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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK ANTI-SLAVERY
CATECHISM ***

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ANTI-SLAVERY
C A T E C H I S M .

BY MRS. CHILD,

Author of 'An Appeal in favor of that class of Americans called Africans,' the 'Evils of Slavery, and the Cure of Slavery,' 'Authentic Anecdotes of American Slavery,' 'History of the Condition of Women,' 'The Oasis,' 'Frugal Housewife,' &c.

“On the nation’s naked heart
Scatter the living coals of Truth.”

S e c o n d E d i t i o n .

NEWBURYPORT:

PUBLISHED BY CHARLES WHIPPLE.

1839.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1835,
By CHARLES WHIPPLE,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

ANTI-SLAVERY CATECHISM.

Question. Why do you consider it a duty to preach and publish abolition doctrines?

Answer. First, I consider it my duty as a Christian; for the system of slavery, as a whole, and in each one of its details, is in direct opposition to the precepts of the gospel. Secondly, I consider it my duty as a conscientious citizen of this republic; for I believe slavery is prejudicial to the best interests of my country; and I dare not hope that God's blessing will rest upon us, if we persevere in our iniquity.

Q. But the abolitionists are accused of showing the worst side of slavery. Is it not true that they seek to give an exaggerated idea of its evils?

A. I believe every man, who candidly examines the subject, will come to the conclusion, that every side appears to be the worst side. Allow me to give a brief statement of the case. Between two and three millions of people are compelled to labor without wages. They gain nothing more by working ten hours than they would by working one hour. It is not in human nature that they should be disposed to be industrious under these circumstances. They try to do as little as possible. The chief part of the labor that is got out of their bones and sinews is obtained by fear of the whip. A peck of corn a week is the usual allowance for the food of a slave. The planters generally estimate that a slave can be fed and clothed at an expense of from fifteen to twenty dollars a year. The following is the printed testimony of Thomas Clay, of Georgia, himself a slave-holder, though reputed to be an amiable, conscientious man: "A peck of corn per week, if it be sound flint corn, is sufficient to sustain health and strength under moderate labor. But there is *often* a defect in the quality, and the quantity is then insufficient. The present economy of the slave system is to get all you can from the slave, and give in return as little as will barely support him in a working condition. Even where there is not direct intention to abridge his comforts, they are but little consulted; and the slave, seeing his master wholly engrossed by his

own advantage, naturally adopts the same selfish course, and, when not restrained by higher principles, becomes deceitful and selfish.”

Q. If Mr. Thomas Clay is a good man, and really thinks slavery so bad in its effects, why does he not emancipate his own slaves?

A. If you were to ask him, I suppose he would give an answer very common among planters. He would tell you that he could not do it because the laws of the State in which he lives impose such heavy penalties, that the process of emancipation is extremely difficult and expensive.

Q. Who makes the laws of the Southern States?

A. The slave-holders themselves. When I hear a man say that he would gladly emancipate his slaves, if the *laws* would allow it, it makes me think of an anecdote I have often heard. A little girl had been ordered to perform some household work in the absence of her mother. When the parent returned, and saw that her orders had not been obeyed, she said, “My child, why have you not done as I bid you?” The little girl replied, “I should have been glad to do it, mother; but I could not. Don’t you see I am tied?” “And pray who tied you?” inquired the mother. “I tied myself,” was the reply. Now this is plainly the case with the slave-holders. They make oppressive laws, and persist in upholding those laws, and then say, “I would do my duty, if I could; but the *laws* will not permit it.”

Q. Do the slaves have to work all the time?

A. In some States the laws ordain that slaves shall not be compelled to work *more* than *fourteen* hours a day, from September to March, nor more than *fifteen* hours a day, from March to September; and it is reasonable to conclude that there would have been no necessity for making such a law, unless some masters *did* compel their slaves to toil beyond the specified hours. Convicts, who are imprisoned for crime, are not obliged to work more than ten hours a day, and are better fed than the slaves. It is an extraordinary thing for a slave to be sent to the state prison for an offence. Instead of punishment, it would in fact be amelioration of his lot.

Q. But I have been told that the slaves sometimes work for themselves.

A. When they happen to have kind masters, they are sometimes allowed a part of the time to earn something for themselves; but the laws are extremely inefficient for the protection of property thus acquired. If a white

man sees fit to seize the products of their industry, the law in most cases affords no redress; because in slave States a colored man is never allowed to give evidence against a white man, under any circumstances. Any note of hand, or written contract with a slave is worth no more than a promissory note to a dog; because no slave can bring an action at law. In several of the States, a slave is liable to punishment if it is ascertained that he has acquired any property.

Q. I have been told that masters are allowed to kill their slaves. Can this be true?

A. The laws do indeed nominally consider the killing of a slave as murder; but no instance has ever been recorded of a white man executed for killing a slave. One law on this subject has the following strange qualification: "Except said slave die of *moderate* punishment." As if any punishment, that occasioned death, *could* be moderate! If a hundred blacks or mulattoes, either bond or free, should see a slave murdered, it avails nothing against the murderer; because the laws of slave States do not allow a colored person, under any circumstances, to testify against a white man. The laws of South Carolina favor the master to such a degree, that when accused of murdering a slave, he may be absolved simply upon *his own oath*, that he did not commit the crime!

Q. But I am told that white men are not unfrequently prosecuted for cruelty to slaves; and this looks as if the laws afforded the poor creatures some protection.

A. I have read not a few Reports of Cases in Southern Courts; and those reports did more than any thing else to make me an abolitionist. Prosecutions are always brought for the master's interest—never for the protection or redress of the slave. In Martin's Louisiana Reports, 1818, you will find the case of Jourdan vs. Patten. In this case a lady sued a neighboring proprietor for the damage of putting out the only eye of one of her slaves. The Supreme Court decided that the defendant should pay the lady the sum of twelve hundred dollars; in consideration of which, the slave should be placed in *his* possession. The lady received all the money, as an indemnification for the loss of property; but the poor slave not only received no atonement for his sufferings, but was actually given to the very man that had knocked his eye out! This is a fair sample of the nature of all

such prosecutions. In Nott & McCord's South Carolina Reports, 1818, it is stated that a slave belonging to Mrs. E. Witsell, was shot through the head by two men who were hunting runaway negroes. The lady commenced an action to recover the value of her slave. The judge told the jury that circumstances *might* exist to authorize the killing of a negro, *without the sanction of a magistrate, or even the order of a militia officer*; but it was thought such circumstances were not connected with *this* case; the lady was therefore entitled to compensation for injury done to her property. As for the poor slave himself, his parents, his wife, or his children, they were never once thought of in the matter.

Q. But do you really believe they hunt negroes with dogs and guns, as some people say?

A. There cannot be the slightest doubt of the fact. Dogs are trained for that express purpose. The planters justify the practice, by saying it is absolutely necessary for their own safety; because runaway negroes, who collect in the woods and swamps, will soon begin to commit depredations on the neighboring estates. Thus the evils inevitably growing out of this bad system are made use of to justify its cruelties. Free laborers would have no inducement to run away and hide in swamps. It would obviously be for their own interest to keep at work. These negro hunts seem to be entered into with all the keen excitement of sportsmen going out to hunt squirrels or hares. A letter written near Edenton, N.C. among other items of news, states: "We have had great negro shooting lately." A gentleman well known in the literary world resided for some time in the family of a Georgia planter; and he himself stated to me that three negro hunts took place during the first nine months of his stay there. He said, that one night hearing a noise below stairs, he hastened to ascertain the cause. "The gentlemen of the family were cleaning and loading their guns, trying their flints, and going through the usual preparations, apparently for a deer hunt, as buck shot and bullets were in demand. The children of the family had partaken of the general excitement, and arisen from their beds. As I entered the room, I could hear one of the youngest say, 'Why, pa, you wouldn't kill Ralph, would you?' 'I would take him, and sell him, and get money for him,' said the next of age. 'You will only lame him, so as to seize him, I suppose,' said the mother. 'I would rather kill him than the best fat buck in the country,' replied the father, as he rammed down the heavy charge. The moonlight

from the window glanced along the barrel of the piece, and caught the eye of the eldest boy. The reflected light kindled up his glance with something of an unnatural flash, but in vivid sympathy with the paternal look and attitude. The anticipated joy of vengeance seemed to be the predominating emotion.”

