripes of the whip, the quantity of sugar enormously decreased. This apprenticeship was the height of stupidity, and could only aggravate difficulties. Popular opinion ascribed its origination to Henry Brougham, now become Lord Chancellor Brougham, a vastly different man from his former self: but the present writer knows no proof that that rumour was true. However, in this first Bill 'Mr. Secretary Stanley' proposed a *loan* to the planters of *fifteen* millions, with a requirement that they shall sacrifice a *fourth part* of the labour of the slaves, who were to be allowed to buy their own three-fourths time, and were to be registered as apprenticed freemen. He volunteered to state his own opinion, that it would be quite unjust to expect the planters to repay the loan of fifteen millions; but the slaves ought to pay it, or a part of it: the rest might be borne by this country, unless indeed Parliament thought fit to convert the loan into a gift.

Viscount Howick (the present Earl Grey) vehemently protested against the continuance of the existing system for a single day, and insisted that, instead of the slaves paying anything to the masters, they ought rather 'to receive compensation for past services and unrequited labours.' Mr. Fowell Buxton also and others were highly dissatisfied with the proposals. This debate went on till May 14, 1833.

Not to trouble the reader with further details, the loan of fifteen millions was finally changed into a grant of twenty millions, by two hundred and eighty-six ayes against seventy-seven noes; and the Ministry, against protest, insisted on calling it 'compensation.' Children under six years old were made free, so were all the negroes, nominally; then why compel them to labour for seven years unrequited? This forsooth was 'the *safest, speediest, happiest way*' of liberating them!

We may well ask, How had the planters deserved this large gift or payment from our innocent nation? If the Executive Government winks at crime, does crime become rightful, and is the nation unable to forbid it without paying the criminals? Such was the doctrine of a majority of the Grey Ministry; certainly not of the present Lord Grey, who always looks earnestly at the just and right. At any rate, the twenty millions bought up the worth of all the estates, and we might have claimed them as Crown property, and have given to the negroes independent freeholds; though of course no sugar would have been forthcoming for many years in that way. In the Mauritius notoriously the slave trade had been largely carried on since 1807. But somewhat must now be said as to the worth of West Indian property at that time.

One word first on the laziness imputed to the negroes. They had twenty-six days in the year to work on their own allotments, and by

this work they fed themselves—that is, by one day out of fourteen. Surely this denotes how well they worked, when they would themselves enjoy the fruit of their labour. A negress of Berbice complained bitterly that her mistress never gave her clothes, yet punished her by tearing her clothes in pieces; hence it would seem that the negroes often clothed themselves, as well as fed themselves. After the nominal freedom given in 1833, a negro might buy his own complete freedom, but no maximum price was fixed. He was valued by a stipendiary magistrate from England and two local justices; hence the ablest negro had to pay most. Even so, the Rev. Mr. Knibb attested that in Jamaica a full thousand negroes had in three years worked out their entire freedom, while only one-fourth of their time was their own. How fatuous is the complaint of idleness in ‘black Quashee!’

But now, as to the masters and overseers, were not *they* idle? After the slave trade got into full activity, they did not need to care how many slaves they killed by overwork; hence by force of the whip the estates were for awhile highly productive. When George III. came to the throne, was perhaps the very acmé of flourishing sugar estates. But the culture was very wasteful. Even the richest tropical lands will not bear crops for ever with very partial manuring. The only manure was carried in a sort of bowl on a slave's head. The plough was not used; roads were hardly thought of; the hands of unwilling men and women were the only motive force. Meanwhile, the wealthiest of the planters became absentees, and lived extravagantly in England; many became Members of Parliament; some rose to the peerage. The planters were manufacturers as well as agriculturists. There was no economy

on the estates when the master's eye was removed, no reserving of capital for better manufacture or less prosperous times. The overseer, or manager, often kept more than one black or brown mistress, and freely used the resources of the estate for his own pleasures; nor were the managers always honest in other ways. The mercantile agents also made their harvest out of the estate; and if a loan on mortgage were required, things soon went from bad to worse. When the slave trade was forbidden, the fatal blow was struck. Yet already in 1792 the Jamaica House of Assembly reported that in the course of twenty-two years one hundred and seventy-seven estates had been sold for the payment of debts, and more than eighty thousand executions had taken place, for a total of more than twenty-two millions sterling. Bankruptcies abounded up to 1807, through manifest recklessness. The same ruin (Mr. Charles Buxton observes) came on the Dutch colony of Surinam, where, out of nine hundred and seventeen plantations, six hundred and thirty-six were abandoned, though no philanthropists there teased the planters. In our West Indies the planters had a monopoly of the British market; even sugar from British India was highly taxed, as a bonus to West Indian sugar. This did not suffice. They obtained bounties on their sugar, as well as protecting duties. The latter were computed to mulct the people of England of at least one million and a half sterling a year, which in eighteen years (from 1815 to 1833) alone amounted to twenty-seven millions; and in 1833 the West Indian estates were worth very little. Already in 1830 Lord Chandos presented a petition from the West Indies, setting forth ‘their extreme distress;’ they earnestly solicited relief from Parliament; the distress was unparal-

