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REVIEW

OF THE

REV. DR. CHANNING'S LETTER

TO

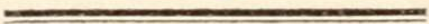
JONATHAN PHILLIPS, ESQ.

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ON THE

SLAVERY QUESTION.

By Jas. T. Austin.



BOSTON:

JOHN H. EASTBURN, PRINTER.

1839.

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R E V I E W.

Remarks on the Slavery Question, in a Letter to Jonathan Phillips, Esq., by William E. Channing. Boston: James Munroe and Company, 1839. Cambridge: Stereotyped and printed by Folsom, Wells and Thurston, 12mo. pp. 91.

AT the last session of Congress Mr. Clay of Kentucky, delivered his sentiments on the Slavery question. Recently Dr. Channing of Massachusetts has published his remarks on the same subject.

These several productions are before the public. They are in strong contrast to each other, and highly characteristic of the sources whence they came.

The one is the speech of a Senator to the statesmen of his country, the other is the letter of a clergyman to the deacon of his parish. The speech presents the subject in its vast relations to the whole human family, the country, the constitution and the laws, and applies to it those comprehensive and profound principles which are alone competent to regulate the affairs of mankind. The letter treats it as a local and limited institution, operating principally on a particular caste, and brings to it the technical rules of a scholastic system that can never be enforced.

The speech considers things as they are and bears practically on the business and affairs of life. The letter deals with a theoretical state of things which can never have real existence. The speech takes man as

it finds him, and proposes to soften the passions of his nature and control the motives of his conduct, the letter considers man as it would have him to be, and teaches an extravagant and therefore a false morality.

The argument of Mr. Clay, even when it fails to convince our understanding, brings us to a doubt whether it may not be safer to trust his judgment than our own. The logic of the letter leads to an eventual connection between the races at which the soul sickens with loathing and disgust.

The speech is calculated to calm the agitation and soothe the asperities of past discussion; the letter to aggravate and prolong the irritation it has occasioned. The one is the herald of peace, the other of war.

Mr. Clay entered upon the subject at the risk of losing the good opinion of a portion of his fellow citizens at a time when his own interests were most concerned to conciliate universal favor. A senator of Carolina has informed us that he was consulted on some matter in the speech, and that he suggested to Mr. Clay a doubt as to the policy of delivering it. He was told, in reply, that his opinion was asked not as to what was expedient to be done, but as to what was right. There is a moral sublimity in the declaration which would have immortalized a Roman. Dr. Channing is to gain new popularity for his new efforts, and enjoy the incense of applause from partial friends who reverence his talents as Pagans do the sun.

Nor is there greater dissimilarity in the strength of the argument than in the style in which it is con-

ducted. The speech meets its opponents on terms of equality and treats them with the respect and courtesy due to honorable but mistaken men; the letter assumes the attitude of authority, arrogates to itself the entire possession of humanity and sound morals, and treats its opponents with an affected compassion which seems very much like scorn.

We have looked with some care to find the exact design of this letter. It was "suggested"—as it says—by the speech, but it does not pretend to be a methodical discussion of the subject. It cannot be deemed an attempt at refutation so much as contradiction. Some part of the speech is very slightly noticed. To the whole constitutional argument—by far the most labored and least satisfactory part of Mr. Clay's effort—it offers no answer at all. It seems to be rather intended to settle up old scores. Dr. Channing some time ago left his pulpit for Faneuil Hall. He became a petitioner for a public meeting and a speaker in it. He saw for the first time something of the rough and tumble of life, and how little able the mere student is to manage the concerns of a multitude. This letter is probably intended to recover his lost ground.

We shall examine his new position with some freedom and ascertain whether the strength of his entrenchments conform to the reputation of the commander.

The first point of the letter which we deem it proper to notice is the writer's separation from the

Abolitionists. "I am not of them," he says—"and nothing would induce me to become responsible for their movements." We do not admire or admit this disclaimer of the party. He is one of them who does their work, whether he professes to be so or not. So far as an actual connection with their societies may be necessary to constitute an Abolitionist the declaration is undoubtedly true. So far as their internal dissensions are concerned, and their quarrels about the rights of women as well as men belong to the party, it is not wonderful that a sensible man would hesitate to be responsible for their movements.

But he gives his name and his talents to the great objects of the cause, which they carry no doubt beyond his notions of propriety. Without the aid he brings to it directly and indirectly by his writings, his speeches, his petitions for public meetings, and his personal interference, the party here would be absolutely insignificant. He is identified with it at the South. He carries to it the importance which his connection with a large class of the christian community enables him to possess; and whether he belongs to one or other of the factions into which the party is divided, or carries on the war, a party by himself, he spreads the unhallowed and wasting fires which are to burn over the fields of a contented and prosperous people. He brings on the battle fierce, furious and exterminating, which sooner or later is to follow the ring of arms, and all attempt to evade the responsibility is like the claim of the trumpeter to be

considered a non combatant because he excited others without fighting himself.

We cannot but wonder at the rashness of any one who takes this course. From the lecturer against war—the immoveable advocate of peace, the propagator of charity, affection, love and all the social virtues, it would be absolutely incredible without constant proof of the inconsistency of mankind under the hallucinations of fanaticism.

What is the common object of Dr. C. and the Abolitionists?

In a population of seven millions there are nearly three millions of slaves. Right or wrong the masters of these slaves deem them to be property; and so far as the laws of the States in which they are held can effect the object, they are the property of their masters. The value of this property is estimated by Mr. Clay at twelve hundred millions of dollars, and the letter “admits it without dispute.”

It is property most intimately connected with all the relations of society and coexistent or nearly so with the political existence of the States in which it is held. They who deem themselves owners of this property have been educated to believe in as perfect an inviolability of their title to it, as to the soil on which they live, and moreover are firmly persuaded that it gives to the soil itself all the value it possesses, so that without slave labor their flourishing fields would be barren wastes.

One object of the Abolition movement is to break

up and annihilate this "immense amount of property," and to change all the relations of society by an unparalleled revolution.

Again these three millions of human beings held as slaves are of a different race from their masters, with natural habits, manners, appetites, and passions of an original and distinctive character. They are ignorant, uneducated, debased. "Their laziness, thievishness, lying propensities, sulkiness, the natural fruits of their condition," (we quote from Dr. C. p. 31) give indication of a ferocious revenge whenever opportunity offers, and the object of the Abolitionists is to give the opportunity and run the risk of its consequences.

Once more. The owners of these millions of dark colored beings see no possibility of keeping two races of men under one government. They anticipate extermination or amalgamation as the necessary consequence of a change of relationship, and the Abolitionists are desirous of making the experiment, some of them not regarding one of the alternatives as a very great evil; the more considerate trusting to Providence for providing some middle course yet unknown and inexplicable.

What are the means by which these objects are pursued? A war of the most irritating and provoking character against the institutions, the laws and the men of the slave holding States. A war not of that generous and noble cast which is waged between the chivalrous and the brave, where life is perilled against life, but a war of imputations, censures, accusation,

backbiting, and all uncharitableness ;—a war calculated to arouse the fiercest and wildest passions of our nature, and sooner or later to quench them in blood.

The letter writer is more guarded in his expressions than the society to which he does not belong, but he too holds up the institution as an offence against morality, and the men by whom the institution is maintained, as criminals and sinners. There is very little candor in his pretending to “separate the subject from personalities,” or “to represent the slave holder as an abstraction” when he ventures to speak of Mr. Clay as bearing, because he is a slaveholder a “brand” the brand of a felon “which shows through all the brightness of his talents and fame.” It is this kind of language which has been the cause of most of the trouble we have experienced.

One half the agitation in the New England States has been produced by exciting the apprehensions of silly women and men like women, and operating upon them by the same means which have elsewhere been resorted to for alarming the consciences of the ignorant, and inducing them to build convents, feed monks and purchase absolution for sin. With all our boasted improvement there is much of the same means in operation here with effects not greatly dissimilar.

Whether therefore the writer of the latter does or does not profess to belong to the organized party of Abolitionists, and whether he be or be not an-

swerable for their minor delinquencies, he stands before the world and by this very letter presents himself a principal in the great work they are laboring to accomplish.

The next topic on which we have a word to say is that of “*interference.*”

The letter writer maintains “that there is a moral interference with our fellow creatures at home and abroad, not only to be asserted as a right but binding as a duty.” And he proceeds by this letter, as before by other published works on this subject, to act upon the right and discharge his obligation.

We learn from this two things. First that such works as this letter and consequently all similar publications by the Abolitionists are admitted to be an interference with the local affairs of other States of our Union.

Secondly, we learn to what extent such interference may be carried. We find it is the part of moral duty to taunt our Southern brethren with a condition of things which they did not produce; which, upon entering into life, this generation at least found deeply established—which is generally considered a great evil, and which no human being has discovered any feasible way to change.

We learn that the right of moral interference authorizes us to tell them that by the condition of things under which they were born and are compelled to live, they are robbers, felons, plunderers of other

men's property—that a “BRAND” is burned in upon the flesh of the best of them “which no fame nor talents can obliterate.”

We may, it seems, produce all the ill blood and unkind feeling which such irritation will excite, and justify ourselves as christian moralists exercising a right and discharging a duty. And this is not an idle claim. The works of Dr. Channing and the publications of the Abolitionists have done and are doing all this, and if the defence does not cover it all their whole defence is worthless.

Next we proceed to examine the foundation this claim to the right and duty of such moral interference. We learn from the letter that it is deduced from the principles of Christianity by which “we may act on foreign countries by moral means for moral ends, and on the slave States because the free and the slave States are one nation.”

The argument we suppose to be this. The institution of slavery is a violation of the law of God. The act of holding slaves is therefore a great sin and wickedness. The existence of the institution consequently becomes a wrong to the whole country and to mankind. We may therefore interfere by moral means, in tender regard to the slave holder *pro salute animæ*, for the welfare of his soul, and in justice to ourselves that retribution for this great transgression may not be visited upon us.