Q. If the laws are as you say, I should think the slaves did not stand a fair chance when they are *wrongfully* accused.

A. If you will examine Stroud’s Compendium of the Slave Laws, you will be convinced for yourself that what I say is true; and the effect is as you suppose. The poor slaves are completely in the power of their masters. The same men who accuse them are often their judges and executioners. In illustration of this, I will tell you a case that occurred in Edenton, North Carolina. It was told by a woman who lived there at the time, and witnessed some of the executions. Many of the slaves in that place were skilful in mechanical trades. The planters in the back country were very desirous to purchase some of them; but their masters found it so profitable to let them out, that they would not consent to sell them. Those who were anxious to buy, hit upon the following expedient to obtain their purpose: They wrote anonymous letters, charging these intelligent slaves with having projected an insurrection. These letters were scattered about in Edenton, with the idea that the masters would be glad to sell such dangerous fellows; but instead of this, the poor innocent slaves were tried, convicted, and sentenced by their frightened owners; and a large number of them were put to death, upon no other evidence than anonymous letters.

Q. It does not seem as if such things could take place in a civilized country. Can you believe it?

A. If you reflect a little upon human nature, I believe you will think it perfectly natural that such abuses should exist, wherever one human being has arbitrary power over another. You would not like to place yourself completely in the power even of the best man you know; you would be afraid to have it depend entirely on his will how much work you should do in a day, what food you should eat, and what clothes you should wear, and how and when you should be punished. It is not considered entirely safe for an aged parent to relinquish all his property, and trust entirely to the generosity of his own children; what then do you suppose the poor slave has

to expect, when he becomes too old and infirm to be profitable to his master?

Q. But the Southerners are said to be very honorable, generous men.

A. Our Southern brethren are just what any human beings would be under similar circumstances. They are generous with the proceeds of other men's labor, for the same reason that the heir is prodigal of money, which another accumulates for him. He who can let out his neighbor, and his neighbor's wife and children, and receive all their wages, will naturally be more profuse than a man who depends entirely on his own exertions. Planters have heretofore generally confessed that slavery is an evil, and many of them speak of its detailed abuses with strong regret; but these abuses are merely the necessary and inevitable results of the system they are helping to support; and they never can cure the abuses until they are willing to renounce the system itself. I suppose that few planters would think of palliating the treatment Mrs. Salarie's slaves received; yet they are all helping to support a system under which such cruelties can be committed with impunity. Perhaps very humane and amiable masters do even more mischief than the desperately wicked; for they are always quoted as palliations of the whole system; and they approach so *near* to the right line, that they can more easily draw over kind-hearted people, who have not thought much upon the subject.

Q. What is the history of Mrs. Salarie?

A. She resided in New Orleans. On the 10th of April, 1834, her splendid mansion took fire. During the midst of the conflagration, a rumor arose among the crowd that there were slaves chained in the burning dwelling; but those who asked for the keys were reproved for interfering with their neighbor's business. At last the doors were forced open by sailors and mechanics, that had collected around the spot; and a New Orleans paper thus describes the horrible scene that presented itself: "Seven slaves more or less horribly mutilated, were seen, some chained to the floor, and some suspended by the neck to the ceiling, with their limbs stretched and torn from one extremity to the other. Their bodies, from head to foot, were covered with scars and sores, and filled with wounds. One poor old man, upwards of sixty years of age, was chained hand and foot, and made fast to the floor, in a kneeling position. His head bore the appearance of having

been beaten until it was broken, and the worms were actually seen making a feast of his brains.”

Q. Every body must have thought her a very wicked woman. Did the slave-holders in the neighborhood pretend to justify her measures?

A. I have no doubt that every humane person, that heard of the event, expressed horror, and sincerely felt it. For several months previous to the discovery, her neighbors had been in the habit of living in apartments as far as possible from her house, on purpose to avoid the shrieks and groans of her poor suffering slaves; yet during all that time no complaint was laid before the public authorities, and no investigation demanded! I suppose neighbors were afraid to say any thing, lest they should be accused of promoting discontent among the negroes. Those who endeavor to keep human beings in the situation of beasts, are more afraid of them than they would be of beasts; because the human being has *reason*, which is always prone to offer resistance to tyranny. The consciousness of this makes slave-holders very irritable when any one in the community takes part with an abused slave, or expresses the slightest pity for his sufferings.

Q. Is it not for the master’s interest to treat the slaves well?

A. So it is for the interest of men to treat their horses and cattle well; and yet their passions not unfrequently make them forget their interests. Passive obedience is obtained from human beings with more difficulty than from animals; and when the master *is* provoked, the poor slave is completely in his power, with scarcely the shadow of protection from the law. The law in no case recognises slaves as human beings; on the contrary, it expressly declares they “shall be deemed, sold, taken, and reputed to be *chattels personal*, in the hands of their owners and possessors, their administrators and assigns, to all intents, constructions, and *purposes whatever*.” An act of Maryland, for the settlement of estates, enumerates specific articles, such as “slaves, working beasts, animals,” &c. Where even the *laws* consider human beings as animals, it is not a matter of surprise that they are generally treated no better than self-interest leads men to treat animals. You will likewise perceive that when the slave becomes old, or diseased, or in any way unfit for labor, it is *not* for the interest of his master to prolong his existence by rendering it comfortable. Then again that part of the system connected with *overseers*, shows plainly that the self-interest of the master

cannot effectually secure good treatment to the slave. If planters were to give overseers a stated salary, without regard to the amount of produce, the overseers (who are proverbially unprincipled men) would have no motive for consulting the interest of their employers—it would be a matter of indifference to them whether much or little work were done. To obviate this difficulty, it is customary to give the overseer a certain *proportion* of the profits of the plantation. Of course, it becomes his ruling desire to get the greatest possible amount of work done. He does not care how much the soil is exhausted, nor how much the negroes are broken down. If a slave says he is very ill, the overseer is unwilling to believe the story, because he is reluctant to lose a day's labor. If the poor creature droops under his allotted task, he must be stimulated by the whip, because the overseer cannot spare an hour of his exertions. If the "slave dies under *moderate* punishment," the master must furnish a new laborer; and the loss falls on *him*, not on the overseer. It is obviously natural for the latter personage to think more of his own gains than of his employer's losses. Every body knows that men are prone to drive hired horses with less mercy than their own; because they do not meet with any personal loss from injury done to the beast, and their object is to get their money's worth of riding. Is it not a fearful thing for one human being to be placed towards another in the same relation that a stable-horse is toward the man who hires him? When planters are reminded of instances of cruelty, too well authenticated to be denied, they are prone to lay the blame upon overseers. Mr. Wirt, of Virginia, speaks of this class of men as "the lowest of the human race—always cap in hand to the dons who employ them, and furnishing materials for their pride, insolence, and love of dominion." If we had no such information concerning the character of these men, we should naturally conclude that good people would be averse to enter into such an employment. Yet overseers and drivers are a necessary part of this bad system, because slaves are entirely deprived of the motives which induce free laborers to work; and since overseers must be employed, it is necessary to make it for their interest to get as much work out of the slave as possible. The evils of slavery are necessary and inevitable parts of the system; and whether the planters reprobate them or not, they cannot possibly avoid them, except by relinquishing the system. The master and his subordinate agents *must* have discretionary power to punish, because their poor human brutes, being deprived of salutary motives to exertion, must be driven to it. The slave *must* not be allowed to buy or sell, or make the most

trifling contracts; because the oppressed being would naturally avail himself of this privilege, and sell some of the cotton or tobacco, which he cultivates for his master without wages. The laws *must* punish them with great severity; because the very nature of their condition is a constant temptation to theft, falsehood, and murder. They *must* be kept brutally ignorant; because if they were otherwise, they could not be kept in slavery. Licentiousness *must* be countenanced among them; because their master's interest is connected with their increase, and he might lose many good bargains if the laws did not allow him to sell a wife from her husband, or a husband from his wife. The law *must* suppose a negro to be a slave, till he proves himself free; because runaway slaves would of course pretend that they were free. They *must* not be allowed to witness against a white man; for a slave may have had a wife or a child whipped to death by a white man—and he may have many other good reasons for strong prejudice against white men. An unnatural system *must* be sustained by unnatural means. Hence we find the same characteristic features in every country where negro slavery has been allowed.