leled; affluent families were reduced to penury; the *West India Reporter* said that without speedy relief numbers of planters must be ruined. They had killed off the negroes, had exhausted the soil, had lived extravagantly, and saved no capital, therefore could not pay wages; numbers were deeply mortgaged; they were liable to insurrections through the enmity which their wickedness had brought about; and after they had received much more than thirty millions in gratuities, bounties, and protecting duties, Whig Ministers insisted that they *deserved* 'compensation,' and settled it by the claims of the planters in London, whose goodwill (they fancied) would make things work smoothly in the colonies. Never was there so monstrous a price given for a property so rotten and already so laden with unjust gifts. But the Grey Ministry was overwhelmingly strong; and the anti-slavery party, dreading to lose the crisis, submitted; while they grudged the apprenticeship more than the twenty millions. The public were so delighted to secure the main point, that they forgot all beside.

Mr. Charles Buxton thinks it clear, from the debates in 1831 and 1832, that the real cause which brought round the Parliament collectively to the conviction that slavery could not continue and must be legislatively extinguished somehow, was the undeniable decay of the slave population. Without new importations of slaves all the islands must become worthless. This, and no considerations of humanity, nor regard to the public voice, was the overwhelming argument. That the terrible decrease in the number of the negroes was caused by overwork and cruelties, was rendered certain by the fact that the women were more numerous than the men; also afterwards, by the steady increase of the black

population when freedom was gained.

The Whig Ministry took one step farther. They undertook, it is said, to give a promise, as a bonus to free sugar, that slave sugar (as of Brazil) should be excluded from our markets. How the promise of a Ministry can bind Parliament, is not clear; but both the Anti-slavery party (in its narrowest sense) and the planters much reproached Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston for breaking through this arrangement in 1846. These Ministers ascertained that no free sugar was sold on the Continent; for the cheaper sugar from Brazil drove it out. No discouragement whatever to slave sugar was brought about by our exclusiveness. The sole result was to offend the Brazilians, and almost ruin our trade with them. No doubt, Brazil and Cuba fancied they were going to have an extended trade, when their sugar was admitted to England. A temporary increase of the slave trade was an unhappy, unforeseen result, for which Lord Denman and others did not cease to reproach the Whig Ministers, though Sir Robert Peel supported them. The West Indian proprietors actually claimed both the promise given to them and the apprenticeship as 'part of the compensation.' Jamaica had a virtuous abhorrence of slave sugar, while she continued most tyrannical to the freed blacks. In all the islands the apprenticeship worked very ill, as every man of common sense ought to have foreseen. The Marquis of Sligo, Governor of Jamaica, condemned it, and at once set free all his slaves, advising others to do the same; but he had few imitators, except in Barbadoes. During the apprenticeship, when a negro desired to buy his own time of his master, he was charged in Jamaica *two shillings and sixpence* a day as its value. But as soon as freedom was complete, the planters who wanted labourers

valued their work as worth only *one shilling* a day. From this and other frauds, besides the ill blood from old cruelties, many could not get field labourers at all. Moreover, the freed women no longer worked in the field. Nevertheless, on the few estates where good wages were paid punctually, no difficulty occurred.

It is needless here to pursue the miserable tale—how, after the apprenticeship was arbitrarily terminated in Parliament (not least through its exposure by the devoted efforts of Joseph Sturge and other good Quakers), the Colonial Legislatures hankered after a new slave trade, under the name of apprenticed coolies, and taxed the negroes to import them. Jamaica, as usual, had the pre-eminence in tyrannical legislation and unjust application of public money; until their Legislature itself became unendurable to Tories as well as Whigs. Space does not permit to detail the deeds of Governor Eyre. Suffice it to say in outline, that in 1865 an alarming outbreak of some hundreds of coloured men took place; that martial law was proclaimed in a limited district; that Governor Eyre arrested a coloured member of the Legislature, his political opponent, Mr. G. W. Gordon, the advocate of justice for the blacks; carried him by force into the district where civil law was suspended, had him tried by martial law by two young officers, and hanged. Many besides were hanged; men and women were flogged with piano-

wire, houses of black men were burnt, and after all semblance of insurgency or resistance was put down, violent horrors continued. The Assembly passed a Bill justifying all Governor Eyre's proceedings, which interposed insuperable difficulties to prosecuting him. The English judges were aghast at such lawlessness and at the frightful precedent. Neither a Whig nor a Tory Ministry could for a moment defend it; and though Governor Eyre was not punished, nor Mrs. Gordon (the widow) compensated for losses, the verdict of England was pronounced against the whites of Jamaica. They were summoned to resign their legislature, and did not dare to refuse. An English Governor was sent out (Mr. John Peter Grant, of Indian celebrity) to rule them despotically, and from that day the condition of Jamaica has slowly improved. The chief thing needed has been, to take power out of the hands of those who in former days were accustomed to be tyrants.

If space allowed us to pursue the argument, it would most abundantly be proved that every approach to a modified slavery, such as disguises itself in apprenticeship of coolies, is always as mischievous as unjust; and that the vigilance exercised by the Aborigines Protection Society is never superfluous. But the pen must be checked. In future articles the yet greater question of slavery under the American Union will be treated.

