Parsons
Reflections on the slave trade
REFLECTIONS
ON THE
SLAVE TRADE,
WITH
REMARKS
ON THE
POLICY OF ITS ABOLITION.

IN A LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN IN THE COUNTY
OF SUFFOLK.

BY G. C. P.

FOR THE AUTHOR:
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1791.
ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Letter, which was sent some time since to a respectable Clergyman in this county, was originally intended solely for his inspection. But, at his particular request, and by the advice of some other friends, to whom it has been shown, the author is induced to publish it. He is sensible of its numberless defects, and laments, with no inconsiderable degree of regret, that he had not better documents of information. He begs leave however to observe, that his sentiments are not the plagiarism of Newspapers, or the conversation of Coffee-houses: for the opinions which he now presumes to publish, were formed long ago, and chiefly upon the abstract view of the question. The author offers this letter to the public, not as a perfect piece of symmetry, but as the rude sketch of an extensive edifice. He considers it only as the Prologue to the Drama of some superior and far more comprehensive genius than his: and if he is allowed that honour, his recompence is complete.

Sudbury, Suffolk, May 1, 1791.
DEAR SIR,

THE approbation with which you have honoured my earliest productions, and the wishes you have been pleased to express, to have my sentiments upon the Slave Trade, induce me to submit to you some Reflections on that subject. It was a maxim of the late Lord Chesterfield that *Laudari a laudato viro* was a grand object of literary ambition. This doctrine has made a lasting impression on my mind; and perhaps on the present occasion has impelled me beyond the due bounds of caution and reserve, or the limits of my own experience.

* Chesterfield's Letters.
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and understanding. Yet, diffident as I ever must be of my own abilities, your judgment and opinion have so much weight with me, that I hope to escape the censure of vanity or presumption, in discussing a subject of such great and general importance.

Whenever the Slave Trade has been the subject of my thoughts and meditation, I have been led to consider it in three points of view; as a moral evil; as a religious evil; and as a political evil. Not having met with a more concise discrimination of the subject in any author who has written upon it; or suggested to myself a more easy or better division, I shall take the liberty to adopt it in the following sheets. In conformity therefore to the plan I have proposed, I shall first consider the Slave Trade as

A moral Evil.—In this light it appears to me contrary to Reason. Reason teaches us, that all men are by Nature equal, that there are certain fundamental rights annexed to, and coeval with, the first existence of Man. Of this class is the right of natural Liberty*. I define this Liberty to be, a freedom of action, uncontrolled by any obligations of duty or obedience, by the hopes of reward,

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or the fear of punishment. Man, in a state of Nature, depends upon no one, consequently he is accountable to no one for his actions*. In a state where every man is his own governor and avenger, where all things are in one common undivided mass, there can be no security of person, or permanency of property. Hence I am induced to think, that this state of Nature is a chimera, hatched and nurtured in the brain of some visionary Theorist. Because I cannot conceive that it ever was the intention of the Creator of the world to place his creatures in a state, where their very existence must depend solely upon mutual violence, rapine, and destruction,

Human society, I conclude, is the object of human existence; unless it can be proved that natural independence and licentiousness are better adapted to the frame of our constitutions, or more calculated to promote the aggregate happiness of the species, than civil institutions. But, to confine ourselves to the subject immediately before us:—Is the African a Member of Society, or is he not? The advocates for the Slave Trade contend, that he is still in a state of Nature, an unsociated Savage. I contend on the contrary, that he is a Member of

* It is here presumed, that the dependence of a creature upon his Creator is quite another matter.
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Society, and as such entitled to the benefit of civil institutions, to liberty and to security. To determine this point we must have recourse to our first principle, Reason. To the advocates for the former opinion I submit the following questions. Is it reasonable, or can we reasonably, and as rational creatures suppose, that the Creator wills the happiness of one half of his creatures, and the misery of the other? What! Because a sea or an ocean divides this country from another, are we alone to enjoy, and are they to be excluded from social benefits? What! Because arts and sciences have made a greater progress amongst us than amongst them, are we therefore to be Tyrants and they Slaves? What! Because we are fair and comely, they black and disgusting, are we to trample on their rights and shed their blood with impunity? If any one will answer these questions in the affirmative, I give up the point.

If the human mind can divest itself of prejudice, and discard all interested and selfish motives, and in this state consult the oracles of Reason, it will receive this plain unambiguous answer: That the benefits of Society were never intended to be confined within the narrow limits of countries, but to extend over the face of the Globe, the equal right of all mankind.
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In a moral light, the Slave Trade appears also contrary to justice. Justice commands Man to live soberly and honestly, to molest no one, to render to every man his own. Now, Liberty is as dear to the Peasant as to the King, to the poor as to the rich, to the bad as to the good. Personal security is one of the most sacred and valuable of civil rights. Whoever therefore deprives a man of his liberty and personal security, without the sanction and authority of law, violates the principles of justice. Man, as a Member of Society, in which light he is here considered, may forfeit his liberty by his own act, viz. by the commission of crimes, by debt, and by captivity, which the law of nations has determined to be the just decision of war; otherwise, I conceive that no power upon earth can deprive him of this fundamental and inherent social right, without infringing the immutable law of justice.

The African Slave does not, I conceive, fall under any of the foregoing descriptions. It is in vain therefore to alledge the right of conquest; for that implies a prior right, which in his case does not exist. It is equally futile to alledge the right

† Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy—Chap. Slavery.
of purchase*; for according to the principles of justice, the African has no more right to sell than the European has to buy his fellow-creature. If it is wrong in the first instance, it is evidently wrong in the last. I forbear to make any observations on that principle of natural justice which inculcates *jus suum cuique tribuere: because in the conduct of the Slave Trade it is self-evident, that so far from rendering to every man his own, we deprive others of their most valuable rights, and rights to which we can set up no shadow of claim or title whatever.

The Slave Trade, I next contend, exists in direct opposition to the laws of humanity. Humanity is an innate principle, calculated for the wisest and most benevolent purposes. Indeed I have often thought, that this strong instinctive impulse was implanted in the human breast to compensate for the frailties of our nature, and to enhance the value of existence. The laws of humanity are universal; they extend from the most minute to the highest orders of the creation. Animals were created for the use and subsistence of Man, and not to be the objects of his cruelty. He is under the necessity of putting them to death to preserve his own life. Yet even here the laws of humanity

* This is more fully discussed hereafter. Vid. page 21.
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interpose. They command him to kill, not to torture; he is bound to take away the life of an animal in the quickest and least painful manner that he can. He is also bound by the laws of self preservation to kill all noxious animals; yet noxious animals he ought to kill, not to torture. What a despicable opinion we entertain of that Emperor who killed flies for his diversion! Transfer this natural obligation to humanity from the animal to the human species, and how much stronger and more forcible is the impression it leaves upon our minds!

