Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

DESPOTISM IN AMERICA;

OR

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND RESULTS

OF THE

SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM

IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ARCHY MOORE."

BOSTON:
WHIPPLE AND DAMRELL.

1840.

STEREOTYPED BY GEO. A. AND J. CURTIS,
NEW-ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY.

"The impression which has gone abroad of the weakness of the South, as connected with the slave-question, exposes us to such constant attacks, has done us so much injury, and is calculated to produce such infinite mischiefs, that I embrace the occasion presented by the remarks of the gentleman from Massachusetts, to declare *that we are ready to meet the question promptly and fearlessly. It is one from which we are not disposed to shrink*, IN WHATEVER FORM, OR UNDER WHATEVER CIRCUMSTANCES IT MAY BE PRESSED UPON US. *We are ready to make up the issue as to the influence of slavery on individual and national character—on the prosperity and greatness either of the United States, or particular States.* Sir, when arraigned at the bar of public opinion, on this charge of slavery, we can stand up with conscious rectitude, plead not guilty, and put ourselves upon God and our country."—*Speech of* ROBERT Y. HAYNE, *of South Carolina, in reply to Mr. Webster, delivered in the Senate of the United States, Jan.* 21, 1830.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER THIRD.

ECONOMICAL RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

PERSONAL RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM.

INTRODUCTION.

It has been said, and is often repeated, that the United States of America are trying a great social experiment, upon the result of which hangs the future fate not of America only, but to a certain extent, of all mankind.

The consequences likely to flow from the success or failure of this experiment, are doubtless exaggerated; for those universal laws which regulate the feelings and the actions of men, will ultimately produce their necessary effects, in spite of narrow systems of policy and morals, founded upon the success or failure of any single experiment.

But whatever we may think of its probable consequences, however fancy may magnify, or reason may diminish them, the experiment itself, is a great one. It is in fact far more complicated and more critical, and therefore greater and more interesting, than it is commonly represented.

The American experiment is usually described, as purely an experiment of democracy; an attempt to establish a perfect equality of political rights; an essay towards the equal distribution among all the members of the community, of freedom, property, knowledge, social advantages, and those other good things which make up the mass of human happiness. And this experiment—as we are assured by every writer, native, or foreign, who has touched upon the subject, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the country, is carried on to the greatest possible advan-

tage, not being compelled to encounter a multitude of hostile influences, by which such an undertaking, any where else, would be most vigorously opposed.

This is not a true representation of the case. If in certain parts of the American Union, the experiment of Democracy be steadily and quietly pursued, and with an influence and a feeling in its favor which have at length become predominant, in certain other parts of the country, it is quite overshadowed, and is reduced to creep pale and sickly on the ground, by another experiment, less talked about, less celebrated, but not the less real or important, to wit, the *experiment of Despotism.*

The Northern States of the Union are unquestionable Democracies, and every day they are verging nearer and nearer towards the simple idea and theoretic perfection of that form of government. The Southern States of the Union, though certain democratic principles are to be found in their constitutions and their laws, are in no modern sense of the word entitled to the appellation of Democracies: They are Aristocracies; and aristocracies of the sternest and most odious kind. Property, and all the rights, advantages and enjoyments which the laws bestow, are limited to certain families and their descendants. Certain other families and their offspring, to the latest generation, are not only deprived of all political privileges and social advantages, but they are the hereditary subjects, servants, bondsmen of the privileged class. Every man of the privileged order who is possessed of any property at all, is apt to own at least one slave; if he is rich, he may own a thousand; but whether one or a thousand, of those he does own, the laws create him with but a single slight, and in fact merely nominal exception, the absolute master, lord and despot. In their relation towards each other, the members of the privileged class are nominally equal; and in that aspect, it may happen that the lord of a plantation and five hundred slaves, shall be a great stickler for liberty and equality. But the liberty and

equality for which he contends, is wholly confined to the privileged order; and the total subjection and eternal servitude of the unprivileged class, is considered a matter of course, a first principle, a fixed and established ordinance, as inevitable and as incapable of alteration, as the laws of nature.

It is evident then, how complicated is the American experiment. If the democratical part of it, has hitherto been pursued in silence and quiet, and with such apparent success, that the admirers of Democracy have been ready to cry out, that the problem is already solved;—that quiet and silence have been merely accidental; that success has been only a progress which was comparatively speaking, but slightly opposed; and it is but now that Democracy and Despotism face to face, like Gabriel and the Arch-enemy, make ready for a desperate and dreadful struggle. The preparation, the courage, the arms, the loftiness of soul were not on the part of the "angelic squadron" alone:—

> —— On t' other side, Satan alarm'd
> Collecting all his might, dilated stood
> Like Teneriffe, or Atlas, unremoved
> His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
> Sat horror plum' d; nor wanted in his grasp
> What *seem'd* both spear and shield.—

The struggle that impends is of a nature to shake the country to the centre, and to end, if we believe the prophecies of our southern friends, in civil commotions, infuriated hostilities, and savage war.

So it may be. The event is in their power. Let them be wise in time. The balance of justice is stretched across the sky,—and is it not their scale that kicks the beam? Let them look up and read their lot in that celestial sign, and know themselves, how light, how weak, if they resist. Even the arch-fiend cared not to struggle against inevitable fate, and fled a strife in which he could but suffer.

That heterogeneous mixture of aristocracies and

democracies, which makes up the American Union; that strange compound of liberty and despotism, which pervades the laws of so many of the States, and lurks demurely, in the federal constitution; such hostile and repulsive elements having been so long quietly in contact without producing an explosion, it has thence been argued, and believed, that they might always remain so. But those who reason thus, have not well considered the history of the American States, nor the kind of progress which Democracy has hitherto made.

The dispute which severed the colonies from Great Britain, gave rise to constitutions in the northern States of the confederacy, which acknowledged to a greater or less degree, the leading principles of liberty and equality; principles which before hardly had an existence, except in the speculations of a few political theorists. In no part of the country, were the fundamental theorems of this modern system of policy, more generally received or more warmly maintained, than in the New England States, where the equal distribution of property seemed to open the way for the easy introduction of a purely democratical system.

But property is not the only source of political power. From the earliest settlement of those States, the Clergy had always exercised a predominant influence. They formed a distinct order, acting together with decision and promptitude, and monopolizing all the learning and no small share of the active talent of the community. The mass of the people, though all could read,—an inestimable accomplishment, and under favorable circumstances, capable in itself of becoming the foundation of the most liberal knowledge,—were yet extremely ignorant; for they had no book but the bible, and for the most part they relied upon their religious teachers with a submissive and superstitious dependance, for such expositions of its contents as they saw fit to give. In this state of the case, the power which the clergy exercised was very great. It was however for the most part a moral power, a power not over the bodies, but over the minds of men, and of

course, it was least felt by those who yielded to it the most implicit submission. Some harsh acts of persecution and punishment, were occasionally dealt out to such insubordinate persons, as were bold enough to think for themselves, or to question the infallible and divine authority of the "standing order." But in general, that veneration which the "ministers" claimed, was spontaneously yielded, and the power thus conferred was judiciously fortified by being shared with such of the laymen as most excelled in shrewdness, ambition, and spiritual gifts.

The Revolution, and those questions of constitutional law to which it gave rise, and more yet, those extensive and iniquitous fluctuations of property which the paper money system produced, raised into consequence another body of men, superior to the clergy in active talent; almost their equals in learning; and if they were not regarded with the same affectionate awe, yet both feared and respected by the people. These were the Lawyers.

This new order did not hazard its influence nor waste its strength in a struggle for power, with the clergy. On the contrary, the clergy and the lawyers soon formed an intimate union; and though these latter were sometimes a little wanting in respect for the theological dogmas, and the austere morality of their allies, these deficiencies of faith and practice were more than made up for, by the zeal and subtlety with which they defended the legal privileges of the clergy, and labored to uphold their influence and authority.

This double hierarchy of law and divinity, long maintained a predominating influence over the yeomanry of New England. Bred up on their farms in the simplest way, and with a deep reverence for religion and the law, a reverence easily and naturally transferred to the clergy and the lawyers; depending upon the pulpit for their weekly supply of knowledge and opinions, or if they read a newspaper,—and American newspapers in those times were but small

affairs—choosing such an one as the minister recommended; the Legislature filled with lawyers, whose superior information, eloquence and adroitness, put every thing in their power; the judges, secure in the tenure of their office, and the profound respect with which it was regarded, contributing by their decisions, to uphold a system of which they formed a part; thus beset, hemmed in, controlled and over-awed, all the weaker spirits and more submissive tempers, that is to say, the mass of the community, cowered and submitted to a power, so boldly claimed, so vigorously enforced, and exercised on the part of those who held it, with a serious and sincere belief that superior knowledge, virtue and capacity, justly entitled them to pre-eminent authority.

But notwithstanding this moral oligarchy to which New England was subjected, the spirit of democracy had nestled in the bosoms of her people; and cherished by degrees into energy and strength, it presently began to plume its wings, and to make ready for asserting its just dominion.

The history of the contest in New England, between Democracy on the one hand, and the priestly and legal alliance on the other, has never yet been written. It is not adorned with any of those palpable acts, those scenes of devastation and slaughter, which have hitherto formed the chief topics of historic narration; and though a most violent and bitter struggle, so little has it attracted the attention of political writers, that the progress of American Democracy, thus far, has been generally described as quiet, silent and almost unresisted.

To one, who from the the array of the combatants, had divined the probable termination of the conflict, the speedy discomfiture of the democratical party would have appeared inevitable. Behind the legal and clerical champions who proudly led the van of the opposing forces, there followed a goodly host, including by far the most respectable, and apparently the most worthy portions of society. The wealthy, almost to

a man, enlisted in behalf of the established order of things, which having made them rich, in their estimation, could not but be good. Besides, their wealth enabled them to purchase by gifts to pious uses, and without any special personal merit, high seats in the synagogue; and sufficed to enrol them in the list of "gentlemen," with whom the ministers and the lawyers were accustomed to share their authority. Next followed the great mass of the religiously disposed; for it requires an unusual degree of discernment and decision, to escape from the influences of education and habit, and to distinguish between a reverence for religion, and a blind submission to spiritual guides. The literature of the country, such as it was, naturally appeared on the side of those who were its principal patrons; and crowding in the rear, came the young talent and ambition of the times, anxious to sustain a system, which seemed to offer a rightful preeminence to talent, and to ambition a station above the vulgar level.

The array upon the other side, was contemptible in comparison. Some leaders there were, "sons of liberty," who had been nursed in the cradle of the revolution, whose character, whose honor, whose patriotism was unquestionable, and upon whose clear reputation not all the outrageous calumny of their opponents could fix the shadow of a stain. And there were some followers too, who seemed to love democracy for itself; men enamoured of the idea of equality, who sought no private advantage, but only the public good. But these, whether leaders or followers, were comparatively few. The mass of the party seemed made up like the band of David, when he rose in rebellion against the Lord's anointed;—all who were in debt, all who were in distress, all who were discontented, enlisted beneath this banner; and to believe the account of their opponents, not the tatterdemalions of Falstaff's enlistment were more idle, vicious, dishonest and dangerous.

The truth is, that so stern, severe, active and influ-

ential, was the authority which the allied hierarchy exercised, that few men who had property, standing, character, friends, to lose, cared to risk the consequences of those bulls of excommunication which were fulminated from the pulpit and the press, and those torrents of calumny, denunciation, and abuse, poured forth by a thousand fluent tongues, against whomsoever deserted the ark of the covenant, and allied himself to the uncircumcised Philistines.