Admit all this; agree that a coarse violation of all the charities of life, a self-assumed superiority and

pharasaical pride are justifiable moral means suited practically to obtain our end, and exerted in good faith for that purpose alone, (which indeed it is very hard to believe)—the argument does not touch our case, because we are bound by solemn league and covenant to permit slavery in the South and West; because we of New England are as essentially parties to the actual existence of Slavery as the slave holders themselves; because we have secured to ourselves and do actually partake the fruits, profits and enjoyments of Slavery, and can therefore have no moral right to interfere with our associates in crime until we have first washed our own hands of the defiling iniquity!

Our political duties are regulated by the Constitution of the United States, and are to be determined by correct views of the principles and doctrines it contains.

This constitution is a form of government establishing an integral empire from distinct independent sovereignties, with feelings, manners, opinion and belief of almost every different shade and variety. Compromise was at the foundation of any government at all. Concession, large, free, voluntary concession was required on every side, and on every side was made.

The convention saw this, and the painful struggle it occasioned shook them almost to dissolution. The people, called on to ratify the act of the convention, saw this. They felt that a national government was to be purchased at an immense sacrifice, but they de-

cided wisely, practically, honestly, between anarchy and peace.

This constitution recognizes the existence of Slavery in the United States. It provides for the continuance and security of the institution. It holds us as parties to it. Most of us have sworn to support this Constitution. All of us are bound to do so, whether under oath or not. We enjoy its blessings. We partake of the advantages, which we exacted in return for the concessions we have made. We possess what we purchased in the freshness and fulness of our contract, and it is a base and false morality, or rather a shameless and disgraceful fraud, which hypocritically assumes the garb of piety, to cheat our fellow citizens out of the price.

That the constitution of the United States recognizes the institution of Slavery and that we of the Northern States are parties to this recognition and bound to observe it, is apparent from the language of the constitution and the known circumstances of the time of its adoption. The convention and people of 1788 knew that Slavery existed under the authority of State laws. They reserved to the States the continuance of all powers not delegated to the United States, and they did not delegate any power of interfering with Slavery. Massachusetts having joined in a political confederacy with Carolina, knowing her to have established Slavery, and having agreed as a part of the contract that she shall manage her own affairs in her own way ; the citizens of Massachusetts violate this

contract when they interfere with the domestic relations thus recognized.

The Constitution provides that the common government of the country shall be sustained by an additional power given to the white men of the Slave holding States in the numerical ratio of their Slaves, and it compensates this grievous inequality by shifting in part the burthen of direct taxation from the free to the Slave holding States.

We have nothing to do with the justice or propriety of this provision. We say here only that it was deliberately made on what was deemed good considerations, and that we thereby became partners, co-operators and principals in the institution of Slavery.

The constitution obliges us to arm in sustaining the institution of Slavery by putting down an insurrection whenever it occurs.

The military power of New England and New York is therefore as much pledged in upholding Slavery as that of Carolina. So the force of Carolina is pledged to prevent invasion as much as that of Maine. We promise to act when the case requires action, and the promise may prevent the necessity of any action at all. Whether we should perform our promise or not is another affair. Possibly some modern code of morality would find a way for us to forfeit our honor and our word without sin. It is so nominated in the Bond, nevertheless, and it binds us not only to put down insurrection when it arises, but to do nothing to excite it.

The constitution provides that the citizens of a free State shall surrender a fugitive slave. "We are the jailers and constables of the institution." So says the letter. If this be so, is it not by force of our contract; and while the contract continues are we to confide in any system of ethics that would preach us into a conscientious violation of its terms?

To all this we were contented to submit for the advantages we secured in return. Among these advantages was the entire coasting trade for American vessels, that, is in a very large proportion, for the vessels of the non-Slave-holding States. The intercourse thus secured to us, gives us a direct interest in Slave labor, so that it may be doubtful whether the profitable results of that labor have been greater to the South or the North. Let it be traced through all its ramifications in the shipping, navigating, commercial and manufacturing concerns of New England and New York, in all the domestic and household arrangements in every domicile in the country—with every family where cotton is worn or sugar is eaten, with every fortune that has been acquired by inheritance or marriage, and with the price of labor among the poorest members of the community, and it will be found that under the contract of the constitution a very large part of the profit of slave labor is gathered and possessed by the free States, while the ignominy and the curse of the institution are thrown upon the States where it is performed.

The morality which under these circumstances en-

forces our interference with the Southern institutions of Slavery is the morality of teaching us to violate our solemn contracts; it is the morality of sharpening that huckstering ingenuity, which has been too justly ascribed to the yankee pedlar, of holding to both ends of the bargain.

There is no higher morality than that which enjoins fidelity to contracts—fidelity in the spirit as well as the letter; and no meaner chicanery or fraud than that which attempts to creep from their obligation by keeping the word of promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope. We need not enumerate the provisions of the constitution already adverted to in order to ascertain our duty as faithful citizens, because there is a broader and more expansive principle of honesty. We know what was intended at the time of the contract. We know if a claim to the interference now urged by Dr. C. and the Abolitionists had been proposed and insisted on in the convention, no constitution could have been formed.

But the constitution exists and we are at this moment reaping its advantages, and yet it is seriously proposed, as a matter of moral duty, so to interfere with its establishments, as to deprive one of the contracting parties of the advantages it secures to them. We eschew all such morality.

But this interference is only by “*moral suasion.*” It only goes to *persuade* the Southerner to enfranchise his Slaves. An excuse this, the very quintessence of jesuitism. We exhibit the Slave holder to

the world as a thief, a robber, a spoiler of other men's property—grossly guilty of immorality and crime. We venture to affirm that each one is marked by a felon's "brand," which the fame and talents of the most exalted of their statesmen cannot conceal;—we send forth our missionaries upon their borders to play upon the passions of the servile class and encourage them to "seek through blood and slaughter their long lost liberty." We alarm their peaceful citizens in the same way ours would be alarmed if a menagerie was to be turned loose on the population in our streets; we compel them to change their course of conduct in self-defence, to curtail the privileges, to restrict the indulgences of the Slaves, lest insurrection should follow causes naturally calculated, but not indeed intended to produce it; we destroy by the natural action of human passions, all kindness, sympathy and friendship, between the two great sections of American citizens. We excite our own people into a detestation of the immoral South, and spread, broad-cast, the seeds of strife, jealousy and revenge, and all this we call a moral suasion—deep reverence for the laws of God, commanded by pure morality, kindness, good will and brotherly love—the obligation of duty on our part and great tenderness for the human soul. If it is not calculated to bring religion into scorn it is only because we take our choice between fanaticism and hypocrisy.

These considerations confirm our opinion that citizens of the free States have no right to interfere with a

Southern domestic institution. The letter writer thinks he proves the right of interference when he proves our connection with slavery. The fallacy of his argument consists in extending the right beyond the cause which gives the right. It is our connection with slavery, which, according to his argument, gives us the right of interference. Then let us interfere not with others concern but our own, not with Southern Slavery but with Northern connexion with it. Let us withdraw from the connection and purify our own garments, and then we may more properly speak of the discoloration and stain upon our neighbors. This brings the question to the true issue. When we come to the conclusion that Slavery is a sin and a crime and a gross immorality, which it becomes us at all hazards and at all consequences to annihilate, we should begin the sacrifice of interest at home. We are not to inquire whether the Union will be dissolved by the agitation of the question, we must march boldly to the work and with our own right arm dissolve it. Let it perish, it is the asylum of the Slave holder, the guardian of slavery. When we shall have cut the cord which binds us to tolerate Slavery, to sustain it, and in case of insurrection to maintain it by force, we may next treat the Slave States as we might those foreign States, in which, according to the benevolent and candid illustration of this letter, every child born with black hair should be put to death, or every eighth child slaughtered by a

barbarous decree, or a large part of the population should perish by gladiatorial games.

Yet even in such cases the laws of morality, as we understand them, would confine our interference to our own actions, if by a regulation of our own actions instead of our neighbors the world could be purified from the corruption we affect to deplore.

It is manifestly so in the case before us. The product of Slave labor forms the staple of commerce for the world. If our free citizens would neither feed or clothe the Slave, or supply the means of doing it, if they would not purchase, transport, use or be concerned in any way, with the products of Slave labor, and would persist in this self denial for a year or two, Slavery in the Southern and Western States would die of consumption. To be sure, success in this matter would be somewhat of a hopeless or herculean task, but whether it be easier to persuade our neighbors to give up twelve hundred millions of dollars, or stimulate our own morality to the self-sacrifice of the conveniences and luxuries which Slave labor produces, they must decide who propose this crusade upon crime.

We lay down the rule that we have no moral right to complain of our neighbor, when by our own actions we aid, abet and encourage him in the commission of crime, and that it is with very little grace we call him a thief, when we are ourselves accessories to the felony and receivers of the stolen goods. When we act up to our preaching and refuse a prac-

tical concurrence in the iniquity, the iniquity is at an end.

We know not how much of any man's fortune was made directly or indirectly by Slave labor, but we hold it to be monstrous self delusion or gross hypocrisy for men who have invested their funds in the manufacturing establishments of the North,—for the operatives who work at the mills, for the ship owner, the navigator, or the farmer whose products are raised for exportation to the Slave States, and for any man who eats, drinks or wears any thing that is raised or comes cheaper to him by reason of Slave labor to pretend either the tenderness of his conscience or the indignation of his morality. His actions contradict his words.

The letter puts the right of interference “on the greatness of the evil,”—because “Slavery is not an imaginary monster but a combination of wrongs and crimes and woes, not only justifying but demanding the opposition of all good men.”

This dealing in abstraction is entirely inadmissible. If there be wrongs and crimes there must be wrong doers and criminals—and the writer must intend to declare that our fellow citizens of the Slave holding States, the masters of Slaves, are monsters of iniquity, perpetrating an enormity of evil, *branded*, like Cain, not to be killed, but calumniated; and that in directing upon them the odium of his fellow citizens, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness he is serving the cause of morality and doing honor to God.

The amount of all his charity for the South and West is found in the admission of their insensibility. "Habit has hardened *them* to Slavery," but our free and purer minds, or more intellectual and moral vision is opened to its horrors, and although we do not see our own direct agency and sin and crime, we may thank God we fast twice in the week and are not like other men.