I here make a solemn appeal to candour, to disinterestedness, and to liberality of sentiment. I appeal to the man, who has viewed the shocking scenes of Slavery, with those reflections which must arise from a love of mankind, and a regard for the happiness of his fellow-creatures. Of him I ask, what have been the sensations of his mind, at the sight of those enormities "which beggar all description?" How has his free, his generous, his humane soul, trembled with indignation and horror, to see a fellow-creature torn from the arms of a fond and destitute family, (the staff perhaps of some aged parent, the support of an infant offspring) dragged from his native country, the endearing ties of friend,

* Domitian.
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relation, and companion, chained to a wretched place of confinement, and doomed for life to the most laborious and ignominious Slavery? If the African was the most infamous monster that ever degraded the dignity of human nature, or mocked the sacred image of his Maker; if he was guilty of every species of atrocity, that the human mind, in the last stage of depravity, could fabricate and execute: if he committed "the oldest sins the newest kind of ways," he could not expiate his crimes, by a more severe and dreadful punishment. Yet can we call him a parricide? No.—A murderer? No.—A traitor to his country? No.—A violator of the sacred institutions of religion? No.—For no one offence, for no crime, except it is that of spending his life in harmless indolence and simplicity, he is deprived of the blessings of Liberty, and doomed to the horrors of Slavery!

What is the conduct of England in this momentous concern? How does the boasted mistress of the world acquit herself? Instead of protecting the defenceless, instead of rearing her standard of Liberty to cheer the dejected mind of the Slave, she seems rather to claim, and to deserve the appellation of the scourge of nations. She seems to envy the African his rude un hospitable desert, his sultry parching whirlwind, and the naked barrenness of his soil. Whilst the wretched natives, driven from
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from their peaceful retreats, and hunted down like wild beasts, find no refuge, but in the chains of their merciless pursuers; no asylum, but in the caprice of their new masters. To fill up the measure of their wretchedness, they are perpetually chafed, beaten, and abused; exposed as the objects of derision, of unprovoked insolence, and unfeeling ridicule; and experiencing a treatment infinitely worse, as the objects of it are infinitely more sensible and keen, than the brute creation. And this too, in the face of authority, under the eye of legislature, within sight of the sacred repositories of justice and humanity! Faint portrait of human depravity! The demons of lust and avarice, of cruelty and malice, triumphing over the poor, helpless, prostrate Slave! whilst Humanity bathed in tears, and muffling up her face in the robe of Compassion, bewails the barbarity of her sons, at a mournful solitary distance!

How far will prejudice influence the mind, how will self-interest stifle the emotions of pity, and choke the tender seeds of Humanity! Strange as it may appear to liberal minds, some men will say that the African has no feeling, that as he is equally insensible, so he is only calculated for the employment of brutes. Perhaps it would be a blessing to the Slave, if with the same ill usage and drudgery, he was possessed of the same insensibility. But this is not
not the case. / Destitute of the blessings of education, of the benign influence of science and literature, and deprived of the inestimable blessings of Christianity, he is not perhaps endowed with that mental sensibility, which civilized manners inspire. Yet the organization of his body displays the hand of the same wonderful Almighty Power. He is possessed in as strong a degree as the most civilized European, of those tender and violent passions which lull the mind into the calmest tranquillity, or agitate the frame with the most dreadful tempests—Love, Anger, Remorse, and Jealousy. He is even skilled in some of the finer arts, which partiality for our native country is too apt to confine within its limits. He is equally sensible of the powers of harmony, and acknowledges the magic charms of music. He has the same intuitive ideas of pleasure and pain, of hope and despair; the same sensations of hunger and thirst, of sickness and health, of life and death. Nay more: he believes in the same Supreme Being, he sees him in the clouds, he hears his voice in the thunder, he trembles at his power in the earthquake, he adores him in the rising sun!

"His soul proud Science never taught to stray,
Far as the solar walk, or milky way:
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n
Behind the cloud-capt hill, an humbler Heaven." — Pope.

Agreeable
Agreeable to the division of the subject, I am next to consider the Slave Trade, as a religious evil. Religion in my estimation, whatever garb the caprices of mankind may please to put upon it, is intrinsically the same. The pomp and pageantry of superstition, the gloomy and melancholy cloak of bigotry and fanaticism, ornaments which the ingenuity of man has invented, instead of adorning, appear to disguise its native simplicity. Separated therefore from the dress of external ornament, Religion inspires us with a due sense of the perfection of the Creator, of our dependence upon him, of his goodness towards us. We cannot suppose, that the Deity governs the world by a system of partial laws, unless we can presume, that he is actuated by the same motives from whence all human actions arise: which is, to measure infinite wisdom and perfection by imperfect and finite ideas, and is so much impiety, absurdity, and arrogance. The ways of Omnipotence are inscrutable, and must ever remain hidden from human penetration. Yet from the light of reason and revelation we may collect, that in the scale of Almighty Power, the poor groveling worms of the earth, of whatever climate, or whatever country, are of equal weight and equal consequence. Hence I infer, how presumptuous it is in one man, to deprive another of that, which he holds by the same title with himself.
Life is the immediate gift of God to man. He therefore originally has the sole power to deprive him of it. But for the existence and preservation of society it is necessary, that a part of this power should be delegated somewhere. The executive power, in every well regulated state, is armed with this authority, and for this purpose; to put the laws into execution. "The lawfulness of putting a malefactor to death arises from this circumstance, the law by which he is punished was made for his security." 'Tis the wanton and unauthorized deprivation of life, that is wrong, unjust, intolerable. And can we entertain so despicable an opinion of the Divine Goodness, to suppose that he created man as an object of his derision? Can we presume, that the Deity bestowed liberty upon the inferior orders of the creation, and denied it to man, who has the best faculty to enjoy it? Can we conceive that a wise, gracious, and good Being, would create man a free agent, and then deprive him of the only possible means whereby he could exercise his will? If in defiance of the precepts of religion, of the light of reason, and the doctrines of common sense, we can believe this; we may then reconcile Slavery with Religion, with Justice, and with Humanity.