The democratic party were not wanting in efforts to enlist the powerful aid of religion upon their side. They made friends with the Baptists and other dissenters from the established creed, who cherished an hereditary hatred toward the congregational priesthood, and who were struggling to escape from the legal disabilities with which their heresies still continued to be visited. These clerical allies, in imitation of their opponents, mingled religion with politics, and sought to turn the excited feelings of their hearers, into political channels. They were denounced by the regular order, as hedge-priests, sectarians, wild enthusiasts, puffed up with a ridiculous over-estimate of their spiritual endowments, ignorant, turbulent, bad men, who in attempting to overturn the platform on which was raised the sober edifice of congregationalism, sought to destroy the foundations of society, and to mix up all things in chaotic confusion.

In this situation of affairs, democratical principles were still enabled to gain the ascendency in New England, and to become the prevailing creed, by the joint effect of two separate causes, each of which was perhaps potent enough in itself to have ensured the victory.

Though the professors of these principles were proscribed by the New England oligarchy, declared destitute of any claims to attention or indulgence, represented as wild political fanatics, the disciples of Robespierre, desirous to abolish religion, and to root up morals, to destroy the natural instincts of humanity, and to sprinkle the land with fire and blood; they found encourage-

ment, support and aid, where there was the least reason to expect it, to wit, at the hands of the southern slave-holders. Who could have anticipated that the apostle of American democracy should himself have been an aristocrat and a despot! Yet so it was. Jefferson, is revered, and justly, as the earliest, ablest, boldest and most far-going of those who became the expounders and advocates of the democratical system in America. Most of the others, whether leaders or followers, seemed driven on by a blind instinct. They felt, but did not reason. Jefferson based his political opinions upon general principles of human nature. Men were supposed, in other systems of politics, to be helpless, blind, incapable children, unfit to take care of themselves, and certain, if the experiment were tried, to do themselves presently some dreadful and irreparable harm. Jefferson argued, that however weak and blind men might be, yet their own strength and eye-sight were still their surest hope, and best dependance. If aid were elsewhere sought, whence could it come? These guides, these guardians, these governors, who are they? Are they not men, weak and blind? Worse yet, men ready to betray the confidence placed in them, and under pretence of protection, themselves to plunder and oppress? It is therefore better to make each man, blind and weak though he be, the chief guardian of his own welfare. Subject no man to the arbitrary control of another, who if he may be wiser and better, may just as likely, be blinder and be worse. Such necessary rules of social conduct as the judgment of the majority shall approve, let them be laws, so long as that judgment continues to approve them; and let the laws govern, and the laws alone.

Such was the political creed of Jefferson. It is the creed of democracy; and he espoused it with a warm, an active, almost a fanatic zeal. The perfect political equality of all men; the absolute right of every man to be guided by his own pleasure and judgment, so long as he transgresses no law, and his equal claim to a fair participation in the enactment and repeal of

every law; these were the very fundamental principles of this political system. Yet Jefferson remained all his life the tyrant of a plantation, in the enforcement of an usurped authority, either personally, or by his delegate, which he himself describes, as "a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions,—the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submission on the other." Ah Truth! 'Tis thee alone that men should reverence! Do they reverence men, it is an idolatry as base as if they bowed to stocks and stones. Men *are* blind and weak, the wisest and the best! But Truth,—it is unblemished, in itself complete, divine, pure, perfect!

Had Jefferson attempted to preach the full extent of his doctrines in his native state, he would doubtless have drawn down upon his head a storm of hatred and reproach, not rashly to have been encountered, nor easily to have been withstood. But that was an adventure of difficulty and peril, which he felt no call to undertake. Like Henry and Washington, and those other great men whose devoted patriotism and many virtues would make us willingly forget that on their own estates they were tyrants,—though he acknowledged the trampled rights and crying wrongs of the disenfranchised half of his fellow countrymen, he yet despaired to make any impression upon the ignorance, the prejudices, the blind and narrow self-interest of the privileged class, and he contented himself with now and then a protest against a system of tyrannical usurpation, which carried away by custom and convenience, he still continued to uphold through the support of his own example.

The democracy which he preached at home, was democracy among the aristocrats;—and the perfect equality of all the members of the privileged order, has ever been a popular doctrine in all aristocracies. The "love of liberty" is a phrase under which are included two feelings of a very distinct, and sometimes of an opposite kind. Each individual is always the ardent and zealous champion of his own liberty, be-

cause the hatred of all extraneous control, the desire to be solely governed by the free impulses of his own mind, is a part of the constitution of human nature too essential ever to be wanting. Hence it is that we find kings and emperors among the champions of liberty and equal rights, by which *they* understand, the liberty of governing their own realms without foreign control, and the absolute equality of all crowned heads. Have we not seen the Austrian and Russian despots, leaguing with the king of Prussia and the haughty aristocracy of England to vindicate the *liberties* of Europe against the usurpation and tyrannies of a Bonaparte? When the chains threatened to bind *them*, when they were like to be compelled to bow their necks beneath the yoke of a master, who more sensitive than they to the degradations of servitude? Who more zealous, more earnest, more sincere in liberty's cause? Alexander of Russia turned a demagogue, and the princes of Germany harangued their subjects, not in the dry and austere style of absolute authority, but with the supplicating tone, the humble and insinuating eloquence, the flattery and fair promises, with which ambitious men, in popular states, seek to inveigle the popular favor.

This passion for personal liberty burns fiercely in the soul of every human being, and no where fiercer than in the hearts of an aristocracy bred to its possession, and who have learned to estimate its value by having constantly before their eyes the terrible contrast of servitude.

But the "love of liberty" has also another meaning. It describes a passion not for individual freedom, but for the freedom of all men; a wide, expansive feeling, the offspring of benevolence, the height of philanthropy, the extension to others of that which we find best and most desirable for ourselves; its extension not only to those to whom we are bound by familiar ties of interest and sympathy, our friends and kindred, or those whom however otherwise unconnected with us, we still assimilate to ourselves by

some real or fanciful analogies; but absolutely, its extension to all men,—the love of freedom wherever, by whomsoever, exercised, as an abstract good.

It is evident that the love of liberty in this high sense, can shine out in perfection only from hearts the warmest, souls the most cultivated, minds the most lofty, unclouded and serene. But fragments of it, sparks from this celestial flame, sometimes but dim, the smallest atom almost, and that too buried, and quite smothered amid the ashes of selfish passions,—yet dim or bright, smothered or burning clear, this passion for universal freedom is still a part of human nature, but a part of it which lies dead and dark in uncultivated souls, and which only begins to kindle and to blaze, in the forward and quick feeling minds of a polished and reflecting age.

To this latter feeling, noble and refined, and which lurks, however invisible, even in the hearts of a slaveholding aristocracy, Jefferson did not dare to appeal. He was content to act the humble and comparatively inconsiderable part of a champion for equality among the aristocrats; and laboring to forget that the unprivileged class—some of whom, to believe the voice of common report, were his own children,—had any greater capacities or rights than beasts of burden, he curtailed the expansive and universal clauses of his political creed, till the mantle of liberty which should have extended its protection to every citizen, embraced within its torn and mutilated folds only the privileged order.

The oligarchical party in the southern aristocracies, the aristocracy, so to speak, of the privileged order, though they were richer and better educated than their neighbors of the common sort, had no such moral hold upon men's minds as the hierarchy of the north. The prejudices in favor of family and rank to which they were indebted for the general acknowledgment of their superiority, had been shaken by the revolution, and after a short and ineffectual resistance, the oligarchical party in Virginia and the Carolinas was

completely broken down by the vigorous assault which the Jeffersonians made upon them. Henceforward the most complete and democratical equality among all the members of the privileged class, became the settled and established creed of southern politics. But the Jeffersonian party, while it aimed at overturning the oligarchies of the southern states, aimed also at supremacy in the federal government; and the same victory which assured their ascendency at home, raised their leader to the presidential chair.

From that elevation, Jefferson stretched forth a helping hand to the struggling democrats of New England; and by means of the honors and offices within his gift, he enlisted into their cause divers mercenaries of courage and ability, who were seduced from the ranks of the hierarchy, and having taken pay at the hands of democracy, fought valiantly in her cause.

As the Jeffersonians continued for twenty-four years at the head of the federal government, and during all that time, consoled, comforted, aided and abetted the democrats of New England, the party began presently to grow somewhat more respectable; and as the advantages to be derived from belonging to it, became more and more numerous, converts were multiplied, and presently there might be numbered among them even some of the clergy and the lawyers.

It is evident that this process alone would at length have given to democratical principles a nominal, if not a practical ascendency. But as I have mentioned, there was another cause in operation, in itself sufficient to have ensured an ultimate, and a more substantial triumph. Notwithstanding the grand array of followers mustered by the hierarchy, there were many among them who at heart were traitors to the cause. They had been bred up in a horror of democracy, which they were taught to regard as the concentration of all possible evil, and to the repetition of certain dogmas containing the substance of the oligarchical creed. Yet insensibly they became democrats themselves; and the superior order, to maintain its

influence and preserve its ascendency, was soon obliged to descend to all those arts of popularity, which when practised by their opponents, they had denounced as fit only for demagogues.

The power of the priestly and legal hierarchy consisted in their monopoly of talent and education, and in a certain superstitious reverence with which they were regarded by the people. So long as these two sources of power continued in full operation, their credit could not be shaken, and their influence carried every thing before it. But with the progress of time, and the increasing wealth of the community, education became more general, books and periodicals were multiplied, and knowledge was disseminated. The oligarchical order lost their superiority in this respect, and with it, they lost the awe and veneration of the people. To complete their discomfiture, they quarrelled among themselves on certain points of theology; and as the dispute waxed warm, the parties to it became more intent upon destroying each other's influence, than upon maintaining their own.

Such was the end of the oligarchical rule in New England, of which some vestiges yet remain, but of which the life and spirit has departed. The political creed, generally and it may be said, universally, professed,—albeit the ancient regime has still many secret adherents,—is a purely democratic creed, and the struggle for influence and office between contending politicians, turns wholly upon the question, who among them are the best democrats, who are most devoted to the interests of the people?

Though the New England States formed that part of the Union which held out longest against the general reception of the democratic theory, yet the equal distribution of property, the more extensive diffusion of knowledge, and that feeling of personal independence and equality long cherished among the people, made them from the beginning, the best adapted of all the states, to enter fully into the spirit of democracy, and to display, in the most striking light, the advantages of

that form of government. Accordingly it may be said that the New England States, notwithstanding some gross defects in their political and social system, afford, at this moment, the most remarkable approach any where to be found, toward the theoretical perfection of ideal democracy.

But it was not in New England alone, that the progress of the democratical experiment met with opposition. The middle states—New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania,—at the era of the revolution, contained an oligarchy of rich land-holders, who assumed, and for some time retained, the exclusive political control of their respective communities. To this landed aristocracy the lawyers joined themselves, as also the clergy, whose influence though by no means equal to that of their brethren in New England, was far from contemptible. The yeomanry of those states were in general, rude and ignorant. As there was no system of public schools, many of them were unable to read; and if they were free from some of the prejudices of the New Englanders, they were far behind them, in knowledge, industry, self-respect, and that sensibility of mind and heart, which civilization produces.

If the members of the oligarchical party in these states, could have agreed among themselves, they might long have maintained their influence and authority. But presently they quarrelled, and divided into hostile and bitter factions. Certain persons among them, whether to secure the popular favor by putting themselves forward as the champions of popular rights, or some of them perhaps, sincere converts to the creed, soon declared themselves the patrons and champions of democracy; but as they had a powerful resistance to contend against at home, and opponents who, though discomfited, still kept the field, they were fain to yield the precedence to Jefferson and his southern supporters, and to be content with the second part, where they would gladly have claimed the first.