The writer admits and indeed argues that Slavery touches us, that it bears upon us, that it is connected with us, but he wholly evades the argument, that we of the North—that he himself individually and personally is for all moral responsibility as actual a Slave holder by his voluntary participation of the fruits of Slave labor, as if his fortune was in negroes instead of cotton, and his enjoyment consisted in wielding the lash, instead of paying a less price for the fruits of the labor which the lash has stimulated.

Now if the fact be admitted as strongly as is alleged, we deny the right of interference thereby because our fellow citizens of the Slave holding States are not voluntary agents in having caused, or in maintaining and continuing the institution of Slavery—because it is a millstone, the heavier and more grievous in proportion as the representation is true, fastened upon them by a past generation and continued by a power which they cannot influence or control.

We might as well rail at the giants for not heaving off the mountains under which they were buried, as at

the South for not breaking up, by a mighty earthquake, the mountain of Slavery.

To ask a man to do an impossible act and to abuse him in good round terms for not performing it, cannot be deemed very kind, whatever may be thought of its wisdom or morality. That there are some pretty serious difficulties in the way of Abolition will not be questioned. What they are practically, may be in part imagined from considering what are the obstacles to our performing our own part in this great drama of christian duty.

Suppose an enlightened morality should teach us to begin at home—to cut the connection with Southern Slavery, and no longer to be participators in the stupendous fraud upon three millions of suffering human beings or felonious receivers of the annual interest of twelve hundred millions of dollars of plundered property. That an entire revolution in the commercial and manufacturing establishments would be the consequence, that bankruptcy, desolation and ruin would spread themselves over the country, that free labor would have little employment, that out of idleness and destitution would spring up a vast harvest of pauperism and crime, and that in fact civilization would go backward, are to be denied only by the obstinacy of fanaticism. This certainly would be the effect of a sudden termination of our connection and participation in the guilt of Slavery. A more gradual separation would produce a less revulsion. But how can we trifle with conscience, and what has mo-

rality to do with consequences. When a man finds his conduct is criminal, he must stop at the instant. Such is the doctrine of Abolitionists, and such is the legitimate operation of the principles laid down by this letter.

If these are the evils that beset our people in the path prescribed by "the rant and romance of a sublimated and visionary morality," much greater would be the disasters that would attend abolition in the country where Slavery exists. Here the blow would fall upon property and there upon life. Sooner or later, in our judgment, the consequence would be war, massacre and rivers of blood. We believe firmly that two races could not exist as freemen under one government, and having convinced ourselves firmly of this fact, we look with abhorrence at the recklessness and audacity which, in the name of the Prince of Peace, and with the sanctions of a religion of perfect love, would institute a rash experiment on the happiness of mankind.

We know indeed, to our own satisfaction, that the experiment will never be made, and this knowledge quiets our apprehensions; but while misguided zealots are preaching that it must be made, while "the rant and romance" of a mad philosophy is endeavoring to have it made, while christians and moralists are doing what they can to cause it to be made, and men of talents and influence are straining themselves to lead us by the perversion of our best affections to make it, there will and must be strife, conten-

tion, anger and revenge, the cause of humanity is arrested, true morality brought into discredit and the good will and brotherly kindness which are the foundations of national happiness, under such a government as ours, are sapped at their base.

If Slavery is ever to end, it is not by these means. This letter writer but rivets the chains he would break, by the unskilful use of instruments which he does not understand. If an institution, which under the mysterious dispensation of Providence has existed since the world stood, is to cease before the world ends, Providence itself will indicate the way. It may be by colonization which proceeds by the common consent of master and slave—it may be by some mode yet undiscovered by human reason and unrevealed to christian prayers, but we are certain it is not to be consummated by making our world a Golgotha, turning our country to a desert, and piling up a monument to freedom of the commingled bones of the white man and the negro.

The letter writer is not at all sensitive in regard to a dissolution of the Union. He has no fears on that score. He enumerates the many cohesive principles that bind the States together, and has no apprehension of their separation. That is, he does not believe the South will secede. It may be “passionate but not insane.”

But he wholly forgets that the first duty of moral reformation is to begin himself the work of dissolution. He must consent no longer to be a partner

in this iniquitous traffic. He must no longer be "a jailer and constable over Slaves." He must refuse to join in a war against insurrection, and what is harder and more touching, he must taste not, handle not, come not near the blood-stained products of Slavery.

Let the doctrines which Abolition contends for be inculcated on our own people to the extent and with the force which shall give it success, and the Constitution is already at an end. We may stand upon its ruins and exult at our moral triumphs, but the Union is already dissolved. Our hands will have torn down the star spangled banner and struck from the constellation every representative of a Slave holding State. What we shall have gained in this crusade of fanaticism we shall learn by bitter experience. What we shall have lost is the last hope of freedom in the world.

The rule of morality which we understand prescribes our course of action is this.

If we find that by contract under the constitution, we are bound to aid and abet the South in maintaining the institution of Slavery, and have learned, since the constitution was adopted, that this institution is a wrong and a sin, and that as moral men, under a power above all constitution and human law, we cannot conscientiously any longer consent to aid and abet the institution, we are bound peaceably, quietly, but firmly in the exercise of our reserved rights, to propose the means and prepare the way for the dissolution of that political government under which we

can no longer conscientiously live. Our first duty is to propose to our own people to cast off their unhallowed connection from men with whom we cannot conscientiously act, according to the existing terms of our contract and our bond. The writer of the letter before us has an easier path.

The constitution enjoins a certain duty upon us in regard to run-away slaves. A law of Congress directs the mode of performing it. We agree with him that it connects us with Slavery. It has nevertheless been performed, as is admitted, by our best and wisest men in cases required by the constitution, with no self reproach. The letter writer pronounces them wrongdoers. He advises that it should be performed no longer. He goes for nullification in his own particular case as all nullifiers do.

Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to.

Again—we hold that true morality under the circumstances exhibited in the letter, does not require us to interfere or give us the right of interfering with the domestic relations of the South until we have first purified ourselves from all personal contamination with them.

The case supposed in the letter is that we have discovered that Slavery is a wicked institution. It is a discovery recently made, or at least one to which our attention has been recently drawn. As moral men we are therefore bound no longer to uphold or

permit it. To deal in the products of Slave labor is to uphold and permit it. We are under no contract and no political obligation to deal in these products. We have increased to an immense extent our demand for these products during our ignorance and delusion on the subject of Slavery. New lands have been planted, new States have been peopled, and the money we have paid for cotton has been expended in the domestic Slave trade, in separating families, and in encouraging the breeding of Slaves.

By our over demand, the value of Slaves in the United States which was in 1830 but five hundred million of dollars, has now increased to twelve hundred million. Our factories for the employment of this labor are scattered all over the country. We boast of them. Our Secretary of State has reported the investment of our capital in the State of Massachusetts alone to be about sixteen millions of dollars, and our annual dealing with one single article, the product of Slave labor, to be to the extent of seventeen millions more, and to employ the direct agency of twenty-one thousand citizens. Of the navigating interest concerned, we have an equal amount, and of the indirect connection which it has in every department of industry we can form no estimate. But this great amount is the wages of sin and iniquity. All this we offer to the monstrous Moloch of slavery. Our happiness is bound up in it. It is the prosperity and civilization of life as we have erroneously believed, but now we find it

is the deadly fruit in the garden of our Eden. We may partake of it no more.

The tremendous sacrifice thus demanded of us is nothing, absolutely nothing to that which we demand of our fellow citizens of the South. But we put it to the conscience of our own citizens and to the letter writer himself, whether we are not as much engaged in supporting Slavery as they are; whether if we have discovered its sin and they have not, we can enjoy its profits and rail at them for not breaking it up?

The charge against the South and West is that they maintain a "criminal institution."

We have said that where any thing is criminal, men must be answerable for it, as well the accessories as the principals. The charge therefore is brought against all the citizens of the United States except the Abolitionists, who are the ten righteous men that have hitherto saved the nation.

Let us try this indictment against a whole people—that startling accusation for which Burke said the file afforded no precedent.

A citizen of a Slave State comes by inheritance into the possession of Slaves. By the new doctrine, he must give them their liberty. He is otherwise a Slave holder and a felon!

But the act of emancipation is not every where and always in his own power. The policy of the Slave laws, in most of the States, admits it with many limitations. In some, a special legislative grant is requisite to a valid emancipation, as in Georgia, South

Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi. In others, the right to emancipation is made to depend on meritorious services done by the Slave, which are to be adjudged upon by the County Court, as in North Carolina, and, it is believed, in Tennessee. Where more liberal power is possessed by the master, as in Kentucky, Maryland and Virginia, it is restrained by rules and regulations established for the purpose.* Slaves cannot be emancipated if they are wanted for payment of debts, nor when they would become paupers. The State that has secured their services to the master, has bound him to obligations for their support. It has furnished no means of education for them, without which, liberty is a delusion, and probably a curse. It has provided neither alms house nor hospital. The avenues of honest labor are in a great measure closed, and the gift of freedom, as it is pompously called, may often be consignment to poverty and wretchedness. With great differences in particular cases no doubt, the condition of the free negro is vastly more degrading, destitute and miserable in the Slave States than that of a plantation Slave.

If under these circumstances, the individual white man, by holding the Slave, is guilty of a sin, it is the

* James's Digest, 398. Prince's Digest, Act of 180. Toulman's Digest, 682. Mississippi R. C., 386. Haywood's Manuel, 525. 2 Litt & Swi, 1155. 2 Missouri Laws, 744. 3 Hen Stat. 87. 1 Rev. Code Virginia, 433. Laws of Maryland, 1809, Ch. 171, of 1796, Ch. 67.

original sin of being born in a Slave country, which no efforts of his own can enable him to remove.

Will it be said we only transfer the crime from the individual to the State?

If indeed we have done so we have taken off that "*brand*," which, according to Dr. C., is burned into the flesh of every individual Slave holder. It is no longer his own personal act which is sinful and against conscience, and for which he must be held up to detestation. It is the act of the government under which he lives. For this act he is reprehensible only so far as by his own personal conduct he can change it, or by any reasonable exertion of personal influence cause others to change it.