Q. Some people think slavery as great a sin as the slave trade. Are you of that opinion?

A. There seems to me just the same difference as there is between the thief and the man who pays him for stealing. What would you say of a man who buys a horse, knowing it to be stolen? The following circumstance, which took place a short time before our Revolution, furnishes a good commentary on this matter. A Philadelphia negro was accused of having stolen goods in his possession. He acknowledged the fact, saying, "Massa Justice, me know me got dem tings from Tom dere, and me tink Tom teal dem too; but what den, Massa? dey be only a piccaninny knife, and a piccaninny corkscrew; one cost sixpence, and tudder a shilling; an me *pay Tom honestly for dem*, Massa." "Pretty story, truly!" said his worship; "you knew they were stolen, and yet allege for excuse, you honestly paid for them. Don't you know, Pompey, that the receiver is as bad as the thief? You must be severely whipped, you black rascal." "Very well, Massa, if de black rascal be whipt for buying tolen goods, me hope de white rascal be whipt too, for same ting, when you catch him." "To be sure," replied the Justice. "Well den," says Pompey, "here be Tom's Massa—hold him fast, constable! He buy Tom, as I buy de piccaninny knife, and de piccaninny corkscrew. He

know very well Tom be tolen from his old fadder and mudder; de knife and de corkscrew had neder.”

I do not see how we can escape from the conclusion that the slave-owner is an accomplice of the slave-trader. So long as a profitable market is kept open, the article will be supplied, despite of difficulties and dangers. The only way to stop the trade, is to shut up the market; and this can be done only by the entire abolition of the system of slavery. When nobody will buy a man, nobody will be tempted to steal a man. Slavery never exists without having more or less of the slave-trade involved *in* it. There is in the very heart of our land a slave-trade constantly carried on, and sanctioned by our laws, which is as disgraceful and cruel as the foreign slave trade. The new slave States at the extreme South have not slaves enough, and the climate, together with the hard labor of the sugar plantations, kills them very fast. The old slave States have a surplus of slaves, which they send off to supply these markets. About ten thousand are annually exported from Virginia alone. Niles, in his Register, vol. 35, page 4, says: “Dealing in slaves has become a *large* business. Establishments are made at several places in Maryland and Virginia, at which they are sold like cattle. These places are strongly built, and well supplied with *thumbscrews, gags, cow-skins, and other whips, often bloody.*” In these sales no regard is paid to domestic ties. The newly married wife is torn shrieking from her husband, and the mother with her little ones are sold in “*separate* lots to suit purchasers.” A gentleman in Charleston, S. C., writes to his friend in New York: “Curiosity sometimes leads me to the auction sales of the negroes. There I saw the father looking with sullen contempt on the crowd, and expressing an indignation in his countenance that he dares not speak; and the mother pressing her infants closer to her bosom, exclaiming, in wild and simple earnestness, ‘I can’t leff my children! I won’t leff my children!’ But the hammer went on, reckless whether it united or sundered for ever. On another stand I saw a man apparently as white as myself exposed for sale.”

Q. I have heard some people say that the negroes do not care so much about such separations as we should suppose.

A. There is no doubt that their degraded situation tends to blunt the feelings, as well as to stultify the intellect; and it is a fearful thing to think what Christians have to answer for, who thus brutalize immortal souls. But there are numerous instances to prove that the poor creatures do often suffer

the most agonizing sensations when torn from those they love. Near Palmyra, in Marion county, Missouri, two boys were sold to a slave-trader, who did not intend to leave the place until morning. During the night, the mother was kept chained in an out-house, that she might not make any effort to prevent the departure of her children. She managed to get loose from her fetters, seized an axe, cut off the heads of her sleeping boys, and then ended her own life by the same instrument.

The Missouri Intelligencer, a few months ago, gave an account of a slave named Michael, who was sold by his master to Mr. J. E. Fenton, by whom he was to be immediately shipped for the Southern markets. At the mouth of the Ohio, he filed off his irons, and contrived to escape. He immediately returned to the place where his wife resided, and having armed himself, declared he never would be sent to the South, unless his wife was allowed to accompany him. He was finally taken by stratagem, and lodged in jail for safe keeping. Finding that his oppressors were determined to separate him from his beloved wife, he committed suicide. I believe the attachments of slaves are even stronger than ours; for these ties constitute the only pleasure they are allowed to have. Hundreds of instances might be told, where they have preferred death to separation.

Q. I have been told they sometimes kidnapped free colored persons, to sell them as slaves. Is it so?

A. It is unquestionably true that this is carried on to a considerable extent. More than twenty free colored children were kidnapped in the single city of Philadelphia, in 1825; and in 1827 two were stolen in open day. It is a common thing to decoy the unsuspecting victims on board a vessel, or to some retired spot, and then seize and bind them. A New York paper of 1829, says: "Beware of kidnappers! It is well understood that there is at present in this city, a gang of kidnappers, busily engaged in their vocation of stealing colored children for the Southern market." As the law supposes every colored person to be a slave unless he can *prove* himself free, and as no person of his own complexion is allowed to be evidence for him, the kidnappers have an easy time of it.

Q. Some people say we ought to pity the masters as well as the slaves.

A. I agree with them entirely. The masters are to be deeply pitied; because the long continuance of a wicked system has involved them in

difficulties, and at the same time rendered them generally blind to the best means of getting rid of those difficulties. They are likewise to be compassionated for the effects which early habits of power produce on their own characters. Mr. Jefferson, who lived in the midst of slavery, says: "The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions; the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it. The parent storms; the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in a circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to the worst of passions; and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyranny, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy, who can retain his morals and manners undepraved in such circumstances." The general licentiousness produced by this system can never be described without using language too gross to be addressed to a civilized community. Some idea of it may be derived from the fact, that every female slave is completely in the power of her master, of his sons, of his overseers, and his drivers. The law does not allow her to offer resistance to a white man, under any circumstances; and the state of public opinion is such that any pretensions to virtue on her part would be treated with brutal ridicule. The slave is not allowed to have any right in his wife and children. If his master's interest can be served by his keeping three or four wives, or by his wife's having a succession of husbands, he cannot dispute the commands of his owner. The wife, or the husband, is sometimes sold, and sent thousands of miles from each other, and from their little ones, without the slightest hope of ever meeting again. Under these circumstances, the man, or the woman, is soon ordered to take another partner; because it is for the interest of the master that they should do so. It is a shameful fact that the laws and customs of our country make it absolutely impossible for a large portion of our population to be virtuous, even if they wish to be so. The wealth of Virginia is principally made by the breeding of slaves and horses; and persons unaccustomed to the system would be shocked by the detail of well authenticated facts, which prove that about as little regard is paid to decency in one case as the other. *Mulatto* slaves bring a higher price than *black* ones; hence licentiousness in slave States becomes a profitable vice, instead of being expensive, as it is under other forms of society.