As to the states north-west of the Ohio, which are now beginning to occupy so conspicuous a place in the

Union, their origin is so recent, and their population has hitherto been so much engrossed with the cares and occupations incident to new settlements, that as yet, they have exercised but a limited influence upon the sentiment and opinions of the country. That influence however has been almost purely democratic, and from the very birth of those communities, democracy has always been their prevailing political creed.

These slight and imperfect historical sketches lead us to a fact of the greatest importance towards a correct understanding of the progress, present state, and future prospects of political opinion and political action, in America. Ever since the formation of the federal constitution, down almost to the present moment, strange as it may seem, the democratic party of the Union has been headed, guided, governed and controlled by certain slave-holding aristocrats of the south; —Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson have been successively, its leaders, and its idols.

Under Jefferson, theoretical democracy was a new thing; and it was embraced with all the warmth which novelty is apt to inspire. It formed a principal topic of public discussion; and was defended, if not always by sound reasonings and substantial arguments, yet with the enthusiastic zeal of sincere conviction.

But presently the public attention was diverted into other channels, and became engrossed by matters with which democracy had little or no connection. Under Madison, the great question was, whether the United States should resent and repel the insults and the wrongs heaped upon them by foreign powers, and if so, whether they should make war against the tyrant Bonaparte, or the English aristocracy. The democratic party was in general favorable to Bonaparte, for he was the child, and he had declared himself the heir, and had seized upon the inheritance of the French Revolution. But the very fact that they were led by irrational sympathies, and the ardor of political controversy, to wink at, to apologize for, and almost to defend, the violence and outrages of a mili-

tary usurper, was so contrary to their principles, and produced such a confusion of ideas, that the great doctrines of their creed dropped almost out of sight, and whether or not one was favorable to a war with Great Britain, presently became the test of political orthodoxy,—a test altogether aside from the fundamental principles of the democratical system.

Under Monroe, the great controversies of the day, respected the protection of American industry; a pure question of national economy, upon which people took sides, for the most part, not according to their political opinions, but according to the views they entertained of the effect which this protection would be likely to have upon their own private pecuniary interests.

During the administrations of Madison and Monroe though the democratic creed was predominant throughout the greater part of the country, and though during the interval, it achieved its final triumph in New England, yet beginning in those states where it had earliest prevailed, and extending gradually to the rest, it degenerated almost into a mere form of words without force or vitality.

This state of things is easily explained. The leaders of the democratic, as of all other political parties, were for the most part adventurers,—mere soldiers of fortune, who sought credit, honors, office, and power, by the zealous advocacy of principles which they saw to have many adherents, but for which they themselves felt no very devoted love, apart from the advancement to which they hoped these principles might help them. That advancement attained, the party triumphant, themselves in office, they looked with feelings of contempt upon the ladder by which they had ascended, they were even desirous to cast it down, lest perchance stronger men might climb up thereby, and thrust them from their places.

The mouths of the prophets being closed, the people wandered as sheep without a shepherd; and though the democratic creed was publicly professed

by all, there lurked in the hearts of many a cold indifference, a sneering scepticism, a silent disbelief.

With Monroe terminated the direct line of the Jeffersonian succession; and then began that struggle for the possession of the presidential chair, which has been so earnestly kept up for the last twelve or fourteen years. No one has had a larger share in that contest, than John C. Calhoun, a person likely to figure in history, for the instruction and amusement of mankind.

That able, but restless and unprincipled man, first came into public life as a leading democrat; but that was at a time when democracy in its current sense, meant little more than hostility to Great Britain. Coming from South Carolina as he did, it was but natural that he should be, as he was, a thorough aristocrat; and that not content with the mere supremacy of one race over another, he desired to concentrate all political power into the hands of a chosen few, of whom he himself should be the chief and leader.

But satisfied by the result of his earlier experiments, that the aristocratical party was not strong enough to bestow that power at which he aimed, and that even if it were, he would encounter on that side, some dangerous competitors; he turned short about, and recollecting the success of Jefferson, resolved to try a new means of advancement, and to summon up, from the slumbers of some sixteen years, the genius of Democracy, which he fondly hoped to be able to convert into the mere servant of his political schemes.

The magician was able, and the charm worked well. Dimly in the distance, hazy and indistinct, appeared a figure, whose broad proportions told that time and slumber had but increased its stature and its power. One foot upon the western prairies, the other amid the snowy hills of New England, it strode across the land. The people saw and worshipped. A new enthusiasm was kindled in their hearts. No-

thing could resist it. Those who put themselves forward as the priests, the favored, the chosen of this new avatar of democratical reform, were received with confidence, welcomed with acclamation, and entrusted with power. So far the thing worked well, and he who had called up this apparition of democracy, succeeded in installing, as its high-priest and chosen minister, a man who had been a slave-trader, a man who was a slave-holder, who preached liberty and equality at Washington, but who at home was the despot of the Hermitage!

His purposes thus far accomplished, he who had raised the spirit sought to lay it. But it defies his power. Among the crowd of hypocritical worshippers and blind devotees, there are found a few whose homage is at once enlightened and sincere. They look upon democracy not with a stupid gaze of admiration, unable to distinguish between the apparent and the real, but with a discernment, upon which the arts of political cunning will not easily impose. Democracy, in their estimation, is not a mere phantom by whose aid the credulous may be deluded, and offices and honors be secured to the deluders; it is a real existence, a substantial thing, a powerful and essential means of advancing the public welfare. It is to these adherents, that Democracy now entrusts herself. From being the nursling, the pupil, the instrument of Southern despotism, she is about to become a rival and an enemy. The allegiance she has so long yielded to Southern step-fathers, she will yield no longer. The alliance is broken; and conscious of superior power and higher claims, Democracy demands homage and submission, where hitherto she has paid them.

She prepares to act. She points in sorrow, shame and anger, to the capitol turned into a slave market; to the broad plains of the south, watered with the blood of their cultivators; and to the thousand petty despots, each arbitrary lord and irresponsible tyrant, upon his own plantation.

It is in vain that southern oppressors console themselves with ideas of the insignificance of those who make the first assault. They may ridicule them as fools, fanatics, women. What of that? Does the result of an attack depend upon the prudence, or the wisdom of those who have volunteered for the forlorn hope? What matter who or what they are, those who rush blindly and devotedly upon the open-mouthed cannon, the leveled bayonets of the enemy? They are but food for powder, and they know it. In every great cause it is necessary that some should perish. But if the cause be great, for one that falls, ten will be found ambitious so to suffer!

It is in vain we at the North, cry out that the contest is unseasonable and premature. It has begun; it must go on. Grant that over-zealous and fanatical haste has precipitated a struggle which we would gladly have deferred, and slumbering out our own time in quiet, have thrust upon the days of our children. No matter. In this thing we cannot have our way. The trumpet has sounded; the bold and unquiet are rushing to the field. We may cry peace, peace,—but there is no peace. Fight we must, upon one side or the other. The contest is begun already, and will soon become general. In such a struggle there can be no neutrality. It is time to be choosing under which banner we will stand!

To every one at the North, Democracy is to some extent familiar. Many have doubtless viewed it through a deceptive medium, and have seen it only as it has been reflected by ignorance, or distorted by prejudice; all however have formed some opinion about it, and that opinion is founded upon knowledge either actual or imaginary. But Despotism, the despotism of the slave states, is a thing known at the north only by name, and in general. Few have seen it; fewer still have studied it; and the greater part are totally ignorant of its real character.

Before enlisting, it is well to know the cause in which we are to serve. It is the purpose of the fol-

lowing pages to exhibit the system of social polity established in the southern states, such as it is in its operation and effects; not in particular and accidental instances, but generally, and by virtue of those laws of human nature upon which the working of social and political institutions must depend.

This inquiry is necessary for our own satisfaction. Without making it, how can we act either reasonably or safely? Here is a question with two sides to it, and one side or the other, we must take. How can we choose without knowledge? Despotism may be an excellent thing, well entitled to our warmest support; but how can we know it to be so, without knowing what it is?

Yet are we stopped short, in the very threshold of this inquiry, by the threats and execrations of the south. Dare to inquire; dare look behind the veil that hides our private doings; dare question us, or any of our acts, and we dissolve the Union! Such an impertinence is lawful cause of war, and we will wage it!

Indeed!—It is necessary then to weigh these threats.

The Union of the States has been made the occasion and the theme of a great deal of unmeaning declamation. An idea seems to prevail, that excellent a thing as the Union is, the people, ignorant and short-sighted, may sometime take it into their heads to think otherwise; and therefore it is necessary to create a *prejudice* in favor of the Union,—a sort of feeling for it like that feeling of loyalty, which has often upheld a throne in spite of the vices and the tyranny of him who sat upon it.

Under a democratic government, prejudices of this sort are not only useless, they are highly mischievous; they are but manacles and fetters put into the hands of the artful and designing, by means of which the people are bound, and shorn, against their interest, and against their judgment.

The men who formed the Union were neither better nor wiser than ourselves. For certain arguments and reasons in its favor, they formed it; for certain

arguments and reasons in its favor, we should sustain it; not for itself; for in itself, it is neither good nor bad. It may be either, as circumstances are.

What are these reasons and arguments in favor of the Union? Briefly these; that the Union serves to protect us against aggressions from abroad, and civil war at home; that it is the best guarantee of our independence and our freedom.

But suppose this same Union to be made the pretext for a violent interference with our dearest rights? Suppose that under pretence of preserving the Union, we are to be deprived of the liberty of the press, the liberty of discussion, the liberty of thought,—nay more, the liberty of feeling, the right of sympathy with those who suffer? Suppose this Union requires to be cemented with blood, and that we are called upon to surrender up the noblest of our sons and daughters to be tortured to death by southern whips, for the grievous sin of having denounced despotism with the generous emphasis of freedom?

Are we ready to bow thus submissively before the grim and bloody shrine of this political Moloch? Are we prepared to make these sacrifices? When the thing has changed its nature, what though it still retain its former name? Though it be called a Union, what is it but a base subjection, a miserable servitude?

Some sixty years ago, we had a Union with Great Britain, a Union that had lasted for near two centuries, a cherished Union, the recollection of which kindled a glow in every American bosom; not a fraternal Union merely, but closer yet, maternal, filial. That connection had many things to recommend it. It sustained our weakness; it brightened our obscurity; it made us partakers in the renown of Britain, and part and parcel of a great nation. What curses, eighty years ago, would have blighted the parricide, who should have gone about to sever that connection, so dear, so beneficial!

The mother country, not satisfied with the affection of her daughter, sought to abuse her power, and

to extort a tribute. But were all the advantages of our Union with Britain to be given up, merely to avoid the payment of a paltry tax on tea? Were all the calamities of civil war to be hazarded, all the miseries of a hostile invasion, intrigues with foreign powers, and their dangerous interference, public debts, standing armies, the risk of anarchy, and of military usurpation?

Yes, all, said our fathers, all is to be risked, rather than surrender our pecuniary independence, rather than become tributary to a British parliament; rather than be taxed at the pleasure of the mother country. A Union upon such terms is a mockery; it is not the Union we have loved and cherished. We scorn it, and we spurn it.

So our fathers said. And when it is undertaken to deprive us not of our money,—which, for the sake of peace, we might be willing to part with,—but of that whose value money cannot estimate; when it is attempted to shut out from us the atmosphere, the essential life-breath of liberty; when it is sought to gag our free mouths, to forbid and stop the beating of our free hearts; to subdue us by penal statutes into a servile torpidity, and an obsequious silence, shall we hesitate one moment to repel this impudent effort of despotism, because, if we refuse to submit, it will endanger the Union? Perish the Union; let it ten times perish, from the moment it becomes inconsistent with humanity and with freedom!