Before he can be condemned by the justice of any human tribunal, and certainly before he can be convicted of a breach of those laws, which only God administers, it must appear that he is individually answerable for the existing condition of things, and that it would be safe, and prudent, and wise, and humane, and consistent with the best interests of all castes and classes to proclaim universal emancipation.

If he is not answerable for the existing state of the law because he did not bring it about, and cannot change what is established; or if by his exertions he might produce a change, but if such change however productive of partial good, would in his honest judgment be on the whole, of most dangerous consequences, he stands acquitted before the Supreme Ru-

ler of the universe of all individual sin, and may despise the self appointed inquisitor who

———deals damnation round the land,
On all he deems God's foe.

We are brought back then to the great question of the moral duty of the South and West to destroy the institution of Slavery, and to the danger of this mighty revolution on both castes, the white man and the negro, through all time and in all parts of our country.

We think this question is not to be flippantly settled by retired students in their study, on abstract principles without regarding practical effects, nor by women gathered from their domestic occupations, whose little span of observation, places in the same relation the ability to mend stockings or make laws, nor least of all by that intemperate class, who have worked themselves into a passion in the cause of justice, and are furious and ferocious in maintaining quietness and peace.

It is no small affair to change institutions which are coexistent with the settlement of the country, and it is a little rash and uncandid to denounce God's curse on a great people, because they cannot yet see by the light of this new philosophy.

Let us be grateful that "*curses kill not.*"

We do not propose to renew the discussion of this question. It has been sufficiently considered, and is presented by Mr. C. in his magnificent speech with

the pencil of genius, eloquence and truth. We desire to bring the discussion to some practicable issue.

There are three insuperable objections to emancipation stated by Mr. Clay.

1st. The amount of property which would be sacrificed by emancipation.

2d. The amalgamation of the races.

3d. The civil wars, ending in the extermination of the one or the other race, which would follow abolition.

We understand the replies given in the letter to the first of these objections to be these.

1st. That there is no such property.

2d. That what is supposed to be property would not be destroyed.

3d. Admitting for arguments sake only, that there is such property now existing, and that it would be destroyed by emancipating the Slaves, that consequence is no just objection to emancipation.

We shall consider each of these positions.

As to the first, that "there is no such property."

This is one of those splendid sophisms upon which nothing but genius could venture; yet "as in religion there is no error but some sober brow will bless it, and approve it with a text," so is there no fact in history, and no truth in testimony, which in rashness or in ignorance may not be denied.

Our author hears "with pain the doctrine too common among lawyers, that property is the creature of the law."

At the risk of renewing this unpleasant sensation, we repeat with Mr. Clay, what was said in substance by the writer of a former reply to Dr. Channing, "THAT IS PROPERTY WHICH THE LAW MAKES PROPERTY."

It is impossible to discuss or illustrate this question, as a matter of fact, but by an appeal to the Statute book and to the proceedings of Judicial Courts.

In every government with which we have any acquaintance, Jewish, Grecian, Roman, Mahometan or Christian, the law has undertaken to decide by its own positive decree, what shall be property and what shall not be property;—what shall be the tenure, title, and incidents of property, who may become its owners, and by what means, and by what artificial and political system it shall be transferred, alienated, inherited or lost. Because these matters are regulated in different countries by laws more or less different from each other, the character, incidents and security of property in different countries are various, in the exact proportion of that difference.

For a single example. Under the feudal system, all real estate was supposed to belong to the king, and to be held under him, and in the various modifications of that system, it is now in England, held by the occupant under the king "as in fee," while with us, through the United States, it is wholly allodial.

In one country certain specific articles are made incapable of being the property of an individual citizen, in others they are open to universal proprietor-

ship. Waifs, estrays, increments by alluvion, and numerous others may be named, and among them the whole subject of monopoly, private jurisdictions, the game laws, &c. If there was any thing but the law, any thing above, beyond, or superior to the law, by which property could be determined, it would in all christian countries at least, result in the same thing.

Look at the administration of this right of property. Wherever there is any law at all, it is administered by Courts of Justice, and these Courts undertake to decide the fact of property, to identify the owner, to determine the extent of his title and the amount of his right, and to vindicate his possession and secure it to him against all the world. They do this by reference to the Statute book and the law of the land.

They do not give to a man his farm or his merchandize upon any abstract principle of justice or natural right, but because by the rules of human law, right or wrong, it is his. The law decrees it and the Court awards it.

If there is any discrepancy between law and justice, the property is adjudged to him who has law on his side, and he who has only justice is the losing party.

Hence the complaints we hear very often, that a decision may be law but not justice,—a complaint too frequently made in ignorance of the fact. Law is intended to be the perfection of reason, and is so to the extent that human power can make it. So far

as it is what it intends to be, it is identical with perfect justice and moral right, but if in any case the law of man and the gospel of the Redeemer both unite in one result as to property and the ownership of property the possessor is in the enjoyment of it in our country, not by force of the Christian Religion but by the express declaration of the law of man.

The letter supposes that property has "a natural foundation," is "a natural right," "precedes all laws," "is their ground, not their effect."

This is mere rhapsody,—words without meaning, or at best an idle cavil about the import of terms.

What do we mean by property? The word implies something to be owned, and somebody to own it. An owner without property, or property without an owner, is nonsense. The word "property" implies a subject matter and a person, and it is the relation and connection of the two that constitutes, to all practical and useful purposes, the idea of property, as it is entertained by rational men. That some of the subjects of property had a natural foundation and preceded the laws is true; but in that condition of things such subjects were not property.

The earth—the soil on which we stand, is a subject of property,—the great foundation and source of all human property—and undoubtedly it existed before man was created. But as there was nobody to own it, it was not property. So too our own country was in existence and occupied by rational beings before it was discovered or planted by civilized man.

Whether it was the property of the Aborigines or not, and whether by natural right or not we leave casuists to determine. Our ancestors drove off the Indians,—as to our shame be it said we have done their descendants,—took the country into their own hands and parcelled it out by human law. Where they chose to pay the original proprietor, they allowed no individual to become the owner, but according to their own civilized laws; and from that day the law of the land has established, and from time to time has altered, and in all respects controlled the property of the soil, and all other property of the inhabitants.

Look at the subsequent power of alienation and succession. This is different in America from what it is in Europe—different in Great Britain and on the Continent—different in each of the United States in one or more important particulars. What makes these differences but the law of the land?

Let us go behind the original mode of acquisition and suppose an individual to be in possession of property by a natural right. May he by force of this right do what he pleases with it, or shall his pleasure be limited? At his decease shall it go to his children or to such other persons as in his life-time he has designated by his will? One would think, if there was any natural right, it would permit a man to do what he pleased with his property as long as he lived, and that his children after him should enter into the enjoyment of it. Whether there be or be not any such

natural right is a subject of very useless inquiry, because we know that in all countries, and in the United States especially, to which our inquiries lead us, the law of the land rides over all such right and directs distribution by a set of positive, artificial rules, which have been changed again and again, as convenience, policy, or political interest requires,—so that the right, if there be one, is at last the creation of the law.

We say then that property is the creature of the law, because in point of fact the power of the law is the efficient power, which makes it what it is; so that if theoretically there is any other power, it is dormant and imbecile, in the practical business of life.

A more exact statement of what we mean, as practical men, when we speak of property and law, may illustrate the subject of examination.

For all practical purposes, by the word "*property*" we mean that which a man uses, occupies, enjoys and possesses, and for the use, occupation, enjoyment and possession of which he may command, by proper application, the physical force of the community.

We say property, so understood, is the creature of the law, because nothing but the law makes it what it is.

Law is a modification of the physical force of society. It directs and it executes. It is the will of a power that commands, and has the means of making its commands obeyed. When this power directs a thing to be, the thing is.

To say that the law does not do what we see it constantly does do, and is doing, and will do, while the world stands, is either a paradox or a quibble.

We may complain of the law as cruel, oppressive and unjust. When its rules are compared with the rules of the Gospel it may, in a given case, or by an individual opinion, deserve such epithets. But is it less an operative power? To confound what ought to be law, and what is law, is a miserable confusion of intellect.

Let us now transfer this doctrine to the immediate question before us. Slavery once existed in Massachusetts. Men were here purchased, sold, whipped and worked, as now they are in Kentucky, not so many indeed, but still there were slaves, men, women and children.

Slavery was as truly an institution of New England as now it is of any of the Southern States.

We may not be able to ascertain how it crept in, whether by force of any law that cannot be found, or by the universal custom prevailing through the European colonies, in the West Indies, and on the continent of America, or by the commercial policy of the parent State; but we do know that Slavery was recognized as existing in fact, and various regulations were prescribed in reference to it, and among them a restriction on the master's power to emancipate his Slaves.

We know now, and we desire to express our gratitude for the fact, Slavery does not exist.

Why? Because it is abolished by law. The first judicial decision about it in Massachusetts, after the revolution, announced that Slavery was abolished by force of the Constitution, the supreme law of the land.

Christianity could not abolish it; no system of morals *proprio Vigore* could abolish it. Christianity and morality might operate on the law makers, but it was after all the act and not the motive of the law-giver that gave freedom to oppressed humanity.

It was urged indeed by the Attorney General of Massachusetts, in his argument against Kneeland indicted for Blasphemy, for whose pardon after conviction, Dr. C. was the leading petitioner, that Christianity was part and parcel of the common law of Massachusetts, and that the morality of the gospel was the law of the land. This opinion is sustained by the very general concurrence of the legal profession, but it was opposed by all the free-inquirers of the country. Nobody supposed that without the operation of human law, as distinct and separate from any other power, penalties could be enforced or rights maintained in civil society. The question was whether the law-makers had made the christian morality the law of the land.

Once more. What dissolved Slavery in the West Indies? "In one day half a million, probably 700,000 of human beings were rescued from bondage to full, unqualified freedom." What power accomplished this magnificent work? An act of the British Parliament. A piece of parchment that had passed through certain

forms and was thus the evidence of the will of the government. The dissolution of Slavery was effected by the giant power of the law. And what are all these Abolition petitions which are crowded upon Congress but a demand upon the legislature of the country to change the law which makes one man a Slave to another?