Q. I have been told that a great many of the slaves have very light complexions. Is it so?

A. In the old slave States, where the process of amalgamation has been going on for a long time, this is remarkably the case. An old soldier, who lately visited the South, said he was not so much struck by any circumstance, as by the great change that had taken place in the complexion of the slaves since the Revolution. Now and then I have seen in the southern papers advertisements for a runaway slave, "who passes himself for a white man." A Boston gentleman, who dislikes the abolitionists very much, visited Georgia a few years ago. He told me that when he was walking with a planter one day, they met a man driving a team, who had a perfectly fair complexion, with blue eyes and brown hair. The Bostonian remarked, "That must be an independent fellow, to be driving a team in this part of the country, where it is considered so disgraceful for a white man to work." "O, that fellow is a slave," replied the Georgian. Almost every body has heard of the recent case of Mary Gilmore, of Philadelphia, a perfectly white girl, of Irish parentage, who was taken up and tried as a runaway slave. A Missouri newspaper proves that a white man may, without a *mistake*, be adjudged a slave. "A case of a slave sueing for his freedom, was tried a few days since in Lincoln county, of which the following is a brief statement of particulars: A youth of about ten years of age sued for his freedom on the ground that he was a free white person. The court granted his petition to sue as a pauper upon inspection of his person. Upon his trial before the jury, he was examined by the jury and two learned physicians, all of whom concurred in the opinion that very little, if any, race of negro blood could be discovered by any of the external appearances. All the physiological marks of distinction, which characterize the African descent, had disappeared. His skin was fair, his hair soft, straight, fine and white, his eyes blue, but rather disposed to the hazel-nut color; nose prominent, the lips small, his head round and well formed, forehead high and prominent, ears large, the tibia of the leg straight, and feet hollow. Notwithstanding these evidences of his claims, he was proved to be the descendant of a mulatto woman, and that his progenitors on the mother's side had been and still were slaves: *consequently he was found to be a slave.*" I have been told of a young physician, who went into the far Southern States to settle, and there became in love with a very handsome and modest girl, who lived at service. He married her; and about a year after that event, a gentleman called at the house, and announced himself as Mr. J*****y, of Mobile. He said to Dr. W*****, "Sir, I have a trifling affair of business to settle with you. You

have married a slave of mine.” The young physician resented this language; for he had not entertained the slightest suspicion that the girl had any other than white ancestors since the flood. But Mr. J. furnished proofs of his claim, and Dr. W. knew very well that the laws of the country would uphold him in it. After considerable discussion, the best bargain he could make was either to pay eight hundred dollars, or have his wife put up at auction. He consented to the first alternative, and his unwelcome visiter departed. When he had gone, Dr. W. told his wife what had happened. The poor woman burst into tears and said, “That as Mr. J. *was her own father*, she had hoped that when he heard she had found an honorable protector, he would have left her in peace.”

Q. There can be no doubt that slavery is a bad system; but don't you think it ought to be done away gradually? Ought not the slaves to be fitted for freedom, before they are emancipated?

A. The difficulty is, it is utterly impossible to fit them for freedom while they remain slaves. The masters know very well that their vassals will be servile just in proportion as they are brutally ignorant; hence all their legislation tends to keep them so. It is a disgraceful fact, that in half of these United States the working men are expressly forbidden to learn to read or write. The law ordains that twenty lashes shall be inflicted upon every slave found in an assembly met together for the purpose of “mental instruction.” Any white person who teaches a slave to read or write, or gives or sells him any book (the Bible not excepted), is fined two hundred dollars; and any colored person who commits the same *crime*, is punished with thirty-nine lashes, or with imprisonment. The Rev. Charles C. Jones, of Georgia, said in one of his sermons: “Generally speaking, the slaves appear to us to be without God and without hope in the world—a *nation of heathen in our very midst*. We cannot cry out against the Papists for withholding the Scriptures from the common people; for we withhold the Bible from *our* servants, and keep them in ignorance of it.” A writer in the Observer, of Charleston, S. C. says: “I hazard the assertion, that throughout the bounds of our synod, there are at least one hundred thousand slaves, speaking the same language as ourselves, who never *heard* of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer.” The reason assigned for these oppressive laws is, that “teaching slaves to read and write tends to excite dissatisfaction in their minds,” and to produce insurrection. In Georgia, a white man is fined five hundred

dollars for teaching a slave or free negro to read or write; and if a colored man attempts to teach the alphabet even to his own child, he is liable to be fined or whipped, according to the discretion of the court. Such laws are necessary for the preservation of this detestable system; and while such laws exist, how can the slaves ever be better fitted for freedom? When the British government insisted that female slaves should no longer be flogged naked in the Colonies, the Jamaica legislature replied, that the practice could not possibly be laid aside, “*until* the negro women acquired more of the sense of shame, which distinguishes European females.” Fitting men for freedom by keeping them slaves, is like the Jamaica mode of making women modest by whipping them without clothing.

Q. But don't you think it would be dangerous to turn the slaves at once loose upon the community?

A. The abolitionists never desired to have them turned loose. They wish to have them governed by salutary laws, so regulated as effectually to protect both master and slave. They merely wish to have the power of punishment transferred from individuals to magistrates; to have the sale of human beings cease; and to have the stimulus of *wages* applied, instead of the stimulus of the *whip*. The relation of master and laborer might still continue; but under circumstances less irksome and degrading to both parties. Even that much abused animal the jackass can be made to travel more expeditiously by suspending a bunch of turnips on a pole and keeping them before his nose, than he can by the continual application of the whip; and even when human beings are brutalized to the last degree, by the soul-destroying system of slavery, they have still sense enough left to be more willing to work two hours for twelve cents, than to work one hour for nothing.

Q. I should think this system, in the long run, must be an unprofitable one.

A. It is admitted to be so. Southerners often declare that it takes six slaves to do what is easily performed by half the number of free laborers. Henry Clay says, “It is believed that slave-labor would no where be employed in the farming portions of the United States, if the proprietors were not tempted to raise slaves by the high price of the Southern market, which keeps it up in their own;” and he says the effects of introducing slavery into

Kentucky have been to keep them in the rear of their non-slave-holding neighbors, in agriculture, manufactures, and general prosperity. General Washington, when writing to Sir John Sinclair on the comparative value of the soil in Pennsylvania and Virginia, ascribes the very low price of land in Virginia to the existence of slavery among them. John Randolph declared that Virginia was so impoverished by slavery, that slaves would soon be advertising for runaway masters. A distinguished writer on political economy says: "The slave system inflicts an incalculable amount of human suffering, for the sake of making a wholesale waste of labor and capital."

Q. But the masters say the negroes would cut their throats, if they were emancipated.

A. It is safer to judge by uniform experience than by the assertions of the masters, who, even if they have no intention to deceive, are very liable to be blinded by having been educated in the midst of a bad system. Listen to facts on this subject. On the 10th of October, 1811, the Congress of Chili decreed that every child born after that day should be free. In April, 1812, the government of Buenos Ayres ordered that every child born after the 1st of January, 1813, should be free. In 1821, the Congress of Colombia emancipated all slaves who had borne arms in favor of the Republic, and provided for the emancipation, in eighteen years, of the whole slave population, of 900,000. In September, 1829, the government of Mexico granted immediate and entire emancipation to every slave. In all these instances, *not one case of insurrection or of bloodshed has ever been heard of, as the result of emancipation.*

In St. Domingo no measures were taken gradually to fit the slaves for freedom. They were suddenly emancipated during a civil war, and armed against British invaders. They at once ceased to be property, and were recognized as human beings. Col. Malefant, who resided on the island, informs us, in his Historical and Political History of the Colonies, that, "after this public act of emancipation, the negroes remained quiet both in the south and west, and they continued to work upon all the plantations. The colony was flourishing. The whites lived happily and in peace upon their estates, and the negroes continued to work for them." General Lacroix, in his Memoirs of St. Domingo, speaking of the same period, says: "The colony marched as by enchantment towards its ancient splendor; cultivation prospered; every day produced perceptible proofs of its progress." This

prosperous state of things lasted about eight years, and would perhaps have continued to the present day, had not Bonaparte, at the instigation of the old French planters, sent an army to deprive the blacks of the freedom they had used so well. The enemies of abolition are always talking of the horrors of St. Domingo, as an argument to prove that emancipation is dangerous; but historical facts prove that the effort to *restore slavery* occasioned all the bloodshed in that island; while *emancipation produced only the most peaceful and prosperous results*.