Should South Carolina declare that war, for which, as she asserts, she has such lawful cause, and march an army northward to enforce silence at the point of the bayonet, the sons of those men who fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill, will perhaps know how to repel the invaders; and those states which furnished soldiers, generals, arms and money, to re-conquer Carolina from Cornwallis and Rawdon, will be able, peradventure, to vindicate their own liberties against any force which Carolinian despots may be able to send against them.

In this matter, let us learn a lesson from these very

Carolinians. It is but four or five years since, that South Carolina considered herself aggrieved, by what she esteemed the usurpations of the federal government. She accused Congress of levying taxes, which the constitution did not authorize. No matter whether the charge were true or false; those who made it, doubtless were sincere. And did they quietly submit to this aggression, rather than endanger the Union by their resistance? Not they.

Though denounced at the north as rebels and traitors, though coldly looked upon even by those states which shared the grievance, and which had promised to assist in the redress; though unaided and alone, and harassed too by a large party at home, who threatened, in the event of hostilities, to take sides with the general government,—the South Carolinian leaders magnanimously dared to "calculate the value of the Union;" and they concluded, like brave men as they were, that rather than give place to what they esteemed oppression, rather than be ruled in a manner which no constitution authorized, rather than submit to an usurped authority, it were better to break the Union, and risk a war.

The bold are always less in danger than the timid. The strength and resources of South Carolina compared with those of the remaining states, were but as dust in the balance; yet rather than provoke violent resistance, by an exercise of doubtful authority, Congress yielded; the tariff was modified, and the principle of pure and unlimited protection was totally abandoned.

If South Carolina calculated the value of the Union, when it was only a question of tariffs and of taxes, shall we hesitate to calculate its value, when the dearest rights of manhood are in danger? when we are commanded to submit in silence, and not dare to criticise the despotism that controls us?

Let them break the Union, if they choose; it is a matter wherein they are free to act. But before they break it, they will do well to revise their calculations

of its value. What the southern States would be, if they stood alone; what elements they have within themselves of civilization, greatness, safety, strength, and power; what sort of a nation they would form, if isolated, and cut off from intercourse with their northern neighbors, is an inquiry which will find its proper place hereafter. But there are some more obvious considerations, which our southern friends will do well deliberately to weigh, before they judge fit to dissolve the confederacy, and to break up those constitutional guarantees by which they are now protected. As sister states, talk as they may of the mischievous intermeddlings of the north, they enjoy privileges and an impunity, they never could expect from a foreign, an offended and a hostile nation. Those unhappy fugitives who had once reached the borders of States then truly free, could never be reclaimed; as between independent nations, the tortures and the death wantonly inflicted upon northern citizens, would no longer be regarded with a careless unconcern; and how many forays from the frontiers, how many crusades of liberty would there not be undertaken, by men anxious to redeem from slavery, if not their own relatives, those at least whom they regard as brothers? These collisions, sooner or later, would inevitably bring on war; and the broad banner of emancipation, with fifty thousand men to back it, once displayed, and gayly flaunting on the southern breeze, farewell, and forever, to the despotisms of the south!

But here we are met again.

If you have no regard for yourselves, say our southern friends, fool-hardy and fanatical, if you do not tremble at that annihilation with which we threaten you,—pray, at least, have some consideration for us. Remember the delicacy of our situation. Do you wish to involve us in all the horrors of a servile insurrection? Why scatter "seed that will presently germinate, and sooner or later will ripen into a harvest of desolation and blood?"

How this solemn objurgation is to be reconciled with the loud threat of severing the Union, and enforcing silence and submission at the point of the bayonet, those can best tell who are accustomed to join that threat and this objurgation. In the mean time, we may remark a curious analogy.

When the Jeffersonian aristocrats of the south first began to preach the doctrines of democracy, it was in terms like these that they were greeted by the northern oligarchs. "Bad men, wicked, turbulent, seditious, fanatical, contrivers of mischief, what mean ye, what do ye desire? Would you uproot society from its foundations? Would you abolish religion? Would you overturn morality? Would you do away with government? Would you dissolve all ties? Would you put an end to the established order and rightful propriety of things?

"What?—Do you seek to elevate the most ignorant and abandoned of society to a level with us, their betters and natural superiors? Would you deprive us of that power and authority which God has seen fit to entrust to us, which is our natural right, and which we exercise so much to our own honor, and the benefit of those we rule?

"Yes:—and you talk of guillotines too; you dare to denounce us as tyrants; you are organizing a conspiracy for a general insurrection, and for the slaughter and destruction of all good men. Out upon ye, ye Robespierres, ye Dantons, ye blood-thirsty knaves! Democrats forsooth!—Jacobins, atheists, murderous villains! Why scatter seed that will presently germinate, and sooner or later, will ripen into a harvest of desolation and blood?"

So they preached, and so they prated, from pulpits and the press. Yes, and they passed laws too. There was the Alien Law, whereby all *dangerous foreigners* were to be excluded from the country; and there was the *Sedition Law*, intended to gag the press, and to subject those who spoke disrespectfully of the powers that were, to the penalty of fine and imprisonment.

When the southern aristocrats offered to our fathers the precious boon of democracy, such was the loathing, such the struggling reluctance, and such the passionate indignation with which they received, and would have rejected it. And now that we, in our turn, recollecting with gratitude, the good offices of the South, seek to repay the favor, and commend to their lips that same draught, of their own concocting, which however bitter to the taste has health and vigor in it, life and strength ; they in their turn, with the rage and malice of spoiled and wayward children, reject the medicine, snap at the nurse, and load their best friends with frantic maledictions.

Let us be patient with them ;—they are sick. Yes very sick; and when the fit is on, light-headed. Compared with their disorder, all the fierce fevers that infest their clime, are mild and trivial. What angry passions, what tormenting fury, what anxious fears, what cares, forebodings, terrors, tremors, seize upon the despot, when he feels the sceptre slipping from his grasp, and sees his subjects ready to claim their freedom?

How he has governed ; how he has trodden under foot, men good as he ; what wrongs he has inflicted ; what cruel, bloody, barbarous, bitter wrongs, he knows full well. He dreads a retribution ; he shakes and changes color when he thinks how just that retribution, and if complete, how ample ! Though he be brave, a coward conscience chases away his courage ; a cold sweat stands upon his brow ; and he becomes as fearful as a child, while phantom images of guilty actions flit around his pillow,—

> By the apostle Paul, *shadows* to-night
> Have struck more terror to the soul of Richard,
> Than could the substance of ten thousand soldiers
> Armed in proof—

Those frightful visions which afflict the south ; they are but shadows. One act of generous justice,

of prudent justice, which yields what it can safely keep no longer, shall absolve the greatest tyrant of them all, and send him forth, a neophyte from the baptismal font of freedom, pure, washed, and spotless; and he may walk, like Scylla the ex-dictator, through the streets of Rome, unguarded, undisguised, and meet at every turn one he has injured, yet never suffer harm!

But an act like this requires a moral courage a nobleness of soul, not common. That justice is the highest expediency, is a maxim which our southern friends sometimes repeat, but a doctrine which they have not the wisdom, nor the magnanimity to practise.

In the mean time they need our help, our most judicious care. But to afford it, we ought to understand their actual condition; we must make ourselves familiar with that melancholy state of things, of which they are at once the champions and the victims.

And this knowledge is necessary to us not on their account only, but also on our own. We form a part of the same nation. It is hardly possible for one member to suffer, and the disease not to extend sympathetically to the whole body. Suppose a general insurrection at the south,—who would be called upon for men, arms, and money, to put it down? Suppose the slaves rise upon their masters,—is it not the democrats of the north, who are constitutionally bound to draw their swords in behalf of despotism?—those very democrats, who have said and sworn, that resistance to tyrants is obedience to God?

Let us learn, then, the full extent of this obligation; let us know what that system is, which we are bound to uphold!

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE RELATION OF MASTER AND SLAVE.

SECTION I.

The Origin of Slavery.

The relation of master and slave, like most other kinds of despotism, has its origin in war. By the confession of its warmest defenders, slavery is at best, but a substitute for homicide.

Savages take no prisoners; or those they do take, they first torture, and then devour. But when the arts of life have made some progress, and the value of labor begins to be understood, it is presently discovered that to eat prisoners, is not the most profitable use to which they can be put. Accordingly their lives are spared; and they are compelled to labor for the benefit of their captors. Such is the origin of Slavery.

It was formerly a practice in America to sell as slaves, such Indian prisoners as were captured during the frequent wars waged with the aboriginal inhabitants. But the great mass of those unfortunate persons held in servitude throughout the southern states, derive their origin from another source.

A Virginian planter deduces the legitimacy of his dominion by the following process. Your great-grandmother being captured by a certain African prince,—in a war, undertaken, doubtless, for the mere purpose of making prisoners,—was sold upon the coast of Guinea to a certain Yankee slave-trader; and being transported by him to James River, was there sold to

a certain tobacco planter. In time, your great-grandmother died; but she left children, to which as a part of her produce, the owner of the mother was justly entitled. From that owner, through diverse alienations and descents, the title has passed to me; and as you are descended from the woman above referred to, it is quite clear, how perfectly reasonable and just my empire is.

Whether in point of logic and morals, the above deduction is completely satisfactory, is not now the question. The nature of the master's claim is stated here, only as an assistance towards obtaining a clearer apprehension of the relations which must grow out of it.

SECTION II.

General idea of a Slave-holding Community.

Slavery then is a continuation of the state of war. It is true that one of the combatants is subdued and bound; but the war is not terminated. If I do not put the captive to death, this apparent clemency does not arise from any good will towards him, or any extinction on my part of hostile feelings and intentions. I spare his life merely because I expect to be able to put him to a use more advantageous to myself. And if the captive, on the other hand, feigns submission, still he is only watching for an opportunity to escape my grasp, and if possible to inflict upon me evils as great as those to which I have subjected him.

War is justly regarded, and with the progress of civilization it comes every day more and more to be regarded, as the very greatest of social calamities. The introduction of slavery into a community, amounts to an eternal protraction of that calamity, and a uni-

versal diffusion of it through the whole mass of society, and that too, in its most ferocious form.

When a country is invaded by a hostile army, within the immediate neighborhood of the camp it becomes impossible to make any effectual resistance. However fierce may be the hate with which they look upon the invaders, the inhabitants within the range of their scouting parties, are obliged to submit. They are made to furnish wood, forage and provisions; they are forced to toil in the entrenchment of the camp; their houses are liable to be ransacked and plundered, and their women to be subjected to the lusts of the soldiers. Upon certain emergencies, the ablest bodied among them will be armed, surrounded by foreign squadrons, and obliged to fight against their own countrymen. But though plundered without mercy, and liable to the most frightful injuries, yet as their services are valuable, and even necessary to the invaders, they must be allowed to retain the means of sustaining existence; and if under all the discouragements to which they are subjected, they neglect or refuse to cultivate their fields, they must be driven to work at the point of the bayonet, lest the invaders might suffer from their negligence, and fall short of forage and provisions.

Now every plantation in the slave states is to be looked upon as the seat of a little camp, which overawes and keeps in subjection the surrounding peasantry. The master claims and exercises over his slaves all the rights of war above described, and others yet more terrible. Consider too that this infliction is not limited to a single neighborhood, as in the case of an invading army, but is scattered and diffused over the whole extent of the country; nor is it temporary as in the other case, but constant and perpetual. It is by taking a view like this, that we are enabled to form a primary, general, outline idea of the social condition of a slave-holding community.

SECTION III.