The right of a man to be free may exist upon natural foundations, but the law overturns these foundations and the right is worthless. Property in man may by moral principles be theoretically impossible, but human law works the impossibility by a miracle and the natural right is trampled in the dust. The property which morals and principle and nature do not and cannot create, is in effect, by right or by wrong, created by law.

The letter writer has some objections to this doctrine which we will briefly examine, premising that the fact and the reason of it are necessarily distinguishable considerations. "Government," it is said, "was ordained not to create but to protect and regulate property," but we answer that before it can regulate a subject, it must define and determine what it is.

"Its chief strength lies in the sanction which the moral sense, the natural idea of right gives to honestly earned possessions." Admit it. Men have an idea of what government ought to do and their respect and regard is conciliated by the doing of it. If governments always did their duty, all governments would be alike. But the duty is one thing, the dis-

charge of it another. What the government does, not what we think it ought to do ; is the rule to which its citizens must submit so long as the government stands and is in fact a government.

“ If we of this Commonwealth have no right to our persons, houses, ships, farms, but what a vote of the Legislature or the majority confers, then a vote of the same masses may strip us of them all and transfer them to others and the right will go with the law.”

The writer considers a vote of the Legislature as making the law. He does not understand that the Constitution is the Supreme law of the land, and that until this law is changed it secures to every man the enjoyment of the property to which he has by the law of the land honestly acquired a title. Cases do indeed occur to which the Constitutional protection does not extend. We then see, even here, that natural right is no protector of property against law. The property in the franchise of Charles River Bridge was created by law, and is destroyed by law.

I do not see—says the writer—“ why the law cannot make some idle neighbor the rightful owner of your property or mine.” Let him read our Constitution and he will find out. No such law can be made until a revolution shall break down all the defences against the Radicalism and Agrarianism of the day.

The writer charges the advocates of this doctrine with being the most dangerous of all radicals “ perhaps.” They become so then by being advocates for

the truth. But he is out of his element as much in politics as law.

Let him establish property, or the right to property on any thing but law, on natural right or a sublime morality, and to how much more or less than he now possesses would he limit his title. Who and how many would contest it with him? Where and how is the right to be settled? Where is the text and the administrator by which partition is to be made? When some "*idle neighbor*" "of the poor majority" without law shall step into his mansion—set down on his soft sofa—bathe himself in his costly essences and feed at his luxurious table, what shall determine the natural right between the possessor of the purple and fine linen for half a century, and the Lazarus that claims them. He is "*perhaps*" no true Republican, who ventures to place the right of property on any thing but the law.

But may he not be a good moralist? "If that is property which the law declares to be property then" according to the letter "human law is made supreme, decisive in a great question of morals. Thus the idea of an eternal immutable justice is set at nought." This is another instance of false reasoning. Who but man is to decide what is eternal immutable justice? The law is the expression of that decision by the community in which it is made. Republicanism presumes that the people are honest and intelligent. They therefore may be entrusted to make the law, and of course a law so made by such a people will

not set at nought eternal immutable justice, but strictly accord with it. When the people are corrupt or ignorant there is among them no longer any law or government, right, justice or morality. There is either Rebellion or Anarchy. Is it a question whether a given law does or does not consist with natural right or with eternal immutable justice? The majority of the people must decide it.

It is when fanatics or disorganizers undertake to settle this question for themselves that we have mobs, riots and Lynch law. Thus the law of the State authorized the building the Hall of Freedom in Philadelphia. But a mob deemed it to be devoted to a cause inconsistent with their ideas of natural justice and they "levelled it to the earth by fire." Thus too the law of Massachusetts authorized freedom of conscience and religious toleration, but a mob deemed these privileges, when enjoyed by the Catholics of Mount Benedict, to be a violation of eternal justice, and they too levelled the Convent to the earth by fire.

In getting upon the subject of riots and insurrection, the writer seems to forget what he has been saying against the force of human law.

Here he remarks with great truth, "the sovereignty has here but one mode of manifestation, and that is the laws. It can express itself in no other way; and consequently a mob in forcibly suspending the laws and in substituting its own will for that which the legitimate organs of the people have proclaimed

usurps for a time the sovereignty of the State and is virtually in rebellion.”

But the law that sustained the Hall of Freedom and the Convent of the Ursulines, was a law that established and maintained the right of property. It was a law by Pennsylvania and Massachusetts in effect declaring that liberty of speech should be allowed to the Abolitionists, and freedom and religious worship to the Catholics, and that each might build and maintain establishments for this purpose. With the pretence and perhaps a belief that these objects as they were or would be conducted, were morally wrong, that the owners were wrong-doers, “not only justifying but commanding the opposition of all good men,” the rioters acted out practically all these theories on the right of property, which are broached in the letter before us. They paid no regard to the human law when it came across their designs. They treated the law of two sovereign States precisely as this letter writer treats the laws of the fourteen Slave holding States, and perpetrating in fact what he only illucidates in argument, they acted as they might have done if property was not the creature of the law, they took the law for a nullity and burned up the buildings.

We have already alluded to the letter writer’s respect for the law when its provisions do not meet his own particular notions. The Citizen who thinks it wrong “must abstain from what he deems wrong.” What is this but to allow every individual to be his

own judge of his duty and obligation, and to obey or disobey, as he chooses for himself? When such a principle is avowed, it is clear that submission in no case proceeds from respect to the law itself, or to the authority by which it is made. Reformers of every class may then proceed by an impulse of their own, and there is no difference in conduct,—except as to the subjects of resistance,—between a Christian Clergyman and a Radical Rioter!

Miss Martineau in her Martyr age alluding to the sufferings of the Abolitionists, says that “the Attorney General of Massachusetts gave “advice to the Governor in Council that any Abolitionists demanded by the South should be delivered up for trial under Southern laws, (the sure result of which is known to be death.”)

The whole statement is absolutely false, but the abolition press without inquiry, on the mere allegation of this intrusive stranger, has rung with its horror and alarm. Suppose it was true, how does it differ from the admitted and avowed declaration of Dr. Channing? The law officer of the Commonwealth gives a wrong construction to constitutional law and advises the performance of a duty which, by such construction would be obligatory. The Reverend Clergyman adopts a right construction of the law, and deliberately determines not to obey its admitted command.

But it may be asked is there no limit to the power of the law in our country?

Unquestionably there are certain acts which the

law cannot do, as that word *law* is understood in its popular sense. We admit that no ex post facto act of the State or Federal Government can punish a citizen. We admit that no law can destroy or impair the obligation of contracts, make a man a judge in his own case, or give the property of A to B without compensation, or do any thing which is against the great first principles of the social compact; and the reason that the law cannot do these things is simply because no law authorizing them can be made.

The common expression that the law cannot do it, raises a vague and confused idea. It is more correct to say no law can be made purporting to do these things, and therefore the law never does do it.

When the idea expressed by the popular phrase is put into the precision of legal language we learn what it means from the authority of the Supreme Court of the United States.

That high judicatory says "There are acts which the Federal or State Legislatures cannot do without exceeding their authority."

"An act of the Legislature contrary to the great first principles of the social compact cannot be considered a rightful exercise of authority."

"To maintain that our Federal or State Legislatures possess such powers would be a political heresy altogether inadmissible in our free republican government."*

We adopt no such heresy. We agree that an act

* Dall. Rep. 3d V. p. 388.

of the Federal or State Legislature, which exceeds its authority, is void.

If the acts declaring and enforcing Slavery are of this description, then no Slavery is established. How are we to decide this question? When an act has passed all the forms of legislation, we have no mode of ascertaining whether it is valid or invalid, but through the judiciary. We do not leave this matter to Dr. Channing or Mr. Clay, but to the sworn expounders of the law.

Now the Legislatures of the Slave States have established Slavery by acts of legislation. The courts of the United States and the State courts, not only in the Slave States, but without one solitary dissentient throughout the whole country, have decided that the acts of legislation, in this particular, do not exceed their authority and are valid, and therefore we affirm that in this case, they have established the property; and if in this case *a fortiori* in all others, "property is the creature of the law," for "what the law makes property is property."

The letter writer thinks he has Mr. Clay on the hip in this, that in urging the wrong which would be done to the Slave holders, should the law strip them of their Slaves, he acknowledges that law is not a supreme rule of right, for if it were, "with what face could they complain of being wrongfully dispossessed."

But our author is under a mistake. Mr. Clay appeals to a sense of justice to control the law-makers;

for which there would be no occasion if the law did not regulate property. As the law now stands, according to Mr. Clay's argument, the master has a property in his Slave. If the law was altered, as the Abolitionists would have, he admits the master would have no such property, because property is the creature of the law. But he says the master should be indemnified for this loss, and he appeals to a sense of justice to secure this compensation. It is evident that the law might abolish the property and not provide a compensation, because property in the right to compensation, as in the Slave, is created by the law.

We have thus endeavored to illustrate our position that property is the creature of the law, by showing that law makes it, designates it, assigns it, protects it as far as it is protected, and does in fact do all and every thing by which property has its distinguishing and distinctive character.

We have not said that the law does this upon the principles of eternal and immutable justice. It would puzzle a wiser philosopher than our author to look around upon the community and determine upon what principle of justice, he or any other individual is a rich man, while "the majority are poor." But we deal with the fact. We maintain that for all practical purposes "that is property which the law makes property," and that he is the owner of property whom the law has designated as the owner of property; that what ought to be done may be one thing, and what is done is another;—that in looking at society,

as it is, the law which designates what shall be property and appoints the owner of property, is the highest sanction which man can know or observe in respect to it, and that while it is his duty to make his laws conform to eternal justice and natural right, so far as he can understand what that is, yet whether in the judgment of individuals they do so or not, they are the only standard by which human right to property is or can be established or ascertained by human beings.