In June, 1794, Victor Hugo, a French republican general, retook Guadaloupe from the British, and immediately proclaimed freedom to all the slaves. They were 85,000 in number, and the whites only 13,000. *No disasters occurred in consequence of this step*. More than seven years after this, the Supreme Council of Guadaloupe, in an official document, alluding to the tranquillity which reigned throughout the island, observed: "We shall have the satisfaction of having given an example, which will prove that *all classes of people may live in perfect harmony with each other, under an administration which secures justice to all classes*." In 1802, Bonaparte sent a powerful French force, and again reduced the island to slavery, at the cost of about 20,000 negro lives.

In July, 1828, thirty thousand Hottentots in Cape Colony were emancipated from their long and cruel bondage, and admitted by law to all the rights and privileges of the white colonists. Outrages were predicted, as the inevitable consequence of freeing human creatures so completely brutalized as the poor Hottentots; but all went on peaceably; and, as a gentleman facetiously remarked, "Hottentots as they were, they worked much better for Mr. *Cash*, than they had ever done for Mr. *Lash*."

Q. But they say the British have had difficulties in their West Indies.

A. The enemies of the cause have tried very hard to get up a "raw-head and bloody-bones" story; but even if you take their own accounts, you will find that they have not been able to adduce any instances of violence in support of their assertions. The real facts are these: The measure was not carried in a manner entirely satisfactory to the English abolitionists. Their knowledge of human nature, combined with the practical evidence afforded by history, led them to conclude that immediate and unqualified emancipation was *safest* for the master, as well as just to the slave; but the

planters raised such a hue and cry concerning bloodshed and insurrection, that the British government determined to conciliate them by a gradual abolition of slavery. It was ordained that the slaves should work six years longer without wages, under the name of *apprentices*; but no punishment could be inflicted without the special order of magistrates. The colonies had a right to dispense with the apprenticeship system if they pleased; but out of the seventeen West India colonies, Antigua and Bermuda were the only ones that chose to do so. The act of Parliament provided that each apprentice should work for his master *forty and a half* hours a week, and have the rest of the time to himself. The masters were not satisfied with this; and they tried, by a series of petty vexations, to coerce the apprentices into individual contracts to work *fifty* hours in a week. While the people had been slaves, they were always allowed *cooks* to prepare their meals, a person to bring *water* to the gang during the hot hours, and *nurses* to tend the little children while their mothers were at work in the field; but because the Abolition Act did not expressly provide that these privileges should be continued, the masters saw fit to take them away. Each apprentice was obliged to quit his or her work, and go, sometimes a great distance, to the cabin to cook his meals, instead of having it served up in the field; and the time taken up in this operation was to be made up out of the apprentices' own time. No water was allowed to be brought to quench their thirst; the aged and infirm, instead of being left, as formerly, to superintend the children under the shade, were ordered out into the burning fields; and mothers were obliged to toil at the hoe with their infants strapped at their backs. In addition to all these annoyances, the planters obtained a new proclamation from the governor, by which they were authorized to require extra labor of the apprentices in times of emergency, or *whenever they should deem it necessary*, in the cultivation, gathering, or manufacture of the crop, provided they repaid them an equal time at *a convenient season of the year*. This was very much like taking from a New England laborer the month of July, and paying it back to him in January. The negroes had behaved extremely well when emancipation was first proclaimed, and universally showed a disposition to be orderly, submissive, and thankful; but this system of privation and injustice soon created discontent. They knew that they were to receive no wages, however industrious they might be; and they were well aware that their masters no longer had a right to flog them. A bad stimulus to labor had been removed, without supplying a good

one in its place. In three of the colonies, the apprentices refused to work on the terms required by their masters. In Jamaica, a very small military force was sent into one parish, and only on one occasion; but no violence was offered on either side; for the apprentices confined themselves to *passive resistance*—merely refusing to work on the required terms. In St. Christophers, difficulties of a similar kind occurred; but no outrage of any kind was committed. In one fortnight all the trouble was at an end; and out of twenty thousand apprentices, only thirty were found to be absent from their work; and some of these were supposed to be dead in the woods. In Demarara, the principal difficulty occurred. The laborers assembled together, and marched round with a flag staff; but the *worst* thing they did was to beat a constable with their fists. *It is a solemn fact that a few fisty cuffs with a constable are the only violence to persons or property, that has been attempted by the eight hundred thousand slaves emancipated in the British Colonies!*

Even the difficulties above enumerated (slight as they were, and unworthy to be named in connexion with such a great moral change) were but temporary. The governor of Jamaica, after five months' trial of emancipation, declares, in his address to the Assembly, "Not the slightest idea of any interruption of tranquillity exists in any quarter; and those preparations which I have felt it my duty to make, might, without the slightest danger, have been dispensed with." By recent news, we learn that the planters finding the system of coercion was likely to be ruinous to their own interest, offered the apprentices 2s. 6d. per day for extra work. The enemies of abolition prophesied that nothing would induce the negroes to work more than they were actually compelled to by law, and that the crops would perish for want of gathering. But the result proved otherwise. As soon as *wages* were offered, they came forward eagerly, and offered to do more work than the planters were willing to pay for. We have the testimony of one of their magistrates, that as soon as this system was tried, "their apparent indifference was every where thrown off, and their work carried on in a steady, persevering, and diligent manner."

Q. And how was it in Antigua and Bermuda, where they gave up the apprenticeship system, and tried immediate and unqualified emancipation?

A. In those colonies not the slightest difficulty, of any kind, has occurred. The Antigua journals declare, "The great doubt is solved; the highest hopes

of the negroes' friends are fulfilled. A whole people, comprising thirty thousand souls, have passed from slavery into freedom, not only without the slightest irregularity, but with the solemn and decorous tranquillity of a Sabbath." The Christmas holidays were always seasons of alarm in the slave-colonies, and a military force was always held in readiness; but the Christmas after emancipation, the customary guard was dispensed with. Up to the present time, every thing remains perfectly tranquil in Antigua; and a negro is at the head of the police in that island. The population consists of 2,000 whites, 30,000 slaves, and 4,500 free blacks.

Q. Yet people are always saying that free negroes cannot take care of themselves.

A. It is because people are either very much prejudiced or very ignorant on the subject. In the United States, colored persons have scarcely any chance to rise. They are despised, and abused, and discouraged, at every turn. In the slave States they are subject to laws nearly as oppressive as those of the slave. They are whipped or imprisoned, if they try to learn to read or write; they are not allowed to testify in court; and there is a general disposition not to encourage them by giving them employment. In addition to this, the planters are very desirous to expel them from the State, partly because they are jealous of their influence upon the slaves, and partly because those who have slaves to let out, naturally dislike the competition of the free negroes. But if colored people are well treated, and have the same inducements to industry as other people, they work as well and behave as well. A few years ago the Pennsylvanians were very much alarmed at the representations that were made of the increase of pauperism from the ingress of free negroes. A committee was appointed to examine into the subject, and it was ascertained that the colored people not only supported their own poor, but paid a considerable additional sum towards the support of white paupers.