The Empire claimed by the Master.

The relation of master and slave, as we may conclude from the foregoing statements, is a relation purely of force and terror. Its only sanction is the power of the master; its best security, the fears of the slave. It bears no resemblance to any thing like a social compact. Mutual interest, faith, truth, honesty, duty, affection, good will, are not included, in any form whatever, under this relation.

But let us descend somewhat into particulars, and inquire more specifically what is the nature of the empire claimed by the master.

That empire is the most absolute and comprehensive which it is possible to imagine. The master considers his slaves as existing solely for his benefit. He has purchased, and he possesses them for his own sake, not for theirs. His sole object is to obtain the greatest possible profit out of them.

Perhaps to obtain this greatest profit, it may be necessary to feed them plentifully, and clothe them well, and to allow them certain intervals of rest, and other like indulgences. If the master is of that opinion, he acts accordingly. But in so acting he merely pursues his own advantage. If he has adopted the contrary opinion, if he imagines that he can save more by retrenchment than he can make by outlay, in that case he cuts down the allowance of rest, food, and clothing, and endeavours to supply the deficiency by the stimulus of the lash. It is a mere matter of calculation either way; not a question of morals, but a mere problem of domestic economy. The slaves are not thought of as sentient beings, but as machines to be kept in profitable operation.

One who visits a slave-holding community, for the first time, if he have any feelings of humanity and any spirit of observation, is puzzled and shocked, by

what appears to him a series of distressing uncongruities. Men who in their relations towards those whom they acknowledge as fellow-citizens, fulfil with promptitude and exactness all the duties of benevolence and justice, in their conduct towards their slaves, often seem destitute of all human sympathies.

This course of action results from the very position of a master; and men naturally of the most benevolent dispositions, become reconciled to it by force of custom and education. The soldier, frank, generous, warm-hearted, ready to share his last dollar with his comrade, from the moment he enters an enemy's country becomes a violent, fierce, and brutal robber, who plunders, whenever he has opportunity, without hesitation or remorse.

It is exactly so with the master of slaves. His conduct towards his fellow-citizens, and towards his servants, is regulated by rules and considerations totally distinct. In making this distinction, he is supported by the laws of the land, and the dogmas of the church; upheld by the example and countenance of his friends and neighbors; and encouraged by the approbation, open or implied, of all the world. If nobody finds fault with his conduct, why should he think of changing it? Why relinquish a lordship and a revenue, which every body tells him, he does right to retain?

The value of this lordship, and the amount of this revenue, would be nothing at all, if instead of looking steadfastly, and with a single eye, to his own interest, the master should trouble himself about the well-being of his slaves. Their well-being evidently requires the liberty on their part of pursuing their own happiness, according to their own notions of it; and it clearly demands the disposal at their pleasure of the entire fruits of their own labor. That is, it requires the complete cessation of the master's empire. But it is impossible for the same thing to be and not to be at the same time; so that whoever wishes to retain the character of a master, and to exercise the prerogatives which that character confers and implies, is

driven, by an invincible necessity, to disregard the well-being of his slaves, and to consider solely his own profit. Whether indeed that profit is best promoted by retaining the character of master at all; whether the master's interest, upon a full and comprehensive view of it, might not best be advanced by ceasing to be a master, is a question not now under discussion.

But in communities where all are free, how many are there, who regard any interest except their own? And wherein is the particular evil of slavery in this respect?

The peculiar evil of slavery consists in the very fact, that the slaves do not stand in this particular on a level with other men; they are not allowed to pursue their own interest. Not only is the well-being of the slaves disregarded by the masters, it is deliberately sacrificed. Left to themselves, like other men, they would pursue their own happiness, with success, less or greater. But their own happiness is a thing they are not suffered to pursue; and if yielding to the instinctive impulses of nature, they make the attempt, they are thwarted and driven back at every turn. Their own comfort or pleasure is a thing they are not allowed to think of at all; or to think of only at the risk of the lash.

In free communities, selfishness itself is enlisted into the service of benevolence. In order to obtain favors, it is necessary to confer them. Mutual services are secured by the attraction of mutual interest. But mutuality is a thing which slavery knows not. The master does not say, "Work for me, and I will give you in return wherewith to feed and clothe yourself and family." "Work for me," he says, "or I will torture you with the lash!" If the master supplies the slave with food and clothes, he does not do it by way of compensation for labor. It is a necessary expenditure, grudgingly laid out, in order to keep these human machines in motion. So far from being in the nature of a bargain or contract, slavery is nothing but violence upon one side, and compulsive obedience upon the other.

SECTION IV.

Means of enforcing the Master's Empire.

To sustain an empire of the kind above described, it is evident that the most vigorous means must be essential.

The means employed are chiefly three, to wit: *force, fear, fraud;* and according to the different tempers, talents, habits and notions of the master, one or the other of these three means, is made the key of his system.

I. Force. Those masters whose tempers are harsh, violent, and brutal, especially those who have never been softened by education, and who are strangers to the refinements of cultivated life, and others who are endowed with a firm, decided vigor that moves directly to the point, and by the shortest way, rely principally upon force.

Is the slave late in coming into the field? Twenty lashes. Is he idle? Thirty lashes. Does he disobey or neglect an order? Forty lashes. Does he negligently waste or destroy his master's property? Fifty lashes. Is he detected in a lie? Sixty lashes. Is he strongly suspected of theft? Seventy lashes. Does he say or do any thing that can be construed into insolence? Eighty lashes. Is he guilty of the slightest act of insubordination? One hundred lashes. Does he venture to run away? Let him be pursued by men and dogs, disabled by small shot, and so soon as he is taken, be flogged till he faints, then be worked in chains, locked up every night, and kept on half allowance, till his spirits are broken, and he becomes obedient and *contented.* Should he dare, upon any occasion, to offer any resistance? Let him be shot, stabbed, beat to the ground with a club, and should he not be killed in the process, as soon as he is so far recovered as to be able to stand, let him be subjected to all the discipline mentioned in the preceding sentence, and in addition, be flogged every night, for thirty days in succession.

Such is a brief specimen of this system of plantation management, which some call cruel, but which those who follow it, merely describe as vigorous and efficient.

II. Fear. But there are many men, naturally soft-hearted, who cannot look without some feelings of sympathetic pain, or at least of instinctive disgust, upon the body of an old man, or a woman perhaps, cut up with the lash, and scored with bloody gashes. The screams and outcries of the victims affect them disagreeably. They lack that harsh, unfeeling vigor, that stern promptitude, tyranny's steadiest and most efficient support. They endeavor to avoid the actual use of the whip, and to govern as far as possible, by the fear of it. They utter most tremendous threats, and strive to supply by bitter and alarming words, the place of action. But words, when they are found to be intended only as scare-crows, soon lose their efficacy. It is therefore necessary to maintain a steady stream, and the master who governs upon this wordy plan, soon comes to keep both himself and his slaves, in a constant state of irritation and ill feeling, by a process of fault-finding, scolding and threats, which becomes a habit, and goes on from morning to night, from day to day, from one year's end to another.

The slaves, who are thus made to feel every moment the weight of tyranny, and the humiliation of servitude, contract towards these snarling masters, the sincerest hate; and from hating, being soon satisfied that with all their bluster, they have not the vigor to act up to their threats, they come presently to despise them. Whether they do well or ill, it is much the same, the master scolds on by habit; but though he scolds, as yet he does not punish; and the bolder among the slaves soon begin to try experiments upon his patience. They are encouraged by the impunity of first transgressions to take greater and greater liberties. Their example finds imitators, till presently the whole plantation falls into a state of idleness and insubordinacy, which cannot be longer overlooked or endured.

The master must now give up the hope of revenue

from his slaves, or he must re-establish his authority. He begins with moderate whippings. But his first attempts in this way are laughed at, or perhaps resisted. He is alarmed and inflamed. Anger and fear supply a vigor he does not naturally possess. He storms and raves; flogs without mercy; shoots, stabs, chains, imprisons, starves, tortures. His nature seems to be changed, and for a while he acts out the tyrant, in the most savage and vindictive spirit of despotism. The slaves bend and bow beneath this whirlwind of tyranny. The most turbulent and unmanageable,—those of them at least, who have escaped with their lives,—are sent off and sold; and presently things subside into their former state. The master grows ashamed of his violence, and perhaps endures some twinges of remorse; the lash is disused, and the tongue supplies its place. The discipline of the plantation is presently relaxed; the servants become idle and insubordinate as before; but this flattering calm cannot be relied upon; a new storm of tyranny is secretly brewing, which will burst at a moment when it is least expected.

III. Fraud. There are some masters, who pride themselves upon their cunning and superior knowledge of human nature, who make considerable use of fraud, in the management of their slaves; but this is a means employed only occasionally, and of which the efficacy is not great.

One of the most usual applications of it, is the attempt to take advantage of the religious feelings of the slaves, and to impress them with the idea, that obedience, honesty towards their masters, humble submission, and other like plantation virtues, are religious duties, which God commands, under the penalty of damnation.

This stratagem is chiefly practised by slave-holding clergymen and church members. The religious people of the South have been at the pains of preparing a slave catechism; in some places they have established slave Sunday schools; and meetings for slave-worship are regularly held. The immediate agents

in these proceedings, are generally men of good intentions, but of very feeble understandings. They are mere tools in the hands of crafty hypocrites. The motive of their labors is doubtless the spiritual welfare of the slaves; but those by whom they are supported and encouraged, however tender a regard they may have for the salvation of their own souls, look upon religion among slaves merely as a means of plantation discipline; and please themselves with the idea that the more religious their slaves are, the easier they may be managed.

The agents employed in this double service of christianity and despotism, often succeed in kindling a warm spirit of devotion in the hearts of the slaves; but they have often occasion to deplore the inconsistency, the back-sliding, the delusion of their converts, who cannot be made to realize in its full extent, the enormous sinfulness of any attempt to elude that tyranny under which providence requires them patiently, and even joyfully to submit.

Deeply sympathizing with the sad, and almost angry feelings, with which these pious people are accustomed to lament the small success of their labors, and to accuse that stony-heartedness and inherent depravity which prevents even the converted slaves from attaining to the perfection of humility and obedience, the remark nevertheless may with all due deference, be permitted,—that so long as these pious teachers are able to construe the generous precepts of the gospel into an apology and a justification for tyranny, it cannot be considered very surprising that their pupils among the slaves, should instinctively acquire the art of reconciling with christian patience and submission, any and every means, whereby they can shake off, alleviate, or elude the usurped authority of their masters.

But this piece of pious fraud is falling into bad odor at the South. It has been found that religion causes an excitement among the slaves, both dangerous and troublesome. The rascals preach and pray when they

ought to be working. Besides, that religious enthusiasm, which kindles so readily in the most ignorant as well as the most cultivated minds, gives rise to a dangerous exaltation of soul which makes the subjects of it obstinate and unmanageable. Religion once awakened in such savage and untaught bosoms, is apt to degenerate into a superstitious fanaticism. The gifted and the artful begin to see visions, and to dream dreams. They are not content with being hearers and pupils, they aspire to be speakers and teachers. In their sermons and exhortations, it is the vices, the luxury, the cruelty, the wickedness of the masters, upon which they principally dwell, and whence they draw examples and illustrations; and who knows but some one more enraptured than the rest, may imagine himself called, like Moses of old, to smite the taskmaster, and to lead forth the oppressed children?

For these reasons the bible has been proscribed at the South, as an incendiary publication; a book not fit for slaves to read or hear. In some parts of the country the catechism is looked upon with almost equal suspicion; and many masters forbid their slaves to hear any preacher, black or white, since they consider religion upon a plantation as quite out of place, a thing dangerous to the master's authority, and therefore not to be endured in the slave.