But it is said, however this may be generally, yet there are some things which the law cannot make property. This must evidently be a quibble about words. If it was said there are some things which the law ought not to make property, the assertion might be true. If it be said that our notion of justice, morality or honor, forbid us to make some things property, no man would deny the allegation. When we have settled what we mean by property, the sophistry of the objection is apparent.

If the law maker has the physical power to place a thing, animate or inanimate, in such a condition that it has and possesses all the incidents of property, if he can assign a person to act as owner to it, regulate the authority of such owner, subject him to duties and obligations, and secure to him benefits and advantages, in consequence of his assumed ownership;—if to the extent of the jurisdiction of such law maker, he can enforce all the relations so established, and does do all this in the form of a law, and by the sovereign

power of the State, the thing, whether animate or inanimate, human or brute, is for all essential purposes property.

To argue that the law does not make an article property, because in our estimation it ought not to have made it property, is as sensible as to say that an act of homicide is not murder, because murder is a crime, or an act of larceny is no violation of property because to violate property is immoral.

We suppose it is not necessary to protest that the idea of moral right and the fact in any given case may be different things ; and yet knowing the tendency of a certain party to misrepresent our language we do again even to tediousness repeat the distinction.

The letter writer as constantly confounds them. "As a man"—he says—"is physically unable to turn the sun and air into private possessions, so he is morally incompetent to turn his fellow creatures into chattels." This is an instance of the exceeding indistinctness of his ideas on this subject, and is equally unfortunate as an illustration.

Chattels are only another name for a species of property, a mere legal distinction, having no more to do with moral law than the genera and species of Linnæus, which he arranged by a system and nomenclature of his own. It is not morally or physically competent to man to change the nature of any thing, but he may change its relations and connections with other things and other men. It is the relation that constitutes property. This is consummated by the law of the

land. When the relation is established, property is established, and all the moral law has to do with it is to teach and enjoin upon us not to disturb that relationship for any purposes of our own. We may not steal it as some moralists advise us to do. We may not covet it, nor destroy it when it does not belong to us.

Thus it is that men do turn the sun and air into private possessions so that to take more than a fair share of the one or to deteriorate the other, are under certain circumstances the violation of a right of individual property in those common gifts of nature, as our author will find if before he meddles with the law again he will read some elementary treatise.

After a page or two of illustration to show that the general end for which legislation touches property is to make it more secure, he rather as a *non sequiter* concludes "There are then principles of property which no law can move." He specifies none. The fundamental laws of the country, its written or unwritten constitution, regulate all principles of property and govern the whole affair. Parliament, Congress, the French Chambers, our Legislature are not Supreme. There is a Constitution behind, which limits the law makers. This Constitution is the Supreme law. With us of the United States it recognizes the legislation of the Representatives of the people, and their entire supremacy over every thing under its direction.

If any thing but the law of the land makes property to be property, ascertains the right of property

and determines such right, what is it? Is it religion, or morality? Is it justice—natural right, private industry, personal merit? We know in point of fact it is the sealed deed and the operation and force of law upon the instrument, which establishes a man's property in his farm. We know it is the law of inheritance and not the character of the heir, which secures the succession. To substitute any other inquiries than those provided by positive law would throw every thing into the wind. The law must indeed proceed upon general principles, and often, according to our personal opinions works injustice and wrong. But over all our scruples it rides triumphantly.

The argument we are reviewing is pressed further. It is said the law cannot establish property in that which by moral principle and eternal justice is not liable to become property. In other words "that man cannot be *rightfully* seized and held as property." This proposition Mr. Clay pronounces to be a visionary dogma. Dr. C. says it is nevertheless the truth. Now that man is seized and made property is unquestioned. The dispute therefore must turn upon the word "*rightfully*." Whether an act be right or wrong is to be measured by some standard or rule. If the rule be the law of the land then what is lawful is right, and what is done according to law is rightfully done. If the rule be the law of God, the principles of morality, the fitness of things or sense of justice, and if this rule differs from the rule established by the

law of the land, then every body will admit that unless the act is conformable to the law of God it is not a rightful act, although it may be a lawful one. Upon this admission it is evident that when the law of God and the law of man agree, an act that it is lawful is right, when they disagree the higher of the two laws must decide, and an act is not right unless it be according to the will of God.

But who is to decide whether the command of the civil law is nullified by the law of God ?

There is but this alternative. Each man in his own case must decide for himself, or society must decide for all. The supreme power of the State must express the general will, by which all its citizens are bound, or each citizen according to his own convenience or his own fancy must determine for himself.

Is it not at once seen that unless this right of decision rest in the constituted authorities of the State, all government is dissolved, that the buisness of life could not go on, that society must come to a stand still,—and anarchy and confusion hold a jubilee forever ?

Is it not perceived that when a man sets up his own individual opinion as the rule of right, against the law of the land, he opposes the opinion and judgment of others, who may be quite as conscientious in their opinion as he is in his own. It is impossible that both sets of opinions can prevail, and it must be the minority or the majority that is to rule in the last resort. He may think his position perfectly impreg-

nable, so do they. He may find demonstration in his argument; so do they. He may be astonished at their blindness, they are surprised at his.

Take this very case of Slavery. Dr. C. thinks man is morally incompetent to turn his fellow creatures into chattels. Mr. Clay treats this doctrine as a visionary dogma.

Who shall decide when doctors disagree?

Dr. Channing brings to his aid the Anti Slavery Society and all New England. Mr. Clay arranges on his side the clergymen of the South and millions of laymen.

The practical operation of society is to condense public opinion, not to make men think alike, but to ascertain the general will and make men submit to it.

The law, when established, is as precise and exact as any thing human can be. The interpretation of conscientious dissentients, is as visionary and various as their numbers.

What would that blasphemmer, whose pardon Dr. C. solicited, say to a rule of action founded on the will of God, when he denies the existence of a moral governor of the Universe? What becomes of moral principle independent of the will of a Supreme Being? Is it Owen, Fanny Wright, or the Mormons,—the followers of the elect Lady, our Agrarians, Radicals, or Jack Cades, who are to settle the right by justice to the possession of property?

Their ideas of justice are very different from each

other, and all of them equally distant from the established rules of law.

What is to be the right of property under that conscientious class of philosophers who honestly maintain that no christian “can consistently sue a man at law, or acknowledge allegiance to any human government?”

The law of the land is then, as we contend, the best interpretation of the moral and divine law, because it unites the opinion of the majority in its favor, and because all our systems of government are founded on this presumption that the law as promulgated is the only safe and practicable standard for ascertaining a right when such right is contested.

But this theory does not militate with our position. We speak of the fact. Property—whether we regard the article—the owner—or the claim of right—is what it is, by force of the law, and not by theoretical abstraction.

“What is to be done,” it is asked, “if the law violates our conscience?” The answer is easy. A citizen who will not submit to the law must resist it or fly. We go for the right of revolution as our fathers did, when circumstances demand it, as we go for the right of war, in those awful emergencies when it is required for national honor or necessary self defence, and we scout that sublimated morality which, under proper circumstances, cannot ask and expect heaven’s blessing upon both.

Whatever might have been the theory of property

in that fanciful state of things which is supposed to have preceded the formation of civil society and human government, since these were established property, is the result of a political and not a moral right. Dr. Paley very sensibly remarks—"We speak of property in land, for the land was once no doubt common and so appropriated to the first owner, and the question is how any part of it could be taken out of the common and so appropriated to the first owner as to give him a better right to it than others, and what is more a right, to exclude all others from it." And he concludes in these words, "the real foundation of our right is the law of the land."

The substitution of any other foundation is the work of that new philosophy which adopts the theoretical for the practical;—that TRANSCENDENTALISM which places the *ideal* above the *actual*, and deranges the conduct as well as the faith of the world. We see it every where in the dreamy mysticism of imaginative minds. But wherever it is seen, it is the same appalling heresy, whether it is conveyed in the polluted pages of convicted Blasphemy or the polished periods of classical composition. It is every where the same subtle person, whether alluring a delicate taste in the disguise of a French cordial, or soliciting a vulgar appetite in streams "warm from the still and faithful to its fires."

Under a sense of their deep responsibility to God and man our fellow citizens of the South and West have established the institution of Slavery by force of

law. We personally deem it a great evil. We regret and deplore the existence of it. We lament the condition of things which seems to them to warrant and require it. We hope in the course of Providence a way will be opened for its extinction. We sympathize as truly as the most sensitive Abolitionist in the moral and physical degradation of the Slave, and we extend our sympathy to those who have the misfortune to be his masters. We are profoundly grateful that no such institution exists here.

But we oppose any interference of the kind attempted in this letter and the works of the Abolitionists, until we shall put ourselves in a condition *honestly* to make such interference, by surrendering our Constitution and the Union of the States, and assuming a separate government which shall leave us free for political action, and until we shall have voluntarily abandoned that direct encouragement of Slavery, which we practice for our own pecuniary advantage. If we are not ready to make these sacrifices moral duty imposes silence.

We further oppose all interference at this time because it is calculated to prolong rather than shorten the evils it proposes to remedy, and introduces false principles of action subversive of all law and order and tending to destroy the foundations of society.

Let us now turn to some of those considerations by which the governments of the South and West assume the right of maintaining the Institution of Slavery, that we may determine how far under the circum-

stances of their position they are obnoxious to such degree of reprehension as renders it our duty to hold them up to the reprobation of the world, and to propose that tremendous revolution which even if peaceably accomplished would change the condition of the country.

Let us consider this matter temperately, remembering that though the judgment may to some extent be influenced by the feelings, it can never properly be overwhelmed by them.

“ A Slave is one who is in the power of another to whom he belongs.” Civ. Code Lous. Art. 35 & 173.

All human government is to some extent a restraint on the actions and will of its subjects, and as it is inseparable from government the right of imposing it is not decisive by practical and intelligent men. We give the name of Slavery to the exercise under the authority of government, of this restraint to an extreme degree by one man or one set of men over another.

The first article of the Massachusetts Bill of Rights declares that all men have certain natural, essential and unalienable rights, among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties—that of acquiring, possessing and protecting property, in fine that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness.