Q. I have heard people say that the slaves would not take their freedom, if it were offered to them.

A. I sincerely wish they would offer it. I should like to see the experiment tried. If the slaves are so well satisfied with their condition, why do they make such severe laws against running away? Why are the patrols on duty all the time to shoot every negro who does not give an account of himself as

soon as they call to him? Why, notwithstanding all these pains and penalties, are their newspapers full of advertisements for runaway slaves? If the free negroes are so much worse off than those in bondage, why is it that their laws bestow freedom on any slave, “who saves his master or mistress’s life, or performs any meritorious service to the State?” That must be a very bad country where the law stipulates that *meritorious* actions shall be rewarded by making a man more unhappy than he was before! Some months ago, I had a conversation with a woman, who went from Boston to Tuscaloosa, in Alabama. She was the wife of a Baptist clergyman, professed to be a pious woman, and was considered as such. I found her an apologist for slavery, but was not aware at the time that she actually owned slaves. She maintained that freedom was the greatest curse that could be bestowed on a slave; and when I attempted to put the case home to her conscience, she, for consistency’s sake, declared, that she should be quite as willing to die and leave her own little son in slavery, as to leave him a free laborer at the North. She said if she had a hundred slaves, she should treat them all kindly, and endeavor to make their condition comfortable. I replied, “I am willing to believe that you would do so, madam; but in case of your death, or of any pecuniary distress in the family, the poor slaves would be divided among heirs, or seized by creditors; and then who can tell into whose hands they may fall? The condition of the slave depends on the character of the master; and that is entirely a matter of *accident*”. The pious woman rejoined, “Oh, I should take care of that. If they were good, faithful servants, they would find at my death that papers of manumission had been duly prepared.” “But you told me that freedom was the greatest curse that could be bestowed upon a slave,” replied I: “Now is it possible, madam, that you would leave, as your dying legacy to good and faithful servants, the greatest curse you could bestow?”

Q. Do you suppose they really believe what they say, when they declare that slaves are happier than freemen?

A. I leave your own republican good sense to determine that question. Governor Giles of Virginia did not take that ground in his address to the Legislature in 1827. Speaking of punishing free blacks by selling them as slaves, he says: “Slavery must be admitted to be a punishment of the highest order; and according to every just rule for the apportionment of

punishment to crimes, it would seem that *it ought to be applied only to crime of the highest order!*”

But even if it were true that the slaves were as happy and contented as slave-holders try to represent them—what would it prove? It would merely prove that they had fearfully brutalized immortal souls before they *could* be happy in such a situation. Edmund Burke said very truly, “If you have made a *happy slave*, you have made a *degraded man*.”

Q. But how is it that some people, who really do not intend to make false representations, bring back such favorable accounts of slavery, after they have visited at the South?

A. It is because they go among rich, hospitable planters, and see favorite household slaves. Of the poor wretches on the plantations, subject to the tender mercies of an overseer, they know as little, as the guests of a Russian nobleman know of the miserable condition of his serfs. Their sympathies all go with the master. They ask questions of the master, and not of the slave. Even if they tried to talk with the latter, the poor creatures would be afraid to speak freely, lest any expressions of discontent might be reported to the master, or the overseer. I should like to have you hear them talk as I have heard runaway slaves talk, when they knew they had a friend to listen to them!

Q. But do you think the suitable time has yet come to exert ourselves on this subject?

A. I will answer, as a similar question was lately answered by a lady who had been brought up in the midst of slavery: “If thou were a slave, toiling in the fields of Carolina, I apprehend thou wouldst think the time had *fully* come.” This explains the whole difficulty. We do not put ourselves in the condition of the slave, and imagine what would be our feelings if we were in *his* circumstances. We do not obey the Scripture injunction, “remember those that are in bonds, *as bound with them*.”

But if we look at this question merely with a view to expediency, without reference to justice or mercy, when can we hope that a time will come *more* propitious to the discussion of this subject? The fact is, difficulties and dangers increase every day. In South Carolina and Louisiana, the blacks are already a majority. The annual increase of the *slaves*, without including the

free blacks, in the United States, is now 62,000 annually. It is a fact worthy of consideration, that the licentiousness of the white man increases the colored race; but the vices of colored men or women can never increase the white race; for the children of such connections are of course not white.— These people are increasing in the midst of us in startling ratio. If we pursue a kind and Christian course, we can identify their interests with the rest of the community, and make them our friends; but if we persevere in the course we have pursued, their feelings and interests *must* be all in opposition to ours, and there is great reason to fear the consequences.

Q. Don't you think the Colonization Society is doing some good?

A. Those who have examined into the subject, have so universally come to the conclusion that Colonization is entirely ineffectual for the abolition of slavery at any time, however remote, that it seems hardly worth while to waste words on that subject. I do not pretend to impeach the motives of benevolent individuals, who have been engaged in it; but there is no doubt that its *practical tendency* is to perpetuate slavery. John Randolph, and other slave-holders, have advocated that Society, upon the avowed ground that by sending off an inconvenient surplus it would increase the price of the slaves left. In the new slave States, where they have not as yet an "inconvenient surplus" of slaves, they don't like the Colonization Society; but the old slave States have been its warmest friends. There is one brief objection to the idea of abolishing slavery by Colonization: *it is impossible*. Even if it were desirable to remove these valuable laborers from our soil, it could not be done, if the whole Treasury and Navy of the United States were devoted to it. The Colonization Society has been in operation about nineteen years; they have had immense funds; and they have transported to Africa, during that time, about three thousand colored persons, of which *not one thousand* were manumitted slaves. Now the annual *increase* of the slaves alone is 62,000; and the annual increase of the free blacks is about 10,000. *In nineteen years the Colonizationists have not been able to carry off one sixtieth part of the increase of the slaves in one year!* This is worse than the old story of the frog, who jumped out of the well two feet every night, and fell back three feet every morning. But even if the colored people *could* be all carried out of the country, what is the South to do for laborers? They have been in the habit of excusing themselves, by saying that white men cannot work in their climate, and by taking it for granted that black

men will not work for wages. If the climate is unsuitable for white laborers, it is manifestly very impolitic to send off the black ones. It would be far wiser to try the experiment they have tried in Bermuda and Antigua. Labor is needed in all parts of our country; and it is worse than a childish game to be sending off ship-loads of laborers to Africa, while we are bringing in ship-loads from Ireland, Holland, and Switzerland.

Q. I have heard some people say they gave their money to the Colonization Society merely as a missionary establishment.

A. It would be well for those people to examine into the matter, and first ascertain whether it is a missionary establishment. When we send missions to India, the Sandwich Islands, &c., we send men believed to be pious and enlightened. For the probable influence of the emigrants carried out by the Colonization Society, let the Society answer for itself. They assure us that the colored persons colonized from the United States will “carry religion and the arts into the heart of Africa.” Yet Mr. Clay, Vice President of the Society, says, “Of all classes of our population the most vicious is that of the free colored—contaminated themselves, they extend their vices to all around them.” And the African Repository, which is the organ of the Society, declares that “they are notoriously ignorant—a curse and a contagion wherever they reside.” Now, are not these admirable missionaries to send out to christianize Africa? It would be wise to put them under better and more encouraging influences at home, before we attempt to send them to enlighten heathen lands.

Q. Some say that these people are naturally inferior to us; and that the shape of their skulls proves it.

A. If I believed that the colored people were naturally inferior to the whites, I should say that was an additional reason why we ought to protect, instruct, and encourage them. No consistent republican will say that a strong-minded man has a right to oppress those less gifted than himself. Slave-holders do not seem to think the negroes are so stupid as not to acquire knowledge, and make use of it, if they could get a chance. If they do think so, why do their laws impose such heavy penalties on all who attempt to give them any education? Nobody thinks it necessary to forbid the promulgation of knowledge among monkeys. If you believe the colored race are naturally inferior, I wish you would read the history of Toussaint

L'Ouverture, the Washington of St. Domingo. Though perfectly black, he was unquestionably one of the greatest and best men of his age. I wish you would hear Mr. Williams of New York, and Mr. Douglass of Philadelphia preach a few times, before you hastily decide concerning the capacity of the colored race for intellectual improvement. As for the shape of their skulls, I shall be well satisfied if our Southern brethren will emancipate all the slaves who have *not* what is called the "African conformation."

Q. What do you think about property in slaves?

A. Let me reply to that question by asking others. If you were taken by an Algerine pirate, and an Arab bought you, and paid honestly for you, should you ever consider yourself the *property* of the Arab? Should you think your fellow-citizens ought so to consider you? Can what is stolen in the beginning, be honest property in the transmission? If you and your children had toiled hard for years, and received only a peck of corn a week for your services, should you not think that some compensation was due to *you*?

Q. These are hard questions; and I find it is hard to answer a good many things, when we once get into the habit of imagining how we should think and feel if we ourselves were the slaves. But what have the North to do on this subject?