I have
I have hitherto only treated of Religion in the abstract—I will just advert to such principles of Christianity as are connected with our present subject. To forgive injuries, to love our enemies, to do good to all men, and the like, are ranked amongst the first duties of Christians. In the conduct of the Slave Trade, these charitable and benevolent principles are wholly reversed: instead of forgiving, we commit the most flagrant and unjustifiable injuries on the persons and properties of others. Instead of loving our enemies, and doing good to those who despitefully use us; we are guilty of every species of violence and rapacity, which avarice or ambition can dictate, against those who never did, and never could do us any injury. Instead of shewing mercy unto all men, we turn away from the intreaties of prostrate wretchedness; insult the feelings, deride the prayers, and ridicule the tears of supplicating misery; and often, in the mad excess of tyranny, deprive a fellow creature of life, or at least of the enjoyment of it.

If mankind had no laws to regulate their conduct, no divine or revealed precepts to instruct or improve their minds, some apology might be made in their behalf. But that the worst effects should proceed from the purest sources, is a paradox beyond my power to solve. Take away the idea of Religion,
Religion, let us even suppose for a moment that men had not an idea of a God, could their conduct towards each other be more inimical and cruel? Yet, with all the powerful motives of Religion, with the superior incentives of Christianity, to violate the laws of God, the dictates of reason, justice, and humanity, is surely the height of arrogance and impiety. If a religious institution is necessary to establish the peace and harmony of society, surely its precepts ought to be held in the highest veneration and esteem. But to violate the fundamental principles of all religion and morality, and that too in a country where reformed protestantism, the mildest of all systems, is professed in its purest state, what is it, but to deny the authority of a God, and defy his power?

The third division of the subject leads me to consider the Slave Trade as

A political evil.—Slavery, which the learned and ingenious Mr. Paley defines to be "An obligation to labour for the benefit of the master, without the contract or consent of the servant," is in its nature wrong; it can only be supported on the principles before laid down, of crimes, debt, and captivity.

But as I before observed, the Slave Trade does not come within either of these definitions. It cannot therefore, originating from a different cause, be supported on conclusions drawn from those principles. If the *African Slave Trade* can be supported on any basis whatever, it can only be the supposed policy of it. Of this I have my doubts; because I am inclined to think that it is neither beneficial to master or slave. These doubts I shall state more fully hereafter.

England detests the idea of a Slave within her realms. Partial as every man is to his *natale solum*, much as I love my country, revere her laws, and adore the happy texture of her constitution; yet I will not presume to say, that England is the only seat of Liberty. Thank Heaven! its bright luster and diffusive rays have penetrated the wild forests and dark morasses of North America. This bright sun, which has been so long obscured and darkened to the greatest part of the world, begins to dispel the thick mists of despotism, and to cheer and illuminate the nations of the earth. Without presumption, I may say, that Liberty has flourished, and taken as deep root in England as in any country of the habitable world. Yet even England, jealous as she is of the Liberty of her own subjects, can tolerate the most degraded species of Slavery
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in her colonies. Amazing inconsistency! that the same laws should have the most scrupulous regard for Liberty at home, and wholly disregard, nay even authorize the abuse of it abroad.

Were I to see the savages of Louisiana leading their captives in triumph amidst the scoffs and insults of victorious barbarians: were I to see them, in the mad delirium of ungovernable revenge, tearing off the scalp, and besmearing their bodies with the blood of the wretched victims, I should turn, with silent horror, from the scene. I should lament the misguided zeal, the mad enthusiasm, the wretched system of religion and policy, which encouraged them in these monstrous excesses. But I should be unwilling to condemn men for committing the greatest outrages, which were sanctioned and authorized by the laws and religion, the manners and customs of their country. In reverse of this, when I see men, born and educated in a civilized state, living under the protection of established laws, and professing a strong regard for the civil liberties of mankind: when I see men of this description, committing the greatest outrages upon the persons and properties of their fellow-creatures: when I view the melancholy picture of human depravity which the Slave Trade presents to my eyes: I am at a loss whether most to deplore the wretched condition human
human nature may be reduced to, or to account for that imbecility in human policy, which, instead of preventing, seems to sanction and authorize these dreadful excesses.

It is now time to enquire, upon what basis the right of the African Slave Trade is erected. Human ingenuity generally discovers means to palliate the most flagrant enormities. Thus, an usurper wishes to have the credit at least of a good and equitable title. I can suggest to myself only two pleas, upon which the abettors of the Slave Trade rely for its support. The Right of Conquest on the part of the vendor, and the Right of Purchase on the part of the Slave Merchant. It is necessary to discriminate these two titles; because if the former fails in point of equity, the latter appears to me to dwindle away and fall to the ground with it.

It is said, that the petty States of Africa are at perpetual war with each other, for the express purpose of procuring Slaves. This then is their only traffic; but men ought to reflect upon what principles they act... Antecedent to the Right of Conquest there arises another right, prior in time and existence, the Right of Attack. If the members of one community are injured by the members of another, the law of nations has ordained, that the community
community whose members are the aggressors shall make restitution*. The injury therefore received by individuals becomes the injury of the whole body, and vice versa; and if the necessity of the case requires it, the injured community is justified in proceeding vi et armis to obtain restitution†. This seems to be a plain simple principle, founded in justice and policy, and is acceded to by every civilized nation of the earth. For if men were at liberty to seize the persons, and to attack the possessions of each other, without waiting for provocation or injury, the world would be in a most deplorable situation indeed. This principle levels a blow at the root of all civil institutions, and must ultimately sap and undermine the foundations of human society.

Here perhaps a casuistical nicety may arise in the minds of a certain description of men, which has no small share of plausibility in its composition. This is, that the war which continually subsists between the principalities of Africa, does not come under the denomination of justum bellum, which, according to some civilians, can only exist between States where the law of nations is adopted; and

* It should be understood that this case lays in time of peace, and before actual hostilities commence.
† Puffendorf de Bello et Pace.
that consequently we must not draw similar conclusions from different propositions. From this objection, which I think cannot originate in a liberal mind, I draw this inference; that if the origin is wrong, the consequence must be wrong also. Where a spring is poisoned, the streams that flow from it partake of its baneful effects. Hence I contend that such a war is wrong ab ovo; and upon minute enquiry, we shall find no cause of war at all.