Yet government is established for the very purpose of restraining, regulating, controlling and in some cases destroying their declared rights. It takes life and liberty by its established laws, it restrains the acqui-

sition and possession of property when it sees fit to do so, it prevents a man from protecting his property except in a manner indicated by law, and it refuses its permission to a man to seek and obtain his own safety and happiness, if his inclination leads him to find it in a mode not recognized to be right.

It declares that all men are born free and equal. But the moment of their birth is the last moment of absolute freedom or perfect equality. In all the relations of child, apprentice, pupil, wife, soldier, sailor, and indeed in all others, the natural and physical liberty of the individual citizen is restrained by the law. Slavery is the extending of this restraint to the extreme, and hence he is the only true Abolitionist who goes for entire freedom from all human government. All power over, or property in a Slave is of the same kind as that which the father has in and over his child, the husband over his wife, the artizan over his apprentice, the naval or military man over his enlisted soldier or sailor, differing in degree but not at all in character or principle. Now the extent to which this power shall be carried must be determined by the government itself.

If the government has a right to do any thing, it must have the right to decide how much it will do, and to what extent it will go; and a free and an absolute government is distinguished by nothing else but the limitation it puts upon its own powers. Is it said government may impose these restrains so far as they are authorized by the law of God and morality?

Government must decide for itself what God and good morals authorize it to do. Is it said that it may go only so far as necessity or the common good requires? Again we answer that it must judge for itself what this necessity and this common good demands. And this is precisely the point to which both we of Massachusetts and our fellow citizens of the Slave holding States have come. We had Slaves in Massachusetts, and we determined that in our condition and circumstances, the just principles of morality and the common good demanded of us to give them freedom. It was done. Our Southern brethren would, we doubt not, most gladly find themselves in a condition to do the same thing. They are surrounded and filled up by this same population. It has entered into all their connections. It has continued for centuries. It is not the scaffolding but the very foundation stones of their society. They consider that the colored race has not at present a disposition for voluntary labor nor a capacity for freedom; that their ill regulated passions would make it a curse to them instead of a blessing; that the two races could not live under one government; that an attempt to change the condition of the servile class, would produce war and bloodshed, dissoluteness, poverty and ruin; they therefore determine that morality and the common good demand of them not to give them freedom. It is therefore not done. They consider themselves entitled to decide this grave question, and they deny that the power of a sovereign

State over its subjects can be rightfully controlled. For the exercise of their duty in this respect, they hold themselves responsible only to God.

If the facts are admitted, the decision they have made must be deemed proper. If the consequences of Abolition would be the extinction of one or the other race, who would propose it? Even our author admits that "bad as Slavery is, Massacre would be far worse."

The right to decide is with them, morally and politically,—and the correctness of their decision must be determined by the true state of the facts and a correct estimate of probable consequences.

Dr. C. yields the whole argument, not unadvisedly we presume, when he says "The Legislature may place the colored race under guardianship—may impose such restraints as the public order shall require, and may postpone the full enjoyment of personal liberty even to the next generation." p. 50.

Whence is their right to do this? The law of self-preservation gives the right. They may impose this restriction for a whole generation and defer for the life of a great majority of those, now in being, the unalienable and inestimable right of freedom, if they do truly and honestly believe this delay would promote the cause of humanity and the common good. Why may they not enforce private ownership on the same principles? If the Legislature has any right to exercise its discretion, by what is this right limited? Are the Abolitionists or their own intelligent men, laity

and clergy, statesmen and civilians and jurists, to decide on the extent of this discretion?

Slavery, let it be remembered is not the less wrong in principle because it is more or less severe in its operation. "The hostility is to the system, not primarily on the physical agonies it inflicts, but on its flagrant injustice and the misery necessarily involved in a system of wrong." p. 31.

If therefore there is no right in the South to establish Slavery there is no right to "postpone the full enjoyment of liberty." The reasons that would justify the one, would in a certain condition of things justify the other. With this ethereal doctrine of right expediency has no connection. To postpone the enjoyment of a right, is to do a great wrong;—to do it for a generation, is to keep the present one in Slavery for life. If the system is against the law of God under all possible circumstances then Dr. C.'s proposition involves an act of injustice and sin. If there are any circumstances under which the system may be right, then the government of the country must be the exclusive judge whether such circumstances do or do not exist.

We come then to this result, that power over and property in the lives, liberty and estate of its own citizens is to some extent possessed by every constituted government, and that by virtue of this power all governments do dispose of the life, the liberty and the property of their citizens. That the danger of an unreasonable exercise of this power is guarded against

by constitutions of government and fundamental laws, which limit the power in the hands of those who exercise it. That there is no danger of an abuse of this right when the people are sovereign as they are with us, because under our free constitutions the legislative and executive departments cannot carry the exercise of this power beyond the exigency of the case; but of this exigency the people of the country or the government of the country, the supreme power in the last resort, must be the exclusive judge.

Such judgment decides under these circumstances what is the moral right and the necessity of the case. We can reverse it only by appealing downward from the mass to the individual, and obtaining a counter judgment by the minority.

We are particularly desirous on this point not to be misunderstood. We do not assert that the judgment of the government of a country can make an action morally right or wrong at its pleasure. Every action is morally right or wrong as it conforms to the will of heaven. But we maintain that the government is a better interpreter of that will than any individual citizen, and that it is safer to be governed by the will of the government, in such cases, than by that of an individual citizen. There will be eminent men on both sides of the question. The true Pope only is infallible—Protestant Popes claim to be, but cannot maintain their assumption.

By government, it is to be understood, we mean, not

the agents of the people, but the people themselves. It is their decree to which we submit.—

VOX POPULI VOX DEI.

Suppose the contrary theory is true. Look at it. Moral law in no condition of things gives man a property in human beings.

Human law can in no condition of things establish property in human beings.

Then there is no such property in the master of Slaves.

But he exercises the power of ownership.

This is power without right. Power without right authorizes resistance to any extent necessary to remove it.

Private assassination and open murder are among the means necessary to remove it.

But private assassination and open murder are not means enough.

Insurrection and servile war are necessary for this purpose.

Insurrection and war are therefore lawful.

Hence in the pursuit of an abstract right war and all the crimes it occasions are made the lawful ministers of Abolition.

We come now to the second answer which is

That giving freedom to Slaves would not destroy the property of their masters. This is maintained by a process of such ingenious fallacy that we shall not spare the time and space to refute it.

Then it is said that if this be property, the destruction of it would be no reason against Abolition. This is another of those charitable, humane and magnificent theories, which speculative philosophers indulge in and cherish, as we suppose, for its utility. In the present condition of things there is a certain amount of human happiness and human suffering. Whether it would be more or less after the new process should have had its perfect work, we may perhaps learn from the example of St. Domingo.

Let us proceed now to consider very briefly the answer to the third objection to Emancipation before we proceed to the one preceding it.

Mr. Clay tells us "that Emancipation will stir up the two races to a war which nothing but the Slavery or extermination of one or the other will end."

We remark here that this is a perfectly sufficient objection if it be founded in truth, and of course its truth is denied by Dr. Channing.

Secondly, we remark that a decision of it is strictly within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Slave States.

Third, that if they believe it to be true—whether it be true or not—which ultimate fact can only be known on an experiment, they are justified in not making the experiment.

Fourth, that all that we of the North can lawfully do, is to inquire whether they do believe this assertion to be true, or whether they put it forth colorably as a pretence to mask their own cupidity and deceive the world.

This inquiry is undoubtedly open to us. The civilized world sets in judgment on the actions and motives of States and men, and will not permit a grievous wrong under a false assumption of pretended causes of justification.

Of the enormous evils of Slavery no stronger opinion can be entertained any where than in the States where it is established. But he is a poor moralist who contents himself with displaying the miseries of Slavery or war. Abolition has its evils too, and so has peace. It would not puzzle an ingenious man to make a beautiful lecture on the disasters produced by gravitation.

Emancipation is unquestionably the duty of the Southern governments unless it will in their judgment occasion vastly more evil than good.

Now, as we have before said, it is not within our plan to argue this question over again, but to place the true points of the controversy in the possession of our readers. We believe in the honesty of the Slaveholders when they tell us that two castes cannot live under one government on terms of equality. We believe the fact that Abolition is but another name for Massacre.

We have read the "six months tour,"—which some Abolition friend was kind enough to send us—and we come to conclusions of a very painful kind. It is yet to be seen whether Antigua, Barbadoes and Jamaica are not to be like St. Domingo. We are yet to learn whether the white man is to be expelled

from his plantation, and the islands themselves become mere sand banks on the ocean, desolate and deserted, or inhabited only by pirates. They who look at the Negro as he is, despoiled by Slavery of the spirit of a man, see only a crouching, abject, miserable coward. But let liberty do her work and his nature revives. "Is he not a man and a brother?" He will then raise not chained hands, but wield with brawny limbs and heart of steel the sword and the dagger with all the ferocity of deep revenge. Even now, under his present degradation insurrection is constantly apprehended, and well it may be, for it is prevented by nothing but force.

Mr. Clay is of this opinion. Dr. Channing takes the opposite side. In a comparison of the means of information possessed by these distinguished gentlemen we might suppose indeed that the greater sources were open to Mr. Clay. It would seem too that he was likely to have as much firmness as common men, and not to indulge in imaginary fears. But Dr. Channing has heard "of the fears of the brave," and he treats all these apprehensions as chimerical. Either because of his ignorance of the danger or the stoutness of his nerves he is much more courageous than his opponent. He has been in the Slave States too and has learned nothing of the danger of his white fellow beings. It is doubtful if he wished to.

Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.

In his long residence among Slaves he says he has

used fewer precautions than at home. But he does not discriminate between individual and general danger, between private assassination and combinations for insurrection and slaughter. Here we guard against the solitary robber and are comparatively safe from the outbreak of an organized clan. But it is enough for us to put one Abolitionist against another.

“I say then with a heart filled with awe and solemnity that a wide-spread and merciless conspiracy on the part of the Slave population is to be regarded among the probable occurrences of every day.” Garrison’s Oration 4th July, 1830.—p. 24.*

For a copy of this oration we acknowledge our obligation to some unknown hand.