Another stratagem, occasionally employed, when it is desired to stimulate the efforts of the slaves, is the distribution of little prizes among those who accomplish the greatest labor in the shortest time. This contrivance works wonderfully well for a few days; but as soon as it is discovered who are the ablest workmen, the emulation is confined to them, and the greater number, who have no chance to win the prize, presently relapse into their former apathy. Besides, this distribution of prizes, is apt to give rise among the slaves to the inconvenient notion, that they ought to be paid for working, and the moment it ceases, they work more grudgingly, unwillingly and negligently than ever. Moreover it is expensive; in the minds of most planters, a decisive objection against it.

But there are cases when force and terror cannot be employed, or fail to answer the purpose, and where stratagem is necessarily resorted to. The most common of these cases, are the detection and prevention of theft, and the recovery of runaways.

Upon these occasions, the most respectable and religious masters do not hesitate to descend to every petty art of fraud and falsehood. They have hired spies and informers among the slaves; they blacken their own faces, and lurk in disguise about the cabins, peeping through the cracks, and listening at the doors. They lure the fugitives back into their power, by the most ample promises of pardon, which they break with as little hesitation as they make them. Not uncommonly they attempt to take advantage of the superstitious ignorance of the slaves, and pretend to magical and supernatural powers, in hopes of frightening the culprit into confession. They exult over the success of these fraudulent arts; and in all transactions with their slaves, their total want of respect for their own word has given ample occasion for the proverb common among the unprivileged class, which describes white men as "mighty uncertain."

Of the three principal means above enumerated, and briefly explained, upon which the sustentation of the slave-master's empire depends, it is evident that the first involves the second; for the surest way of striking a deep terror into the heart is, to punish every transgression with a stern and unrelenting severity.

It accordingly happens that those who act upon this plan, not only have the least trouble upon their plantations, but are often comparatively popular, so to speak, with their servants. The certainty of punishment greatly diminishes the necessity of its frequent infliction. The slaves know exactly what to expect; how far they can go; and what is the limit they cannot safely transgress. If the rule is an iron one, it is nevertheless steady and sure. It does not partake of that uncertainty, which besides being a dangerous temptation, is in itself one of the greatest of evils. Slaves

are like other men; and in general, they far prefer to take a punishment, and have it over, to being perpetually scolded, threatened, cursed and stormed at, even though there may be hope that the storm will end in words, and pass over without raining blows.

But this regular and systematic discipline, resembling the despotic precision of a well drilled army, is to be found only upon a very few plantations. Most masters and most overseers are too negligent, or too good humored for their business, or else are ignorant of the real nature, and only sure support of the authority they exercise. They overlook some offences because they do not want the trouble of punishment; some they permit to go unnoticed, because they hate to flog a woman, or a child; some allowances they make for the petulance of old age, or the hot temper of youth. But every liberty that goes unpunished is made a pretence for yet greater liberties; the slaves, always eager and watchful to regain any particle of freedom, perceive in an instant, and with unerring sagacity, every indication of weakness, or want of vigor on the part of their master; they artfully break, now this link, and now that, from their chains; till at length, beginning to feel something of the spirit of liberty, their "insolence," to use the master's phrase, becomes intolerable, and waking from his dream of indulgence and good nature, their despot is obliged to vindicate his authority, and to repress the licentiousness of his slaves, by a sudden outbreak of violence and cruelty, which, however he may excuse it by the plea of necessity, he cannot think of, in his sober moments, without some disagreeable feelings of self-condemnation.

Thus it is that the greater part of Southern plantations are the scenes of a constant struggle; idleness, encroachments, a passive resistance upon one side; negligence and yielding first, then passion, violence and cruelty upon the other.

SECTION V.

Means of resistance on the part of the slaves.

We come now more minutely to consider, with what feelings the slaves look upon their own lot, and what resistance they make to the usurped authority of their masters. For by the very constitution of human nature, it happens of necessity, that such an authority must be resisted, in some shape or other.

As to escaping from a condition to which they seem to have been born, and in which they are held by the joint interest, real or supposed, of all the members of the privileged class, that is, of all those who make and enforce the laws, and who alone possess knowledge, wealth and influence in the community;—such a deliverance appears impossible, and rarely enters into their thoughts. It is true that running away is extremely frequent; but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the runaway is speedily retaken and severely punished; and the attempt is generally made, not with any hope of ultimate escape, but as a means of eluding for the moment some threatened misery, which the unhappy fugitive has not the courage to face.

However, if a door were opened for their escape; if by any circumstance they were induced to entertain the idea of it, and if that idea budded into hope, it is not to be supposed that they would stickle, or hesitate at any means, however horrible, that seemed necessary or convenient, towards the accomplishment of that great end. Prisoners of war, if they can but take their guards at unawares, are accustomed to stab them with their own bayonets, and by that bloody means, to break away. Captives, such as slaves are, must be expected to act upon the same ideas; but with a promptitude the readier, and a hate the more earnest, in proportion to their longer restraint and their greater provocation. When has the master respected the person of his slaves? Would he hesitate one moment to stab, shoot, hang, or

burn the best beloved of his servants, if he supposed that servant's life inconsistent with his safety, or with the security of that tyrannical empire, upon which depends his condition of master? Let there be the whisper of an insurrection, and the old trees of the plantation, shall dance with dying men strung thick as acorns. This the slaves know; and knowing it, what wonder, when the desperate project of insurrection is resorted to, what wonder, if they grant no mercy where they can expect none? What wonder, if with the torture of death by a slow fire, or by some other means equally cruel, before their eyes, they feel no clemency? What wonder, if they steel their hearts to pity, and emulate their masters in bloody cruelties and barbarous revenge? In so doing, they merely practice a lesson they have been all their lives learning; all their lives, the sword has been pointed at their hearts, and if they in any way succeed in grasping it by the hilt,—what wonder if they use it?

If it were possible to speak otherwise than seriously upon so grave a matter, it would be difficult to point out any thing more ridiculous than the frantic fear, the panic terror, the ineffable alarm spread throughout the South, by the slightest suspicion of insurrection among the slaves. That the women and children should be terrified, is natural enough; but that men, men of violence and blood, accustomed to go their daily rounds with the pistol in one hand and the whip in the other, men who have every advantage on their side with the single exception of justice,—an exception however, which they affect to deny and disregard;—that such men should stagger and turn pale at the mere report of a distant insurrection, can only be, because a guilty conscience disturbs their reason, and frights away their courage.

Do they not know the stake for which they play? Have they not considered the conditions of the game? What!—Do they entertain the puerile notion, that an eternal war can be waged, and all the blows, the thrusts, the cuts, the wounds, the danger, be only on

one side? Is it so terrible and atrocious a thing, that my enemy dares to struggle in my grasp? What though I have him on the ground, my knee upon his breast, and a dagger at his throat, is it so strange that even in that position, still he resists, and strives to push his weapon to my heart?

Slavery being in its nature, a permanent state of war, although the overwhelming force of the masters, restrains the slaves for the most part to an apparent submission, yet occasional outbreaks must from time to time, be expected. The ignorance in which the slaves are kept, makes them incapable of perceiving the utter hopelessness of success; and there are some hot tempers, and enthusiastic minds, which, though they did perceive it, would still be ready to risk any thing and every thing, for the most trifling chance of freedom and revenge. The danger from these outbreaks is extremely small. They will cost the masters now and then a few lives; but that is the fortune of war, and those brave soldiers who can slaughter the enemy with such perfect indifference, if not with absolute gusto, ought to be able to lose a few of their own number, without being so wholly carried away with panic terror.

An intended rising requires preparations, means, and an extended combination, which generally lead to its detection before the conspirators are ready to act. Besides, it is only under peculiar circumstances, that any thing of the kind can be attempted. The slaves are so much in the power, and at the mercy of their masters, that they seldom venture upon any thing like violent opposition; they content themselves, for the most part, with a passive resistance.

The master claims, and endeavors to possess himself of the whole time, capacity and labor of the slave. The slave does not venture openly to resist this robbery; but he attempts, by all the silent and quiet means in his power, to evade it, to escape the exactions, and to diminish the plunder of his master.

He yields his time from day-light, until dark; or rather he seems to yield it; for if he be not constantly

watched, he contrives to regain hours and moments, which as he can apply them to no better use, he spends in idleness or sleep. His capacity is a thing more in his own power. It is in general, only certain simple acts of manual labor that can be extorted by force. The mind is free. A master cannot force his slave to reason, to remember, or except in certain cases, to hear, or see. If he is sent with a message, he forgets it. He never considers that if the fence is broken, the cattle will get among the corn; and if they do, he neither sees nor hears them. The thing he is commanded to do, that single thing he does, and nothing else. The master would go hunting, and he sends his slave to bring his powder-flask. The slave sees there is no powder in it;—but what is that to him?—he does as he was bid, and carries the flask. When the gun is to be loaded, it appears then there is no ammunition. "Go home," says the master, "in the closet on the upper shelf there is a canister of powder; fill the flask, and bring it to me." As it happens, there are two canisters, one good, the other damaged. The slave takes down the damaged canister first, and without further examination fills the flask with powder that cannot be used, and carries it to his master. He is set to planting corn. The seed, it chances, is worm-eaten and decayed. What is that to him? He goes on planting. It is just so in every thing else. He neglects to exercise his reasoning faculties at all. He becomes apparently as stupid and thoughtless as the mule he drives. Whatever capacity or understanding he may have, he sinks it, hides it, annihilates it, rather than its fruits should be filched from him by his owner.

He is compelled to labor so many hours; but he takes care to labor to the least possible advantage. Nothing stimulates him but the fear of the whip; and under the show of diligence he proceeds with the greatest possible dawdling and deliberation. Is he a brick-layer? He selects a brick with caution and solemnity; he turns it over a dozen times; he looks as carefully at every side of it as if it were covered

with intelligible hieroglyphics; he feels the corners and the edges; he fits it to its place; removes it; takes up the mortar; spreads and slowly arranges it with his trowel; and at last—lays the brick.

In all those processes which require any thing of skill or judgment, it is impossible to extort a large amount of labor from a slave. He conceals his idleness so cunningly, any attempt to drive him seems to put him into such a flutter and confusion, that he bungles or spoils his work, and it becomes necessary that it should be done over again, allowing the workman his own time. The master can only insist that he shall devote his whole time to the work, but he must be content to let him dally and trifle with it as he chooses.

Hence it is that slave labor is only profitable for those rude and simple processes, which demand nothing but an exertion of muscular strength. A slave may be driven by the whip to cut up grass with the hoe, or to pick cotton with his fingers, nearly or quite as fast as a freeman, who labors for himself; but to compel this labor he must be constantly watched and pressed; and if the whip is not used upon his shoulders, he must at least see it brandished in the air as a spur to his activity.

The day, from earliest dawn oft times till long past dark is all the master's; but the night, since the human machine requires some rest and relaxation, is principally yielded to the slave. He is thus transformed into a nocturnal animal. During the day, he appears a dull, stupid, sleepy, inanimate thing, without sense or spirit, little better than an idiot, and neither so sprightly nor so sensible as the horse he drives. At night, he becomes quite another creature. He runs laughing, singing, jesting, to his cabin. With his calabash of corn, he hastens to the hand mill; and as one grinder succeeds another, the rumbling of the stones is heard all night, a doleful sound, mixed with the curses and execrations of those who grind. But it rumbles on with a steadiness which shows with

what incessant industry the mill is plied, and which is evidence enough that those who grind, labor not for their master, but themselves. His corn cracked into hominy, or ground to meal, he kindles up a fire, and prepares his simple, and too often scanty supper; his family gathers about the smoking dish; they eat with lively talk and laughing repartee; and as no whip cracks in their ears, they readily forget that such a thing exists.