The African, I suppose, is as sensible of the blessings and advantages of peace, and of the horrors and devastations of war, as the most civilized European. And as harmony seems more natural to the human frame than discord, I conclude that the African, partaking of the same nature as the European, has the same inclinations and propensity to the one, as dislike and aversion to the other. Perhaps I am led to this opinion rather by the dictates of my own heart than a strict adherence to fact; but whatever may be the dispositions of individuals, however sanguinary the minds of some members of every community are, I can scarcely conceive that any body of men, collected into a compact of government, and actuated by the first and most natural of all impulses, the desire of happiness, will prefer a system of everlasting rapine
and plunder, to the contrary one of perennial peace, harmony, and good order. I speak not now of those fierce and numerous bodies of banditti who infest the wild deserts of Arabia, and bid defiance to the civil power. I speak not of those hordes or tribes of wandering Indians, who, like the old Patriarchs, live in caves and deserts, upon the roots of the earth. I speak of large and populous nations, of extensive and numerous communities, who are bound by systems of laws, and rules of policy, which we have no reason to ridicule and despise. Whence then the perpetual scene of war and defolation that fills the States of Africa with blood? From what cause, from what source, does it originate? It originates not from the dispositions of the natives; not from the situation and proximity of the respective States; not from the manners and customs, the policy or religion of the country. It originates in the instigations of wicked and profligate men, from the rewards that are offered, from the gilded bait that is hung out and eagerly taken by these deluded wretches. The Kings or Chiefs of each principality are bribed to attack, plunder, and carry away, each other's subjects. Here then lies the onus of guilt: The Captains of the Slave ships are the primary cause of that perpetual scene of depopulation, rapine, and violence, which, contrary to the nature of things, to the pacific
pacific dispositions of the natives, to Religion, Justice, and Humanity, is kept alive with unabated ardour on the coast of Africa.

Weak, absurd, and groundless, as the Right of Conquest must, I think, appear in the case of the African Slave Trade, yet I will not take that advantage which I am entitled to take from my former argument, and annihilate the pretended Right of Purchase, with the Right of Conquest upon which it depends.

"Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis."

I will suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Right of Conquest in the case of the African Slave Trade is just; and that the vendors of such Slaves are, by the just decision of war, entitled to the security of their persons. This brings me to the point at once; and this question naturally occurs: Are they entitled to sell their prisoners of war? The Baron Montesquieu, one of the greatest Philosophers and soundest Legislators that ever lived, is of a far different opinion. He lays it down as a fundamental maxim in policy, that "War gives no other right over prisoners than to disable them from doing any further harm, by securing their persons." This maxim is consistent with the laws of prudence and self preservation; but neither...
prudence nor self preservation require, nor do justice or policy authorize men to fell the persons of each other on any principle whatever.

I am well aware, that the same artful piece of casuistry may be applied with equal propriety to my reasoning on the subject of the Right of Purchase, as to the Right of Conquest. I need not be told that Montesquieu wrote for civilized nations, and not for Savages and Barbarians; but it justum aut injustum bellum, I am much mistaken if my arguments are overturned by such nice distinctions. I have read Montesquieu and other moral and political writers, but I have found no such discrimination; I have never found the sale and purchase of men warranted upon any principle or position whatever. And because I have found no such warranty; because I can neither reconcile it with any idea of Religion, Justice, or Policy; I may venture to conclude that it is wrong. Besides, to constitute the essence and being of a purchase, there must of necessity be an equivalent, a quid pro quo. Now I am at a loss to conceive what the most fertile and brilliant genius can invent equivalent to the liberty and free agency of an intellectual being. Are the persons of men, in this enlightened age, to be weighed against the
articles of commerce? Can any advantages of merchandize compensate for the loss of Liberty or Life.

Perhaps my ideas of the honour of moral and intellectual agents, of the grandeur and dignity of human nature, are too elevated. I was not, thank Heaven! educated in the School of Despotism. The principles of tyranny, of inhumanity, and of cruelty, have never been instilled into my mind. The warm regions of the South have not enervated my body, or dispirited my faculties. Hence perhaps the force of education and habit may preclude real reason and sober judgment. But, whatever my prejudices may be, so long as I breathe the free air of my native Britain, so long as I live under the protection of those laws which I revere; so long as I enjoy that Liberty which I love; so long as I regard the human species, as an order of beings superior in the scale of creation to the irrational world;—so long I shall protest against the principles and conduct of the Slave Trade. I shall ever contend, that if the African had no encouragement for the sale of men, he would desist from this monstrous traffic. Remove the cause and the effect is removed; deprive the Merchant of the power of purchase, and the African is restored to his undoubted rights and privileges, the rights and privileges of Man.
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Other reasons may be alleged to prove, that the Slave Trade, or any trade whose avowed object is to deprive Man of his Liberty, is a political evil. Such a traffic might barely exist under the auspices of Despotism. In an arbitrary Government every subject is a Slave; from the menial tenant of the cottage to the highest officer in the State; even to the Monarch on the Throne, who is generally the Slave of his Ministers. I need not mention the situation of Turkey, or the States of Barbary, in support of this assertion. The African therefore is there in the same condition: His master's life is as much at the will of the Prince as his own is at the will of his master; and he has the satisfaction (miserable satisfaction as it is) to see his master as completely wretched as himself. But in a Land of Freedom, in a country where Liberty has erected her standard, and invited mankind to take refuge under her banners, the case is quite reversed. There he sees the happiness of a society, of which he is not so much as a member; he sees the security of others fenced by laws, himself without any protection; he perceives that his master has a soul capable of enlarging itself, whilst his own labours under a continual depression. Can we wonder then at an insurrection of the Slaves? Can we presume that those powerful feelings which

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Nature dictates, and has implanted in the breast of every man, can be wholly crushed by the weight of cruelty? The African has a soul; he sees the brute creation enjoy a happiness of which he is wholly deprived. He sees, and sometimes feels an inward struggle to obtain it. In this emotion of mind that latent spark of Liberty which has long been concealed and smothered in his bosom, kindles in a moment and bursts forth in a blaze.

History will inform us of the dreadful consequences of an insurrection amongst Slaves. The Roman Empire was threatened more than once with destruction, by the rising of the Slaves in Italy. Every daring plebeian, nay even the haughty patrician, who wished to involve their country in the horrors of a civil war, had recourse to the Slaves, "excitavit servitia." Language can scarcely paint, or imagination conceive the frightful devastations, that might ensue from an insurrection of the Slaves in our West India Islands. What ruin, what desolation, what horrible ravages may not be expected, from a body of men far more numerous than the natives, and strained to the highest summit of indignation and revenge, by every kind of insolence, of unprovoked ignominy, and wanton cruelty? The total destruction of the harvests, the conflagra-

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tion of magazines, the massacre of the planters, and every species of violence which the most ferocious and unbridled revenge could dictate, may be the fatal consequences. This is by no means an exaggerated supposition. It is neither effervescence of a distempered brain, nor the effusion of an heated imagination. It is a reasonable and probable fact, which, unless the legislature of this country interferences, may be daily, nay even hourly expected. It is better surely to emancipate the Slave, than to run the risk of such an event; an event that would strike an irretrievable blow at the interests and prosperity of Britain.*

Englishmen would do well to consider, whether by enslaving others, they are not forging their own chains. This is a matter that will admit a considerable extent of reflection. What are the sentiments of the President Montesquieu on this subject. 