But it is asked if this be so “why are they anxious to fill their houses and plantations and surround their wives and children with assassins?” “Why not feel grateful to the Abolitionists who would free them from the curse.”

These questions are proposed in more simplicity than we should expect from a person who had opportunity of “long residences among Slaves.” We had Keocuck and Black Hawk and a collection of Indians making a residence among us last summer, and our women and children can testify that an Indian war-hoop is harmless music, an Indian war dance only a

* The same idea is contained in the Report of a Committee of Congress on Slavery of which Mr. Pinckney of South Carolina was chairman in May, 1836.

stupid exhibition, and Indian warriors decorated with scalps and carrying off rifles and war knives from the arsenal of Massachusetts, peaceful inhabitants from the fork of two mighty rivers! As to gratitude to Abolitionists, it will be felt when it is discovered that they cease to do what they can, and all they can, to produce the only effect, which their speeches, their writing, their societies ever can produce, a general insurrection and the "unutterable horrors of a servile war."

We hear this very lightly spoken of in the Abolition writings. They always express little alarm and great courage on the subject of insurrection and massacre.

"You speak as if the thing would please you!

"By heaven it would."

The letter writer describes the Slave "as so degraded that the strongest sensibilities of his nature cannot sting him to do for his children what the hen does for her chicken or the trembling hare does for her young," and he comments on a speech made not long ago in Boston in which he says "the Slaves were compared to wild beasts thirsting for blood."

Dr. Channing heard that speech, for he left his pulpit to mingle in the crowd of a caucus. He ought therefore to know that his representation of it is incorrect. No such comparison was made.

The speaker was endeavoring to illustrate the fears of our fellow citizens in the Slave States, as excited

by the conduct of Abolitionists, and he said their fears were what ours would be if a man was about to let loose a menagerie of wild beasts upon the population in our streets. The distinction is too broad to escape the observation of Dr. C., but in the true spirit of the party to which he does not belong he has conveyed a wrong impression of the idea of the speaker.*

But does not Dr. C. perceive that if his own representation is correct, he and the Abolitionists are doing all they can to change these hens and hares into a wilderness of tigers.

The Slave as he has known him, is not a being to be feared. Undoubtedly this is true. He has known him a debased, humiliated, crouching, humbled, suffering man. He has seen only the Slave. Let him see him when the spirit of hope, of liberty, of emancipation shall wake up the dormant passions of his soul, and if then he can ridicule the fears of our

*The speech has been carped at by the Abolition press and pictures appended to their publications to show the horror of comparing Slaves to wild beasts. The criticism is in as bad taste as it is false in its allegation, for if the alleged fact was true, what is it but a translation of the thought of the Roman Poet.

———Inde lupi ceu

Raptores, atra in nebula, quos improba ventris

Exegit cæcos rabies, catulique relictæ

Faucibus exspectant siccis, per tela, per hostes

Vadimus haud dubiam in mortem.—

Virgil thought it no harm to make Æneas compare himself and his Trojans to wild beasts.

Southern friends or the expressions of them by a Northern speaker in Faneuil Hall, he may lay what claim he can to the character of a philanthropist and a christian.

We are brought by this train of argument to the following conclusions.

The question of Abolition belongs to the people of the Slave holding States.

They are bound to exercise a sound and honest judgment under the actual condition and circumstances of their country.

If they have good reason to believe, and do in fact believe that Abolition would stir up the two races to a war, which would end in the Slavery or extermination of one or the other, they stand justified before God, and are entitled to the support of all good men, in maintaining their institutions.

Be it remembered forever that our Southern brethren of the present day are not answerable for the present condition of things. The mother country entailed upon them this curse for their inheritance.

We now come to the disgusting subject of Amalgamation, for which we have but brief space.

Mr. Clay thinks it would be the consequence of Abolition. Dr. C. sneers at the objection. Whether he doubts the fact, or believes that amalgamation would be no great harm does not distinctly appear.

“What a strange reason”—says our letter-writer somewhat quaintly—“for oppressing a race of fellow

beings that if we restore them to their rights we shall marry them.”

But it would be done.

What prevents it now? The law is against it. Sentiment, opinion, prejudice, call it what you will, is against it. All these the Abolitionists will break down. We have great instruction on this point from the West Indies.

“The Governor of Antigua remarked to us”—says the six months tour—“that the first thing to be done in our country towards the removal of Slavery, was to discard the absurd notion that color made any difference intellectually or morally among men. All distinctions, said he, founded in color, must be abolished every where. We should learn to talk of men not as colored men, but as MEN, as fellow citizens and fellow subjects.”—p. 13.

It is stated as the result of Abolition in that island, that emancipation has been followed by a “manifest diminution of prejudice against color, and has opened the prospect of its speedy extirpation.”—p. 51.

Again in Jamaica. “The prejudices against color are rapidly vanishing. I do not think there is a respectable man who would impugne another’s conduct for associating with people of color.”—p. 51.

In Barbadoes it is admitted “that this cruel feeling still exists. Prejudice is the last viper of the Slavery gendered brood that dies. But it is evidently growing weaker.”—p. 70.

The scenes, which are exhibited, are in accordance with this abolition of prejudice.

“Among other things which we witnessed, we shall not soon forget having seen a curly headed negro lad examining a class of white young ladies in scientific history.”—p. 87.

“We had the pleasure of being present at the sitting of the Police Court of Kingston. Mr. Jordan the editor of the Watchman, in his turn as a member of the Common Council, was presiding Justice, with an *Alderman of the City, a black man*, as his associate.”—p. 90.

The lawyer, who would practice before a negro Judge, would marry his daughter.

But why go abroad for examples. In the present low, degraded and servile condition of the colored ladies and gentlemen, there are whites petitioning the legislature of Massachusetts for leave to marry them.

Give them a social equality, and the purity of the Anglo Saxon blood will be permanently contaminated.

We oppose all this, not from prejudice but judgment. In our opinion it will debase the white race and do no good to the black. It will carry back civilization, degrade us in the eyes of mankind, and humble us in our own.

If it could elevate the black race, it would be at the expense of the white. We do not agree to produce this result. We go for our own race, as Lord Grey went for his “order,” because we believe the happiness of the whole people—the only practicable

and useful benevolence we understand—depends on the social condition, the purity, elevation and good morals of the great majority.

We do not call it prejudice. Distinction between the races has sound wisdom for its basis.

The negro is different from the white man, not in color only, but in features, hair, arterial and anatomical formation, some animal functions, and whatever there is in the instincts of physical nature.

If God has made of one blood all nations of the earth, he has made them of different skins and skulls, complexions and physical character.

He intended to mark them, that they might be kept separate. They will stand at the last day equal candidates for his mercy, but he has appointed to them different paths to travel, before they shall be called before his throne. We have nothing to do now with the question about equality. We say only that they are different. Between the black and the white races a mark is placed for perpetual distinction, and he who dares to break it down, he who gives the sanction of the marriage connection between the two races, comes under the spirit of a curse,* denounced by the lawgiver of Jerusalem and “all the people shall say amen.”

*Deuteronomy, ch. 27, v. 21.

We have concluded our Review of Dr. C.'s book. To prevent misconception we take leave to add that we wholly dissent from Mr. Clay's doctrine in regard to the power of Congress. In our judgment Congress has authority under the Constitution to abolish Slavery in the District of Columbia, and it will be its duty to exercise this authority whenever it can be done safely and prudently. We wholly dissent from the course taken by Congress in respect to the petitions. We hold it to be a violation of our constitutional rights. We think it is injurious also to the South. If our voice could have any influence we would insist that our Southern friends should rescind these resolutions. Let them meet the question and give to it the best answer they can. Their course makes up a false issue to the country, and invigorates Abolition. They may depend upon it that they cannot maintain any institution by force, which they cannot sustain by argument and reason, under the circumstances in which they are placed.

We add in justice to our own feelings that we look on Slavery as the great curse of the Country; as an institution that is fraught with incalculable evils threatening confusion, disunion and destruction. We are acquainted with no terms that are too strong to express our feelings in reprobation of it. But we speak of it more in sorrow than in anger, because we see no practicable way to remove it, without putting fire to a magazine of gunpowder and bringing it to a fearful end by one tremendous explosion.

We had intended to have amused ourselves and our readers by exhibiting some specimens of that Narcissus-like love of its own fancied charms, which appears so complacently in this letter, and to have presented for examination some of those literary beauties which the admirers of our author find thickly scattered through his works. But we have extended our remarks far enough and must borrow what remains from a paper ascribed to Lord Brougham.

It is to be found in the *Edinburgh Review* for April, 1839, in remarks on Dr. Channing's character of John Milton, with the very appropriate running title of "*false taste.*"

"His opinions"—says the *Edinburgh* critic speaking of Dr. Channing's works—"indicate a very defective taste and show that in his own practice of writing he goes wrong on a false theory, and in pursuit of the striking—the grand—the uncommon."

"Men of some note and whose names have risen into fame beyond their real merits, may contaminate the taste both by laying down false rules of criticism, which the weight of their authority has a tendency to enforce, and by themselves forming their writings on a false model of criticism. It appears to us that Dr. Channing has succeeded in both these ways on the present occasion."

"In every page we trace its evil influence in most careless thinking and most careless diction, a constant mistaking of strange things for strong ones—a perpetual striving for some half brought out notion of

which the mind has never formed to itself any distinct picture—a substitution of the glare of words for harmonious ideas, and we are sorry to add, that worst vice of bad writers, the assuming to use words in a sense peculiar to themselves, partly in order to strike by novelty, and partly in order to save the pains of more legitimate and correct composition.”

These are the Edinburgh Reviewers remarks on Dr. Channing's general style. We had not seen them when we were writing our own commentary on his letter, which contains abundant illustration of all the characteristics thus appropriately noticed.

ERRATA.

Page 5, for conform read conforms.

19, for manifestedly read manifestly.

51, for sequiter read sequitur.

58, for decisive read *denied*.

The punctuation of the sentence should be altered so as to read, as it is inseparable from government, the right of imposing it is not denied, by practical and intelligent men.





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