The meal ended, they do not think of sleep. They meet for talk and dances. The more daring secretly mount their master's horses and ride to visit their cronies upon some neighboring plantation. One goes courting, another to see his wife; some with dogs and axes hunt the opossum, a night-walker like themselves; some meet to preach and pray; others prowl about to see what thing of value they can lay their hands upon. Others yet, with bags of stolen corn or cotton on their heads, secretly set off to visit some petty trader, who receives their stolen goods in exchange for whiskey. Some have a bottle on hand, and collecting their intimates about them, they drink, and emboldened by the liquor, they discuss the conduct of their masters, or the overseer, with a keen freedom, a critical observation, an irony as bitter as it is just;—happy if a prowling overseer, or some false-hearted spy does not stand listening, and make them presently pay the penalty of free discussion. It is only toward morning that they think of sleep; and it is surprising with how little sleep they exist. But in fact, their day time is but a lethargy, during which, though the body be active, the mind slumbers.

But as the slaves become more numerous, and the masters more timid and more exacting, tyranny takes possession even of the night. At dark, the slaves are penned up like cattle, and forbidden to leave their huts, lest they should employ themselves in plunder, or in plotting insurrection; or if merely indulging in sports and amusements, lest they should exhaust that strength and vigor, which the master claims as wholly

his. The dance is forbidden; no merry laugh is heard, no torch-lights are seen glancing and streaming on the darkness, or eclipsing the splendor of the moon, as the slaves pass from one cabin to another. All is still as night and tyranny can make it; and if the slaves, spite of this despotism, yet have their meetings, for talk, for drinking, for plunder, or for prayer, all are equally prohibited, and they steal forth with slow and stealthy steps, watchful and cautious as the midnight wolf.

The masters greviously complain of this night-walking propensity on the part of the slaves. Besides the efforts of each planter to suppress it on his own estate, and the barbarous severity, with which it is customary to punish slaves for being found visiting on a plantation to which they do not belong,—public patrols are established for the purpose of arresting, flogging, and sending home, all slaves caught wandering at large without a pass, that is, a written permission.

The two grand charges, however, brought against the slaves, and which are quoted by the masters as decisive proofs of their lamentable depravity, and total destitution of all moral principle, are the accusations of *lying*, and of *theft*.

1. The slaves, we are told, are arrant liars. They lie for themselves; they lie for each other; and to deceive their master or the overseer is esteemed among them as an action, not blameless only, but even praiseworthy.

Well,—why not? Falsehood has ever been considered a lawful art of war; and slavery, as we have seen, is but a state of protracted hostilities. Do we not applaud a general for the stratagems and arts by which he deceives, misleads, entraps his enemy? Do not the very masters themselves, chuckle and exult over the ingenious falsehoods by which they have detected a theft, or recovered a runaway? Though they be tyrants let them use a little philosophy Dionysius did so, and so did Pisistratus. With their masters, enemies who have seized them, and who

keep them by force, the slaves are not connected by any ties of social duty. It is a condition of open war; and as in point of strength, the slaves are wholly overmatched, stratagem and falsehood are their only resource; and if by bold lying, vociferous protestations, and cunning frauds, they can escape some threatened aggression, if they can so secure some particle of liberty from the prying search and greedy grasp of despotism, why blame them for acts, which in like cases, all the world has justified, and has even exalted to the character of heroism?

In a slave, considered as a slave, cunning is almost the sole quality of mind which he has any occasion to exercise; and by long practice it is sometimes carried to an astonishing perfection. Under an air of the greatest heedlessness and stupidity, and an apparent apathy more than brutal, there is occasionally veiled, a quick and accurate observation, a just estimate of temper and disposition, lively and ardent feelings, and a loftiness of spirit, which some day perhaps, will burst its ordinary cautious bounds, and terminate the life of its possessor, by bullets, knives, the gibbet, or the flames.

2. It is astonishing say the masters, how destitute of all conscience, these rascals are. The best among them, the most pious and obedient, are no more to be trusted than so many foxes. Even our domestic servants steal every thing they can touch. There must be a lock on every door, every trunk, every closet. But even the strictest watchfulness is no match for their arts; and the sternest severities cannot repress their spirit of plunder.

The slaves it seems then, however overmastered and subdued, do still, in a silent and quiet way, and to the best of their ability, retort upon their masters the aggressions and the robbery that are perpretrated on themselves.

Property, it is to be recollected, is a thing established among men, by mutual consent, and for mutual convenience. The game I have killed, the fish I have caught, the vegetables I have cultivated, are decided

to be mine, and are secured to me by the consent and warranty of all my tribe, because the security and comfort of each member of it, requires for himself, the like privilege and protection. But between slaves and masters, there is no such compact, no such consent, no such mutual arrangement. The masters claim all; and so far as they are able, they take all; and if the slaves by stealth, by art, by cunning, can secretly regain the possession of some gleanings from the fruits of their own labor, why should they not? It is in their eyes a spoiling of the Egyptians; it is a seizure and appropriation of things to which they surely have a better title than the masters.

Is it to be supposed that in the prosecution of a perpetual war, the plunder will be all upon one side? The disproportion is doubtless very great; the aggressors, as their strength and means are so superior, carry off rich trophies and abundant spoils; the conquered are well pleased to gather some fragments, to filch some trifles from the over-loaded stores of the triumphant invaders, who plundering upon a great scale themselves, are yet astonished at the depravity of those who plunder on a small one. To expect, as between masters and slaves the virtues of truth, probity and benevolence, is ridiculous. Slavery removes the very foundation of those virtues.

SECTION VI.

The treatment of American slaves considered as animals.

The slave-master desires to look upon his slaves as he does upon his horses; to persuade himself that his empire over both is equally just; and that the claims and rights of horses and of slaves, are confined within the same limits.

But even in this view of the case, narrow and false as it is, the slave-holder too often falls lamentably short of what common humanity, and ordinary good nature require.

A slave is an expensive animal, since he must be supplied not only with shelter and food, but with fire, and clothing. There are however several circumstances in the condition of the southern states, which operate at present to reduce these expenses to a minimum.

The houses of the slaves for the most part, are little miserable log cabins, with chimnies of sticks and clay, without windows, and often without a floor, but one step in advance of the primeval wigwam. They contain but one room, in which the whole family is huddled together without any regard to the privacies or decencies of life; nor are they in any respect superior, if indeed they are equal, to the stables or the cow house. The furniture is as rude as the dwelling, and betokens the lowest state of poverty and destitution. When these cabins have become thoroughly rotten, and ready to tumble to the ground, they are rebuilt at no other expense except a few days labor of the plantation carpenter. Other things have undergone great improvements; but in the construction and comforts of a slave's cabin, there has been little or no change for upwards of a century.

Clothing, especially in the more northern of the slave states is an expensive item; but as its necessity in those parts of the country is the more apparent, the good economy of furnishing a tolerable supply is more generally acknowledged, and the suffering of the slaves from deficiency of clothing, is probably much less than in the more southern states, where the mildness of the climate encourages the masters to stint the allowance, and where the numerous deaths among the slaves from quinsy, influenza, and pleurisy, are a proof how insufficiently they are guarded against the sudden changes from heat to cold, to which the whole climate of the United States is so

liable. The children, till they reach the age of twelve or fourteen, run about almost naked, being covered, if at all, only by an unwashed shirt of tattered osnaburgs. Their sufferings from cold must sometimes be excessive.

Firewood is still so abundant throughout all the southern states, as in most parts of the country to have no exchangable value; or to owe that value entirely to the labor expended in preparing it. The slaves are at liberty to take from the woods on Sundays, or by night, such supplies as they choose. For the most part, they carry it on their heads; though sometimes on Sunday, they are allowed the use of a pair of oxen and a cart. To save steps and trouble, if they can do it without detection, they generally prefer to lay their hands upon the first fence they come to.

Very different opinions prevail in different portions of the southern states, as to the quantity of food which it is necessary or expedient to allow a slave. In Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee, where corn and bacon are produced in great abundance, and where their value is small, the slaves are allowed as much coarse food as they desire; and the plump condition and buoyant vivacity of the children, are an evidence that they seldom suffer from hunger.

In Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, where corn is seldom worth above fifty cents the bushel, some sixteen bushels of it, is considered a competent yearly supply for a slave, to which is generally added, a weekly allowance larger or smaller, of fish or meat.

In the states further south, which may be properly designated as the cotton growing states, where corn is generally worth a dollar or upwards the bushel, and where provisions of all sorts are comparatively scarce and high, twelve bushels of dry corn by the year, without any allowance of meat or fish, or any thing beside, is esteemed a large enough supply of food for a working hand. Sweet potatoes, are sometimes served out during the fall and winter months, instead of

corn; and on the rice plantations, broken or damaged rice furnishes the chief supply of food; but whether it be corn, potatoes, or rice, the allowance is often scanty enough; and the starved, shriveled, peaked condition of the children upon many plantations, are too evident proofs how cruelly they are stinted.

With respect to this subject, the following observation is worthy of attention. A certain quantity of food may suffice to sustain life, and even strength, yet not be enough to appease the cravings of appetite, nor to stay or prevent the torments of hunger. Most laboring men at the North, might probably live and enjoy health, though their daily food were diminished in quantity one half, or even more; yet this is a sacrifice they would very reluctantly make; and the certainty of life and health would be no sufficient consolation for the gnawings of hunger, and the disquietudes of an unsatisfied appetite.

It happens very unluckily, that the slaves in that part of the country where they are worst supplied with food and clothing, are yet subjected to the severest and most unremitting labors.

In Missouri, Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland, except in those limited tracts in which the culture of tobacco is pursued, there are considerable intervals in every year, when the labor of the slaves is little needed, and when the tasks imposed are sufficiently light. But the cultivation of tobacco, and still more, that of rice, sugar and cotton, is an incessant round of labor, from one year's end to the other. These plants are a long time in coming to perfection. The labor of securing the crop, and preparing it for market, is very great; and one year's work is hardly ended, before it is time to begin upon the next. Winter or Summer, there is no rest nor relaxation from constant, steady toil.

On the whole, it may be stated that the physical condition of the slaves throughout the southern states, is far inferior in every respect, to that of the unfortunate men, confined for the punishment of their crimes

in our Northern prisons and penitentiaries. Their food is less savoury, less abundant, and far less various,—and a certain variety of diet seems as essential to health as it is agreeable to the taste. The work demanded of them is far more fatiguing and severe, the time of labor is longer, the clothing with which they are supplied is far less comfortable; and their exposure far more trying. That sort of discipline which we have fixed upon as the most terrible and exemplary punishment of crime,—or rather a discipline much more severe than that,—is the regular, constant, perpetual condition of a large proportion of our fellow-countrymen at the south.

What has been observed with respect to food, applies with equal force to physical condition in general. That which is sufficient to sustain existence, is by no means sufficient for comfort, or for pleasure. Life may be supported, and protracted under such a series of privations that it ceases to be any thing but a continuity of suffering.

That the physical condition of the slaves, is far inferior on an average to that of the free, may be made evident by some statistical considerations. During the forty years, preceding 1830, the average annual increase of the white population of the United States, amounted to 3,04 per cent.; while the average annual increase of the slave population, during the same period, amounted to 2,67 per cent. Emigration from abroad contributed to swell the increase of the white population. Let us suppose, and it will be a very liberal allowance, that the annual increase of the white population by this means, amounted to ,37 per cent. Making this allowance, it would follow, that the domestic white population, and the slave population have increased in the same ratio.*

* The foreign slave trade was not abolished till 1808. Up to that year, the proportional increase of the slave population by that means, was in all probability, fully equal to the increase of the free population by emigration from abroad. The great influx of foreign emigration into the United States, is quite recent in its origin.