"In a monarchical government, where it is of the utmost consequence, that human nature should not be debased or dispirited, there ought to be no Slavery†." 

* Since this letter was first written, information has been received of an insurrection of the Slaves in the island of St. Domingo. This, so far from militating against, is a strong argument in favour of the Abolition. The author laments that his pamphlet was not published before this period, as he should thereby have saved his credit, from all imputation which now may be cast upon it. 

† Spirit of Laws, vol. 1, b: 15, c. 1.
Can any thing brutalize the feelings of men, can any thing blunt the edge of sympathy and compassion so much, as the continual sight of a man engaged in the employment of a beast? Can any thing insult, can any thing degrade the dignity of human nature so much, as converting the noblest work of the Creator into an instrument of the meanest drudgery? It may be asked, will not familiarity with Slavery inspire the mind with indignation rather than with insensibility? Perhaps not. The horrors of Slavery would at first sight roufe the indignation of man. But when he sees them every day, when he is familiarized to them, they vanish before his eyes. The wretch who under the sanction of custom, can coolly barter for the liberty of others, who will not hesitate a moment to plunge his dagger into the heart of conjugal felicity, and sever the nearest ties of husband and wife, of parent and child, is ripe for any mischief; he is callous to the finest feelings of Nature; and avows himself the common enemy of mankind.

These perhaps are not all the evils to be feared. Man, by familiarity with Slavery, contracts low and servile ideas. If he ever possessed a grain of philanthropy and spirit, he discards it as unworthy a place in his heart. He soon becomes as abject a Slave as the Slave he abuses. He is a passive as well as an active being. Hence he loses that precaution
caution which starts at the distant view of danger, He suffers tyranny to aim, before he attempts to ward off the blow. Accustomed to unrestrained licentiousness, he knows, or at least he allows no curb to his passions. He comes from his plantations, bloated with riches hardly earned by the labour and blood of others, big with the idea of his own importance and arbitrary power; and has no appetite to enjoy that equal liberty and happiness which the Laws of England secure to the poorest and meanest of her subjects. Yet such men as these are too often elected the guardians of those laws, which they hate and despise!

Here I must pause awhile; and notwithstanding my own opinion of the ill policy of the Slave Trade, some weight is due to the opinion of others. I am well aware, that I must combat with a close connected body of monied men, whose influence from that cause must be very great. Of the injustice or inhumanity of the African Slave Trade there is but one opinion; of the ill policy of it there are many. Besides I am sensible that it is a most arduous task, a more than Herculcan Labour, to convince men of the impropriety of a subject, where self-interest and prejudice counteract the dictates of reason and candour. But I have other reasons, far more powerful and cogent, which induce me
suspect the strength of my arguments on this subject; the opinion of an Assembly*, the most venerable for the justice of its decrees, and the equity of its decisions; the most respectable for the number, learning, patriotism, and dignity of its Members, that perhaps ever regulated the affairs of a great and enlightened Empire. The grand Assembly of the Nation appears divided in its sentiments on this great and important question. To an authority so great and elevated, to the decision of a tribunal so august and solemn, I must ever bow with the most profound submission and respect.

To point out an evil, and to exhibit it in the most lively and vivid colours, without proposing a remedy, is doing little good to Society. It is giving that sort of satisfaction which a Physician gives who tells his patient the situation and extent of his disease, but laments that it is in its nature so obstinate, and in its effects so dreadful, as to baffle the art of medicine to eradicate it. You will not suppose that I aim at the character of State Physician. That is a character which requires a greater degree of penetration in discovery, of boldness in

* The two Houses of Parliament. Since this Letter was written this important question came before the House of Commons. It was negatived on the 20th of April, there being for the Abolition 83, against it 162.

...
design, and of intrepidity in execution, than commonly falls to the lot of humanity. But it is the duty of every Member of Society to watch for its safety and preservation. It is the duty of every good Citizen, if he discovers an evil growing upon the political body, which in process of time may penetrate into and prey upon its vitals, to point it out, and to propose a remedy for it. It is for the wisdom of the Legislature to reform the evil, and put the remedy into execution.

It has been the object of the foregoing sheets to exhibit the Slave Trade in a just point of view. I have pointed at the evil; it remains to propose the remedy. And here I am bound to acknowledge, that to you I am indebted for the first hint and design of a plan, which might, I think, be easily carried into execution. And should it hereafter meet with the sanction of the Legislature, the merit of it will be solely due to that activity of mind, and benevolent disposition, which every one, who has the pleasure of your acquaintance, must discover and recognize in you. I detest flattery as much as any man; but I consider it a duty to pay the just tribute of applause to genuine merit and intrinsic worth.

The expence of a military establishment to keep our transports in subjection at Botany Bay, has long been
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been the subject of heavy and severe complaint. Of late I am happy to find, it has roused the attention of several Members of the British Senate, and has undergone an investigation in that Assembly. The estimates which have been laid before a Committee of the House almost exceed the bounds of credibility and belief*; and are justly complained of as a national burthen. Might not these transports be employed under similar regulations, and with infinite advantages, in our West India Islands; and by that means annihilate the use of Slaves? Let Government engage for their labour, subordination, and a military establishment to keep them in subjection; and let the Planters contract with Government for them. An immense saving would accrue to this country from the difference only in the distance of transportation. Many objections will, I am confident, be made to this proposal; but I conceive, upon minute enquiry and impartial investigation, they will generally fall to the ground. No objection can be raised in behalf of the objects of transportation. They have forfeited their liberty upon one of our foregoing principles, viz. the commission of crimes; and it is in the breast of Government to send them where it pleases. I conceive I have only discharged the duty of every

* It is calculated that every convict, who is transported to Botany Bay, costs this country the enormous sum of 300l.

Member
Member of a Community, in making this proposal. I forbear to make any comments upon it: They will come more properly from an abler pen than mine. It is for the wisdom of the Legislature to model and improve upon it, if that Legislature thinks fit.