A. They cannot help having a great deal to do with it, either for good or for evil. They are citizens of this republic; and as such cannot but feel a painful interest in a subject which makes their beloved country an object of derision to the civilized world. If the slaves should make any attempt to gain their freedom, we are bound to go with an armed force and rivet their chains. If a slave escapes from his master unto us, we are bound to deliver him up to the lash. The people of Pennsylvania, living so near the slave States, have a great many of these painful scenes to encounter. A few months ago, an industrious and pious colored man in Philadelphia was torn from his home at midnight, and beaten in such a degree that the snow for some distance was stained with his blood. His poor wife, who was devotedly attached to him, had an infant about eight or ten days old; but regardless of her situation, she plunged into the snow, and implored mercy for her husband. Her shrieks and entreaties were of no avail. The citizens of Philadelphia could not help her, because the free States are bound by law to give up runaway slaves. The evil might be cured by the extreme cheapness

of labor, if the surplus population were not drained off to supply *new* slave States. But in order to accommodate slave-holders in this respect, Louisiana has been bought, and Florida bought, by revenues principally raised in the free States; and now they want to purchase Texas likewise for an eternal slave market. Every time a member from the free States votes for the admission of a slave state into the Union, he helps to increase the political power, which has always been wielded for the perpetuation of this abominable system. It is high time for the free States to begin to reflect seriously, whether they ought any longer to give their money and their moral influence in support of this iniquity.

Q. I did not know we were obliged to give up runaway slaves to their masters. Are you sure it is so?

A. When masters *bring* their slaves into the free States, or *send* them, the slaves can legally take their freedom; but when the slaves run away, we are obliged by law to give them up, let the circumstances be what they may. Many conscientious people prefer to obey the law of God, which says, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which hath escaped unto thee."

Q. But would you at once give so many ignorant creatures political power, by making them voters?

A. That would be for the wisdom of legislators to decide; and they would probably decide that it would not be judicious to invest emancipated slaves with the elective franchise; for though it is not their fault that they have been kept brutally ignorant, it unfits them for voters. At the present time, slaves *are* represented in Congress. Every five slaves are counted equal to three freemen; which is just the same as if our farmers were allowed to count every five of their oxen as three voters. This system gives the Southern aristocracy great political power, entirely unchecked by democratic influence, which comes in as a counterpoise in States where the laboring class are allowed to vote. W. B. Seabrook, of South Carolina, has lately published an Essay on the management of slaves, in which he says: "An addition of \$1,000,000 to the private fortune of Daniel Webster would not give to Massachusetts more weight than she now possesses in the Federal Councils. On the other hand, every increase of slave property in South Carolina, is a fraction thrown into the scale by which *her*

representation in Congress is determined.” This country has been governed by a President forty-eight years. During forty of those years we have been governed by a slave-holder! The New England candidates each remained in office but four years; and the great middle section has never given a President. The Middle States are politically stronger than the Northern, and are therefore more likely to act independently, and without reference to Southern support. Perhaps this may be the reason why those States, large and wealthy as they are, have never given a President to their country. Slave-holders are keen-sighted politicians; and they are closely knit together by one common bond of sympathy on the subject of slavery. It is a common remark with them that they never will vote for any man north of the Potomac.

Q. You know that abolitionists are universally accused of wishing to promote the amalgamation of colored and white people.

A. This is a false charge, got up by the enemies of the cause, and used as a bugbear to increase the prejudices of the community. By the hue and cry that is raised on the subject, one would really suppose that in this free country a certain set of men had power to compel their neighbors to marry contrary to their own inclination. The abolitionists have never, by example, writing, or conversation, endeavored to connect amalgamation with the subject of abolition. When their enemies insist upon urging this silly and unfounded objection, they content themselves with replying, “If there be a natural antipathy between the races, the antipathy will protect itself. If such marriages are contrary to the order of Providence, we certainly may trust Providence to take care of the matter. It is a poor compliment to the white young men to be so afraid that the moment we allow the colored ones to be educated, the girls will all be running after them.”

At a town meeting in New Hampshire, one of the citizens rose to say that he did not approve of admitting colored lads into the school. “If you suffer these people to be educated,” said he, “the first thing we shall know they will be marrying our daughters!” After some other remarks, he concluded by saying, “it is impossible for the colored and white race to live together in a kind social relation—there is a natural antipathy—they cannot be made to mix any better than oil and water.” A plain farmer replied, “I thought you said just now, that you was afraid that they’d marry our *darters*; if they won’t mix any better than *ile* and water, what are you afraid of?” Any one

who observes the infinite variety of shadings in the complexions of the colored people, will perceive that amalgamation has for a long time been carried on. The only justification that the apologist for slavery can give is, that it is not sanctioned by marriage. According to Southern laws every child must follow the condition of its *mother*; that is, if the mother is a slave, her offspring must be so likewise. If they would change one word, and say the child shall follow the condition of its *father*, a large proportion of their slaves would be free at once; and the others would soon become so, provided no new cargoes were in the mean time smuggled in from Africa. In this subject, the truth is briefly told in a juvenile couplet, viz.

“By universal emancipation,
We want to *stop* amalgamation.”

Q. Is there any truth in the charge that you wish to break down all distinctions of society, and introduce the negroes into our parlors?

A. There is not the slightest truth in this charge. People have pointed to an ignorant shoe-black, and asked me whether I would invite him to visit my house. I answered, “No; I would not do so if he were a white man; and I should not be likely to do it, merely because he was black.” An educated person will not naturally like to associate with one who is grossly ignorant. It may be no merit in one that he is well-informed, and no fault of the other that he is ignorant; for these things may be the result of circumstances, over which the individual had no control; but such people will not choose each other’s society merely from want of sympathy. For these reasons, I would not select an ignorant man, of any complexion, for my companion; but when you ask me whether that man’s children shall have as fair a chance as my own, to obtain an education, and rise in the world, I should be ashamed of myself, both as a Christian and a republican, if I did not say, yes, with all my heart.

Q. But do you believe that prejudice against color ever can be overcome?

A. Yes, I do; because I have faith that all things will pass away, which are not founded in reason and justice. In France and England, this prejudice scarcely exists at all. Their noblemen would never dream of taking offence because a colored gentleman sat beside them in a stage-coach, or at the table of an hotel. Be assured, however, that the abolitionists have not the slightest wish to force you to give up this prejudice. If, after conscientious

examination, you believe it to be right, cherish it; but do not adhere to it merely because your neighbors do. Look it in the face—apply the golden rule—and judge for yourself. The Mahometans really think they could not eat at the same table with a Christian, without pollution; but I have no doubt the time will come when this prejudice will be removed. The old feudal nobles of England would not have thought it possible that their descendants could live in a community, where they and their vassals were on a perfect civil equality; yet the apparent impossibility has come to pass, with advantage to many, and injury to none. When we endeavor to conform to the spirit of the gospel, there is never any danger that it will not lead us into the paths of peace.

Q. But they say your measures are unconstitutional.

A. Is it unconstitutional to talk, and write, and publish on any subject? particularly one in which the welfare and character of the country are so deeply involved? This is all the abolitionists have ever done; it is all they have ever desired to do. Nobody disputes that Congress has constitutional power to abolish slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. That District belongs in common to all the States, and each of them has an interest in the slaves there. The public prisons of that District, built *with the money of the whole people* of the United States, are used for the benefit of slave-traders, and the groaning victims of this detestable traffic are kept confined within their walls. The keepers of these prisons, *paid with the money of the whole people*, act as jailers to these slave-traders, until their gang of human brutes can be completed. When we are acting as accomplices in all this, have we no right to petition for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade *there*? I do not see how any conscientious man can help believing it to be a solemn duty.