The advocates for the Slave Trade give some plausible reasons for its support; reasons which ought, and I think may be easily confuted: Such as the Necessity of the Slave Trade—the Interest of every commercial Country—the Example of all ages in the world—and the Ruin of innumerable Families in consequence of its Abolition. For the sake of perspicuity, I will enquire into these several arguments distinctively from each other, and first into

The Necessity of the Slave Trade. It is necessary, it is said, to import annually a number of Slaves to cultivate the Plantations. Would it be impossible then to till the ground with any other description of Men than Slaves? It is necessary that they should undergo very severe chastisement and correction to subdue their fierce and sanguinary dispositions. Would it be impossible to conciliate their affections, and to alleviate the fatigues of the most laborious drudgery, by gentle and humane treatment?
ment? It is necessary now and then to put one to death, as a dreadful yet salutary example to the rest. — Would it be impossible to preserve a system of subordination and regularity amongst them, without shedding the blood of a friend and companion before their faces, and holding the reeking dagger to their hearts? I here solemnly disclaim any intention to reflect upon the characters of many worthy men, concerned in the West India plantations. I see some of the first commercial characters in this country, or perhaps in the world, engaged in the conduct of the Slave Trade. I cheerfully bear testimony to the exemplary humanity of some gentlemen, whom I have the honour to know personally, in the treatment and usage of their Slaves; and I admire and venerate the man, who conscious of the dignity of human nature, supports it in his own character, and respects it in the character of others. But I argue upon general principles, and not upon particular exceptions. I protest against the Slave Trade, for its general ill tendency, and not because there are some, whose good fortune it is to fall under the care of humane and charitable masters. One might as well defend the mythology of the Heathens, because many great, wise, and good men were professors of it. The second reason assigned is —
The Interest of every commercial Country. The blessings and advantages of commerce are universally known and experienced; it would be needless to enumerate them here. Yet commerce, like all human institutions, has, or ought to have certain regulations, which it is bound to obey, and certain limits, which it ought not to exceed. The laws of commerce ought not to contradict the superior laws of society. Commerce is a mere creature of human society, nurtured and cherished under its fostering protection; but if this creature is suffered to become a monster, and to prey upon the vitals of its parent, the original ends of society are subverted and destroyed. Wherein would the interests of commerce be injured by the Abolition of the Slave Trade? "Sugar would be too dear if the plants which produce it were cultivated by any other than Slaves*. I tremble for the cause of commerce, if it is erected upon such unjust and unnatural foundations. Are the persons of men, and the liberties of free agents, the staple commodities of this country? Are our revenues founded in, and dependent upon the wanton destruction of the human species? I must be satisfied on these heads, before I can conceive, that commerce, or the interests of commercial countries, would be

* Spirit of Laws, vol. 1. b. 15. c. 12.

injured
injured by the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

We now come to the third argument, which is:

The Example of all Ages of the World. This is a most powerful support to the weak and tottering cause of Slavery. Is the abuse of Liberty any argument against the use of it? Upon this principle we may discredite the public faith of a community, because some of its members are destitute of honour and honesty. We may even condemn the principles of Christianity, because it has many bad and unworthy votaries. Moderns think themselves justified I presume in the practice of Slavery by the example of the ancient Greeks and Romans. "At Sparta Slaves could have no justice against either insults or injuries*. Is this a proof of the moderation, of the humanity, or of the equity of the Spartan Legislators? By the Aquilian Law at Rome, the penalty of a wound given to a Slave and to a beast, was determined,—not by the difference of guilt, but by the difference of value†. Yet I presume, no man will argue for the propriety, excellence, or justice of the Aquilian Law: Admitting therefore that Slavery existed in its fullest extent in the Heathen world; surely some allowance is to be made for the difference of cust-

* Spirit of Laws, vol. i. b. 15. c. 11.
† Ibid.
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toms and manners, the laws and religion of different countries. The Heathen was not so refined in his ideas of moral duties as the Christian is. At least he had not the opportunity. The former had only the light of Reason for his guide, the latter the light of Reason and Revelation. Yet I will hazard an opinion, that a parallel to the Slave Trade of the present day will not be found in the annals of ancient history. Further, if the Ancients openly infringed the dictates of Reason, Justice, and Humanity, are we bound to follow their example? If a man violates the laws of society, am I justified in doing so likewise? Who but a madman would thrust his head into a fire, or hurl himself down a precipice, because another man has done it? The fourth and last argument is

The Ruin of innumerable Families in consequence of its Abolition. This I conceive to be an exaggerated account. But be it so or not: it has ever been an established maxim, that the wants of the few must yield to the wants of the many. How stands this case? If the Slave Trade is not abolished, thousands must fall an annual sacrifice to its fury. If it is abolished, many families will be reduced to poverty. Put the lives and liberties of half the world into one scale, and the private views of interested individuals into the other—which
ought to preponderate? The sacred rights of Nature and Humanity, or the interests of a body of people?

I must here again intreat your pardon, for giving way to those feelings which worldly interests and prejudice have not eradicated from my heart. You will indulge a mind unhackneyed in the ways of deceit, in those momentary flashes of anger and surprise which arise from the contemplation and discussion of a subject like this. I frankly acknowledge to you, that it requires my utmost exertions to stifle and repress those emotions of indignation which come across my mind when I reflect upon the condition of the African Slave. Yet why should I attempt to stifle and repress them? They are natural, and though they may revolt against the cold dictates of prudence and reserve, they have the sanction of habit, of freedom, and of humanity. I have been instructed from my infancy in the love of mankind; I have been taught to revere the sacred rights of Nature, and to idolize the blessings and advantages of human society. These early impressions of education are settled into habit, and have acquired the assent and sanction of Reason. I am sensible of the blessings of civil institutions; and till I find the reverse, I am bound to adhere to, and defend them. The world has
has never deceived me; when it has, it will be time
to alter my opinion and sentiments of it. At all
events I shall never be ashamed to defend the
cause of the injured and oppressed; it shall ever be
my endeavour to do as much good to society as
the feeble efforts of an individual can perform.

The situation of the Negro Slave is surely the
most debased and wretched that can fall to the lot
of human nature. In England the poorest beggar,
the most abject dependent upon the charity of
others, is a Prince compared with the Slave. The
peasant, after the labour and occupation of the
day, retires in peace to his humble cottage. There
he eats the hard bread of poverty, and drinks the
bitter draught of want with satisfaction. He
“ snores out the watch of night” in peaceful and
undisturbed slumbers, and returns to his labour in
the morning with glee and delight. And why?
Because he is free. Because he knows that his
person, and the use of his limbs are his own.
Because he sees the dawning of Liberty break in
upon the gloom of Poverty, and decorate his pallid
couch with that bright luster which the pomp and
splendour of seraglio cannot reflect. And because
he knows that the laws of his country, like “Guard-
dian Angels,” watch for his safety and preservation.
View the sad reverse of this pleasing scene. The
Slave
Slave performs his diurnal labour with dissatisfaction and regret. He knows that his strength is worn away to gratify the avarice of others. And what is his recompence? Too often a scanty allowance of wretched food, insults, chastisement, and the brutal severity of unfeeling tyrants. After a day of fatigue, a day of the most laborious drudgery, under the scalding rays of a tropical sun, he retires—not to enjoy that sweet repose which nature requires, but to reflect on the miseries of his life and to dread the return of day, when his toils will be renewed, and his sufferings increased. This is not all. He sees his life, the poor yet valuable boon of his existence, at the will of an unfeeling Lord; secured by no laws, protected by no institutions. He lives to be the scorn of civilized barbarians; the wretched tool of public avarice, and authorized lust.