Q. Is there any truth in the charge, that abolitionists have tried to excite insurrections among the slaves?

A. This charge is destitute of the slightest foundation in truth. The abolitionists have addressed facts and arguments to the slave-holders *only*. They have never sought for any communication with the slaves; and if they did so, their principles would lead them to teach patience and submission, until their deliverance could be accomplished by peaceful measures. I believe the publications by the Peace Society do not contain so much in

defence of non-resistance under injury, as the publications of the abolitionists. If it should be discovered that any member of an Anti-Slavery Society had tried to excite disaffection among the slaves, he would be immediately turned out of the Society, with strong expressions of disapprobation. This false charge has been got up at the South merely to excite sympathy. A little while ago a paragraph went the rounds of the newspapers, concerning an *abolitionist* who had been overheard trying to persuade a negro lad to run away, and offering to forge free papers for him. It was afterwards ascertained that the man was a *kidnapper*, and took this means of getting the boy into his own power, for the sake of selling him. Complaints are made that pictures of a man flogging slaves having been on some of the books sent to the South; and it is urged that negroes can understand these pictures, if they do not know their letters. In the first place, the books are sent to the masters. In the next place (as has been well observed), the pictures represent a thing that is either true, or not true. If it is not true, the negroes would look at the picture without being reminded of any thing *they* had ever seen or known—if told that it represented a driver beating slaves, they would laugh at such Munchausen stories of things that never happened. On the other hand, if the representation is true, would the mere picture of a thing be more likely to excite them to insurrection than the thing itself? These stories of efforts to excite violence are mere spectres raised on purpose for the occasion. If you will take notice of the charges brought against abolitionists, you will find that they are always mere assertions, unsupported by quotations, or any species of evidence. When I have read the resolutions passed at public meetings against the abolitionists, I have smiled at the farce which those men have been acting. In nearly all their resolutions, the abolitionists could most cordially and conscientiously concur. The enemies of the cause have in several cities gravely met together to declare that they do not approve of attempts to promote insurrections. The abolitionists agree with them entirely. With the same ridiculous gravity, they make known to the world that they do not approve of any legislative interference with the Southern States. The abolitionists have never dreamed of any such interference. They merely wish to *induce the Southerners to legislate for themselves*; and they hope to do this by the universal dissemination of facts and arguments, calculated to promote a *correct public sentiment* on the subject of slavery. This is all they ever intended to do; and this they will do, though earth and hell combine against their

efforts. The men engaged in this cause are not working for themselves, but for God—and therefore they are strong.

Q. But do you believe the Southerners ever can be persuaded?

A. At all events, it is our duty to try. “Thus saith the Lord God, Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions.” If public sentiment becomes universally reformed on this subject, it cannot fail to have a powerful influence. Slavery was abolished in the British dominions entirely by moral influence. Parliament never would have voted for the bill, the king never would have signed it, if an enlightened public sentiment had not made the step absolutely necessary; and the public became enlightened by the exertions of benevolent men, who were obliged to endure every form of obloquy and rage, before the good work was completed. The slave-holders are perfectly aware that the same causes will produce similar effects in this country. One of the Southern editors has lately declared that what is most to be feared is, that these fanatical abolitionists will make some people of morbid consciences believe that slavery really *is* wrong, and that it is their duty to relinquish it. Another Southern newspaper complains that the worst effect of this discussion is, that it is causing good men to regard slave-holders with abhorrence.

Q. But if the system works so badly in every respect, why are people so unwilling to give it up?

A. Human nature is willing to endure much, rather than relinquish unbridled licentiousness and despotic control. The emperor of Russia, and the pachas of Egypt would be reluctant to abridge their own power, for the sake of introducing a system of things more conducive to the freedom, virtue and happiness of their subjects. They had rather live in constant fear of the poisoned bowl and the midnight dagger, than to give up the pleasant exercise of tyranny, to which they have so long been accustomed. In addition to this feeling, so common to our nature, there are many conscientious people, who are terrified at the idea of emancipation. It has always been presented to them in the most frightful colors; and bad men are determined, if possible, to prevent the abolitionists from proving to such

minds that *the dangers of insurrection all belong to slavery, and would cease when slavery was abolished.*

At the North, the apologists of slavery are numerous and virulent, because their *interests* are closely intertwined with the pernicious system. Inquire into the private history of many of the men, who have called meetings against the abolitionists—you will find that some manufacture negro cloths for the South—some have sons who sell those cloths—some have daughters married to slave-holders—some have plantations and slaves mortgaged to them—some have ships employed in Southern commerce—and some candidates for political offices would bow until their back-bones were broken, to obtain or preserve Southern influence. The Southerners understand all this perfectly well, and despise our servility, even while they condescend to make use of it.

One great reason why the people of this country have not thought and felt right on this subject, is that all our books, newspapers, almanacs and periodicals, have combined to represent the colored race as an inferior and degraded class, who never could be made good and useful citizens. Ridicule and reproach have been abundantly heaped upon them; but their virtues and their sufferings have found few historians. The South has been well satisfied with such a public sentiment. It sends back no echo to disturb their consciences, and it effectually rivets the chain on the necks of their vassals. In this department of service, the Colonization Society has been a most active and zealous agent.

Q. But some people say that all the mobs, and other violent proceedings, are to be attributed to the abolitionists.

A. They might as well charge the same upon St. Paul, when his fearless preaching of the gospel brought him into such imminent peril, that his friends were obliged to “let him down over the wall in a basket,” to save his life. As well might St. Stephen have been blamed for the mob that stoned him to death. With the same justice might William Penn have been called the cause of all the violent persecutions against the Quakers. When principles of truth are sent out in the midst of a perverse generation, they *always* come “not to bring peace, but a sword.” The abolitionists have offered violence to no man—they have never attempted to stop the discussions of their opponents; but have, on the contrary, exerted

themselves to obtain a candid examination of the subject on all sides. They merely claim the privilege of delivering peaceful addresses at orderly meetings, and of publishing what they believe to be facts, with an honest desire to have them tested by the strictest ordeal of truth.

Q. But do you think a foreigner ought to be allowed to lecture on this subject?

A. We have some hundred missionaries abroad lecturing other nations—preaching against systems most closely entwined with the government and prejudices of the people. If good and conscientious men leave ease, honor, and popularity behind them, to come here, and labor among the poor and the despised, merely from zeal in a good cause, shall we refuse to hear what they have to say? If we insult, mob, and stone them, how could we consistently blame the Hindoos and Sandwich Islanders for abusing *our* missionaries? We sent out agents to England, to give her the benefit of our experience on the subject of temperance; ought we not to be willing to receive the benefit of her experience on the subject of slavery? Let us candidly hear what these men have to say. If it be contrary to reason and truth, reject it; if it be the truth, let us ponder it in our hearts.

Q. But everybody says the discussion of slavery will lead to the dissolution of the Union.

A. There must be something wrong in the Union, if the candid discussion of *any* subject can dissolve it; and for the truth of this remark, I appeal to your own good sense. If the South should be injudicious enough to withdraw from the Union for the sake of preserving a moral pestilence in her borders, it is very certain that slavery cannot long continue after that event. None of the frontier States could long keep their slaves, if we were not obliged by law to deliver up runaways; nor could they any longer rely upon the free States, in cases of emergency, to support slavery by force of arms. The union of these States has been continually disturbed and embittered by the existence of slavery; and the abolitionists would fain convince the whole country that it is best to cast away this apple of discord. Their attachment to the Union is so strong, that they would make any sacrifice of self-interest to preserve it; but they never will consent to sacrifice honor and principle. “Duties are ours; events are God’s!”

TRANSCRIBER'S NOTE

Obvious typographical errors and punctuation errors have been corrected after careful comparison with other occurrences within the text and consultation of external sources.

Some hyphens in words have been silently removed, some added, when a predominant preference was found in the original book.

Except for those changes noted below, all misspellings in the text, and inconsistent or archaic usage, have been retained.

[Pg 13](#): 'cut off the the heads' replaced by 'cut off the heads'.

[Pg 15](#): 'Ths wife, or the' replaced by 'The wife, or the'.

[Pg 16](#): 'amagamation has been' replaced by 'amalgamation has been'.

[Pg 36](#): 'not not to bring peace' replaced by 'not to bring peace'.

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