Cruel, intolerably cruel as this condition is, yet there is a satisfaction, to which the human mind resorts in the season of distress: an anodyne, which oftens heals the sharp wounds of afflictions. Of this solace the African Slave is deprived. He is deprived of Hope, the grand support of human life. Monstrous excess of tyranny! Is it not sufficient to be torn from the arms of an affectionate wife, and affectionate children? Is it not sufficient, to be dragged
dragged from every endearing tie that smooths the rugged paths of human life? Is it not sufficient, to be banished from his native country, the seat of all his pleasures, and all his delights? No! that wife, the faithful partner of his life, those children, the sweet pledges of his chaste and connubial love, he must hope to see no more. That country which he loves, and those ties which he reveres, he must never expect to revisit or enjoy again. No! those charming, those elevating, those inspiring sensations which might raise the soul from the heavy weight of groaning Slavery, are vanished, and "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leave not a wreck behind."

Wretched, fallen man! I can, and I do feel for him. God forbid, that I should stop the career of pity, or check the full tide of sympathy: that tide which carries in its course the finest feelings of the soul, and unites mankind in one common bond of harmony, and social affection. The African has felt and enjoyed the blessings of liberty in his native deserts; on his mind the loss of that liberty must fall with ten-fold violence. How just is that beautiful ejaculation of the poet—

"Oh! who can hold a fire in his hand,
By thinking on the frosty Caucous?
Or wallow naked in December's snow,
By thinking on fantastic Summer's heat?
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite,
By
In my estimate of the sum of human happiness, I have always considered Hope, or the expectation of a better state than that we now enjoy, one of the first and most powerful ingredients. This principle, which is a natural one, is justly and emphatically stiled the anchor of life. And if the most elevated stations are miserable without it, what must be the condition of the inferior orders of society? The scale, by which most men weigh the happiness of others, is generally deficient. Unexperienced as I am in the world, I have learnt this useful lesson, not to judge by outward appearances: *nimium ne crede colori.* I look at the furniture of the mind, and if I find a vacuity there, I need no other criterion to form my judgement. Happy as I am, in the full possession of that mental and personal liberty which I adore; yet deprived of Hope, deprived of this staff, which must guide and support my steps through the journey of life, I would not give a straw for one hour's existence. I would exclaim with the poet—

——"Out, out, brief candle;
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts, and frets his hour upon the stage,
"And
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"And then is heard no more. It is a tale
told by an idiot, full of sound and fury
Signifying nothing."——

Many and plausible are the arguments which the advocates for the Slave Trade found in the ears of the multitude. Some of these I have detected, and I trust confuted; they may serve as specimens of the rest. In the estimation of some men, the murder of a negro is attended in foro conscientiae with no greater degree of guilt, than the slaughter of the most noxious animal. But for the happiness of society, for the glory and honour of human nature, these are not the general sentiments of mankind. They cannot surely be the natural produce of Britain; they must have been imported from the Seraglios, or the Divans of the East. Thanks to our perverse dispositions, thanks to the stubborn obstinacy of our nature, humanity is not wholly eradicated from the human breast. The trunk indeed may be withered and decayed, but the roots are still alive and in full vigour. The rights of society in this enlightened age are not to be reasoned away by the plausible chicane, or the artful quibbles of sophistry. Too long already, have the lives, the liberties, and the feelings of mankind been the sport of cruelty and despotism. Too long have the sacred Rights of Nature been trampled to the ground.

The
The blood of thousands, must be no longer sacrificed at the altars of avarice and ambition*. The faint, the feeble voice of humanity must be no more drowned in the cries of misery and wretchedness. The dark clouds of error and superstition are nearly dissipated. Reason asserts her influence over the mind, and man begins to think and act for himself. Three or four centuries ago, we cannot wonder at the frequent violation of Justice, of Religion, and of Humanity. The mind was then enveloped in the dark mazes of ignorance and prejudice. Reason was destroyed in the embryo, and the soul, borne down by the weight of civil and religious Slavery, could not exert its faculties. But now man has not this excuse to make. Knowledge has humanized the heart, and the stern despotism of inveterate prejudice, has yielded to the mild empire of reason and judgement.

In support of an assertion, which, after the solemn opinion of a great political writer† of the present age, may appear presumptuous and arrogant, I shall produce one forcible instance. Perhaps in the estimation of most men none will be requisite. But, in dissenting from an opinion of such justly merited weight and authority in the literary and political

---* Quid non mortalia pectora cogis
† Mr. Burke.
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world, [and I dissent from Mr. Burke with that submission and respect which is due to his great and distinguished abilities] I am bound, and I trust shall be able to give some substantial reason. To prove the gradual emersion of the human mind, from ignorance and barbarism to knowledge and urbanity of manners; to prove the superiority in wisdom, and in liberality of sentiment, of the present age, compared with the dark, though by some, admired ages of Chivalry; I ask, what is the power of the Bishop of Rome? Behold the man, before whose throne the Princes of Europe were wont to bend, who excommunicated Monarchs, ravaged their kingdoms, and wrested the sceptre from their hands, a mere cypher even in the eyes of the vulgar! Behold the Tyrant, who, aspiring to the authority of a God, usurped the dominion of the mind, and appalled the trembling hearts of mortals by the terrors of his power, hidden and buried in the recesses of the Vatican! Behold that Sun, whose lustre once dazzled the eyes of Europe, whose heat scorched the wings of Genius, and withered the sinews of Power, faintly glimmering under an almost total Eclipse!

A spirit of universal benevolence and philanthropy is making a rapid progress throughout the world. France has lately roused from her lethargy, and
and inspired her Sons to vindicate the rights of citizens. Happy France! if in pursuit of Liberty she does not lose sight of her object: if in her laudable endeavours to break the bonds of Slavery she does not degenerate into licentiousness, the worst of evils. I see, through the eye of contemplation, Despotism trembling in the midst of his terrors. I see the Throne of Tyranny tottering at its foundation, just ready to fall and crush its master under its ruins*. The minds and consciences of men are no longer in a habit to bear the racks and tortures of arbitrary power. They revolt at the idea. They rebel, and marshalled under the conduct of freedom and public spirit, rear the standard of Liberty upon the mutilated ruins of Despotism. The Inquisition too, that dreadful engine of religious bigotry, and enthusiastic zeal, is justly banished from almost every court in Europe. It exists, and barely exists in Spain and Portugal, the "cinis et umbra" of its former power. But for the glory of Europe, and for the honour of human nature, the Inquisition is in its wane, branded and stigmatized by the accumulated odium of the liberal part of mankind. Yet there still exists an institution (if that can be called an institution, which devotes a

* Convellimus altis
Sedibus, impulimusque. Ea lapfa repente ruinam
Cum foniu trahit. Æn. Lib. 2.

part
part of the human species to Slavery and destruction, more justly meriting the curses and anathemas of mankind, than the detested Inquisition. The Slave Trade still exists, a disgrace to the nations of Europe, a disgrace to the sacred religion professed by her inhabitants, "a foul and ugly blot that mars" the fair page of modern history.

England is free; her laws are made for the happiness of her subjects; the whole scope of her constitution is Liberty. Her natives, secured on one side by the sacred institutions, and the venerable monuments of antiquity, and on the other, fenced by the firm barriers of established laws, and an established religion, enjoy the true medium, that happy state, wherein Liberty flourishes without degenerating into despotism, or wildly running into licentiousness. And long may they enjoy this happiness: long may they prosper under the auspices of a good and gracious Sovereign, of an upright Administration, of an august Nobility, of a venerable Clergy, of a dignified Representation. England allows of no Inquisitions to torture the minds, no Bastilles in which tyrants may immure the bodies of her subjects. That fordid selfishness of principle, which attempts to confine liberality and generosity within its own narrow limits; that pitiful and wretched penury, which feasts itself on its
its own possessions, but refuse to bestow its mite upon a fellow-creature, compose not the national character. Liberty and the love of mankind are engraven in indelible characters on the heart of every true Briton; they rule his actions, they regulate his conduct, they are the grand principles of his life. Let England then, justly sensible of the inestimable blessings she enjoys, extend them to foreign climes. Liberty is a vigorous plant, which has attained the highest summit of perfection in this little isle. Yet why should it not flourish in every part of the globe, under the fostering hands of care and prudence? Let England set the example to Europe. Let England emancipate the Slave. Future ages shall celebrate the deed, and bless the hand that loosed the fetters of Slavery.

I have now discharged the promise which you were pleased to exact at our last interview. In the course of the foregoing sheets I have endeavoured to prove (and I trust not without some degree of success) that the African is a Member of Society. Upon that basis I have erected most of my succeeding arguments. To overturn them therefore, it will be necessary first to weaken and undermine their foundations. Brevity and veracity have been my principal objects; and if I have failed in the one, or overstepped the boundaries of the other, some
some allowance will, I trust, be made for the ardour of youth, and for the fallies of a mind, frank in the formation of its opinions, and ingenuous in the delivery of them. Without incurring the censure of egotism, I may truly say, that

"I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth, 
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech 
To stir men's blood. I only speak right on, 
I tell you that which you yourselves do know."

Much I have to intreat of your pardon and generosity; still more of the candour and lenity of the public; neither of which can be exercised more charitably than on the present occasion. I feel myself in the situation of a young Actor on his first appearance upon the Stage: timid and apprehensive: agitated and depressed by the slightest symptom of disapprobation, and elated on the smallest token of applause. To candour and liberality I submit myself and my opinions; and shall await and receive the decision of that tribunal with equanimity and decorum.

Sudbury, March 1791.  
G. C. P.
APPENDIX.

SINCE the first idea of the publication of the foregoing Letter, the important question of the Abolition of the Slave Trade has been debated in the House of Commons. On the motion of Mr. Wilberforce, the House met on the 20th of April last to discuss this truly momentous and interesting question, where the subject underwent that full investigation, which its dignity and magnitude required. It would be inconsistent with the plan of this short publication to adduce the several arguments advanced on this occasion. For a full and clear information on the subject I refer the reader to the several public papers. I shall however take the liberty to observe, that if ever a question was debated in that House, which on one side was supported by strength of argument, by the brilliancy of eloquence, by liberality of sentiment, and by the most unequivocal appeals to Reason, to Justice, and to Humanity, it was this.
The united support which this cause received from the first characters of that House, and the concurrence and zeal of almost every thing illustrious in rank, patriotism, and eloquence, in that Assembly, are no trivial arguments in its favour. The friends of Liberty and of Humanity are not discouraged by the decision on the question; for they still hope, without presuming to enquire into the motives which caused that decision, that the period is not far distant, when the Abolition of the Slave Trade will be fully effected. I have just been favoured with a Copy of the Resolutions of the Society instituted for effecting the abolition of this traffic. They are written with such a spirit of humanity, of liberality, and good sense, and in such clear and energetic language, that I shall transcribe them for the satisfaction of the reader.

"At a Committee of the Society instituted for the purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade,

"London, 26th April, 1791,

"It was resolved,

"That the thanks of this Committee be respectfully given to the illustrious Minority of the House of Commons, who lately stood forth
APPENDIX.

"the assertors of British Justice and Humanity,
and the enemies of a traffic in the blood of men.

"Resolved,
"That our acknowledgements are particularly
due to William Wilberforce, Esq. for his un-
wearied exertions to remove this opprobrium
of our national character, and to the Right
Honourable William Pitt, and to the Right
Honourable Charles James Fox, for their virtuous
and dignified co-operation in the same cause.

"Resolved,
"That the solemn declarations of these gen-
tlemen, and of Matthew Montagu, and William
Smith, Esqrs. that they will not relinquish but
with life their struggle for the Abolition of the
Slave Trade, are not only highly honourable
to themselves as Britons, as Statesmen, and as
Christians, but must eventually, as the light of
evidence shall be more and more diffused, be
seconded by the good wishes of every man not
immediately interested in the continuance of that
despicable traffic.

"Resolved,
"That anticipating the opposition we should
have to sustain from persons trained to a fami-
liarity
A P P E N D I X.

"Liaiity with the rapine and desolation necessarily attendant on the Slave Trade, and sensible also of the prejudices which implicitly arise from long and established usages, the Committee consider the late decision of the House of Commons as a delay, rather than a defeat. In addressing a free and enlightened Nation on a subject in which its Justice, its Humanity, and its Wisdom are involved, we cannot despair of final success; and we do hereby, under an increasing conviction of the excellence of our cause, and in conformity to the distinguished examples before us, renew our solemn protestation, that we will never desist from appealing to the consciences of our countrymen, till the commercial intercourse with Africa shall cease to be polluted with the blood of its inhabitants."

"By Order of the Committee,

"GRANVILLE SHARP, Chairman."

FINIS.
Human Life short and uncertain:

A

SERMON, &c.