Now it is to be recollected that there are certain prudential checks, as they are denominated, constantly operating to retard the increase of the white population. The extent to which these checks operate, even in those parts of the country in which the white population increases with the greatest rapidity, will be obvious, when it is considered, that in the state of New York, as appears from the results of the State census, in 1825 and in 1835, out of all the women in the state between the ages of sixteen and forty-five, that is, of an age to bear children, *two fifths* are unmarried.

Among the slaves, these prudential checks are totally unknown. There is nothing to prevent them from yielding to the instincts of nature. Child-bearing is stimulated and encouraged by the masters, and so far as it depends upon the mere production of children, the slave population ought to increase, two fifths faster than the free. Instead of doubling once in twenty-five years, it ought to double once in fifteen years. If the increase is kept down to the former level, it is only because disease and death are busier among the slaves than among the free; and as the slaves escape all those kinds of disorders which spring from luxury and over indulgence, this greater mortality can only be ascribed to greater severity of labor, and to destitution of the physical supports of life.

It is often argued that self-interest alone is enough to make the master attentive to the lives and health of his slaves; on the same principle that he provides corn for his horses, and fodder for his cattle. But that provident and enlightened economy which makes a present sacrifice for the sake of avoiding a future greater loss, however it may be generally recommended and applauded, is but seldom practiced; and he who is familiar with the domestic management of the southern states, must know that of all places in the world, it is least practiced there.

An anecdote is related of a Virginian planter, who discharged his overseer, because sufficient cattle had

not died during the winter to furnish leather enough to supply the slaves with shoes. This story though perhaps a little exaggerated, will serve to give an idea of the domestic economy of the south; and he who knows how many mules and horses yearly drop in the furrow, through starvation, over-work, and the abusive treatment, which the slaves, emulous of their masters, heap upon the only creatures in their power; he who has seen the condition of southern cattle in the month of March, hundreds actually starved to death, and those which are alive, a mere anatomy of skin and bones, with hardly substance enough to cast a shadow, searching with feeble steps, and woeful countenance, for a spear or two of withered grass, wherewith to protract their miserable existence; he who has seen these things, would not much care to have his life or his sustenance dependent upon the good economy of a management so utterly thriftless and unfeeling.

SECTION VII.

The treatment of American slaves, considered as men.

There are some people whose sympathies have been excited upon the subject of slavery, who if they can only be satisfied that the slaves have enough to eat, think it is all very well, and that nothing more is to be said, or done.

If slaves were merely animals, whose only, or chief enjoyment consisted in the gratification of their bodily appetites, there would be some show of sense in this conclusion. But in fact, however crushed and brutified, they are still men; men whose bosoms beat with the same passions as our own; whose hearts swell with the same aspirations,—the same ardent desire to im-

prove their condition; the same wishes for what they have not; the same indifference towards what they have; the same restless love of social superiority; the same greediness of acquisition; the same desire to know; the same impatience of all external control.

The excitement which the singular case of Casper Hauser, produced a few years since, in Germany, is not yet forgotten. From the representations of that enigmatical personage, it was believed that those from whose custody he declared himself to have escaped, had endeavoured to destroy his intellect, or rather to prevent it from being developed, so as to detain him forever in a state of infantile imbecility. This supposed attempt at what they saw fit to denominate, the *murder of the soul*, gave rise to great discussions among the German Jurists; and they soon raised it into a new crime, which they placed at the very head of social enormities.

It is this very crime, *the murder of the soul*, which is in the course of continuous and perpetual perpetration throughout the southern states of the American Union; and that not upon a single individual only, but upon nearly one half the entire population.

Consider the slaves as men, and the course of treatment which custom and the laws prescribe, is an artful, deliberate, and well digested scheme to break their spirit; to deprive them of courage and of manhood; to destroy their natural desire for an equal participation in the benefits of society; to keep them ignorant, and therefore weak; to reduce them if possible to a state of idiocy; to crowd them down to a level with the brutes.

A man, especially a civilized man, possessed of a certain portion of knowledge, and well skilled in some art or science, is a much more valuable piece of property, and capable of producing for his master, a far greater revenue, than a mere, two-legged human animal, with all the failings and defects, and none of the virtues of a savage. But if such a slave is more valuable, he is far more dangerous, and far more dif-

ficult to manage. To extort the services of such a slave, by mere severity, would always be hazardous, and often impossible. Drive him to despair, of which such a man in such circumstances, is easily susceptible, and he might violently end a life from which he derived no enjoyment, and court a death which offered him, at least, the pleasure of thwarting the hopes of a too greedy master. With such slaves, it has always been found necessary, to enter into a sort of compromise,—a treaty of peace, in which, if the claims of the conqueror were largely provided for, some respect has also been paid, to the rights and the happiness of the conquered. The claims of the master have been commuted for a monthly or daily tribute; and what else the slave could make or gain, has been relinquished to his own use. He has been further encouraged by the prospect of presently purchasing his freedom; or of obtaining it by the free gift of a master well satisfied with his services.

But though such slaves are very profitable, they are also, as has been above observed, very dangerous. Put thus upon a level with their masters, in all that constitutes the moral strength of men; keenly sensitive to the injustice that is done them, and to the unfair advantage that has been taken of their weakness, —they have ever been ready to burst into rebellion, have sometimes succeeded in overpowering their masters, and have often maintained a long, a bloody, and a doubtful contest.

All this is perfectly well understood at the south. A slave who can read is valuable on many accounts, and will sell for more money than one who cannot. A slave who can read, write, and compute, and who by reason of these accomplishments is able to fulfil the duties of a merchant's clerk, is plainly far more valuable than a mere field hand. One who understands the art of printing, an armorer, an apothecary, are evidently capable of performing more profitable operations, than he who knows only how to handle a hoe.

But well aware how dangerous such slaves would be, the privileged order have perferred to sacrifice profit to safety. In most of the slave holding states, it is specially enacted that no slave shall be taught to read. This inability to read, disqualifies them at once for all the higher occupations. Some few are rudely instructed in those simple handicrafts indispensable upon every plantation; but custom and public opinion, if not the law, imperiously forbid, that any slave should be bred up to the knowledge or practice of any of the superior arts. Some publishers of newspapers, in defect of white journeymen, introduced slaves into their offices as compositors; but the experiment was pronounced too dangerous, and they were obliged to relinquish it.

With the exception of those employed in domestic service, and in the few mechanic arts above mentioned, the great mass of the slaves are occupied in agriculture, which, for the most part, is prosecuted in the rudest possible way. This is a subject which will be more fully considered in a subsequent chapter. Every thing is done by main strength, and under the direction of an overseer. The slaves are confined to the constant repetition of a few simple mechanical acts; and continually employed as they are in this constant round of stupefying labor, which is not enlivened by hardly a single glimpse of art or intellect; thus shut out from the means and opportunity of exercising their higher faculties, no wonder that the soul falls into a deep and death-like slumber. Drugged with such a stupefying cup, so artfully administered, the *soul murder* if not complete, is closely approximated. The man loses his manhood, and is a man no longer. Those mental and moral capabilities which are his pride and glory, fall into abeyance, and apparently he dwindles down into something little better than a mere animal.

The domestic slaves, being constantly attendant upon their masters, and listeners to their daily conversation, cannot but pick up some crumbs of knowl-

edge, and acquire a certain habit of reasoning and reflection. In consequence of these accomplishments they are feared, suspected, and very narrowly watched. In all the towns and villages of the south, the strictest regulations are established and enforced, by which among other things, the slaves are forbidden to leave their master's houses after an early hour in the evening, and in many other respects, are subjected to a constant system of the most prying and suspicious espionage.

Some writers misled by a spirit of patriotism, or deceived by views too superficial, have represented the system of American slavery as extremely mild, and quite a different thing from slavery in any other age or country. There is a difference it is true; but that difference is not favorable to us. It is easy to show, that in certain most essential points,—those fundamental points by which alone a social system ought to be judged,—American slavery is a far more deadly and disastrous thing, more fatal to all the hopes, the sentiments, the rights of humanity, than almost any other system of servitude which has existed in any other community.

Slavery as it existed among the ancient Greeks and Romans has been often referred to, as a system of the extremest severity, cruel beyond any thing to be found in modern times.* No doubt that system was bad enough. It would be well however, if other systems were not worse.

The Roman master had the power of life and death over his slaves; but the slaves, in this respect, stood upon a level with the freemen; for the Roman husband and father had the same power over his wife and his children, and he might claim and exercise it, long after those children had passed the age of puberty, and even after they had attained to the highest honors and distinctions of the state. It is true that the laws do not confer an equal authority upon the American master; but it is equally true that the lives of his

* See Channing on Slavery.

slaves are not the less in his power. It is easy for the master to invent a thousand pretences for taking the life of any slave, against whom he may have conceived a prejudice. If he does not think it prudent to use the pistol or the knife, he needs only to have recourse to a somewhat more lingering process of torture, or starvation.

But the great distinction between the slavery of the ancient world and that of America is this. The Greek and Roman slaves, in the estimation of their masters and themselves, though slaves, were yet men. It was true doubtless, as Homer says, that the day a man became a slave he lost half his manly virtues. From the nature of things it must have been so; but manhood or a portion of it, remained, though darkened and eclipsed, still visible. To a certain extent at least, in point of knowledge, accomplishments, and the developement of mind, the slaves stood upon a level with the free; and if there be something terrible in the idea,—terrible because we need no preparation to comprehend it,—of a city sacked and plundered, and all its inhabitants, the noblest, the wealthiest, the delicate women, as well as the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, sold under the hammer of a military auctioneer, and thence dragged into servitude,—we must recollect that the accomplishments, the knowledge, the refinement of these unhappy captives, furnished also many means of alleviating the calamity of servitude, and presently of escaping it altogether.

The Athenian captives taken in the unlucky expedition against Syracuse, purchased their liberty by reciting the verses of Euripides. Slaves first cultivated the art of Latin poetry, and introduced at Rome an imitation of the Grecian drama. Such were Plautus and Terence, and almost all the elder Roman poets. All the arts which give comfort and refinement to life, and the mere practice of which confers a certain social distinction, music, poetry, literature in general, painting, medicine, education, and many others, were principally, or commonly practiced by slaves, who

thus acquired favor, fame, freedom, and finally wealth and social elevation. Horace, educated at Athens among the sons of Roman nobles, and afterwards the friend and intimate of the lords of the empire, and the delight and pride of the Roman people, was the son of a freedman. Emancipations were frequent and were favored. The slave constantly had before his eyes the hope and the prospect of liberty; he thus had a noble object for which to live; and although there were in general, some political disqualifications which he could not expect to shake off from himself, wealth, consideration, and all the more common objects of human hopes and wishes, were still spread out before him; and for his children—and men live as much for their children as for themselves,—he had every thing to anticipate.

Undoubtedly the condition of the country slave, employed in agriculture, more nearly resembled that of slaves with us. But still there was an opening for talent and for hope. No slave was so low or miserable, that he might not aspire to freedom and to social elevation.

Under this system, there existed that compromise between the master and the slave, which has been explained above. If the slave lived and labored for his master, he also lived and labored for himself. He was secured by custom, which is stronger and more effectual than law, in the enjoyment of a *peculium*, or property of his own. The relation of master and slave lost to a certain degree, the character of pure despotism, and approached towards that of lord and vassal, patron and client; while the frequency of emancipation introduced into the relation of servitude, sentiments totally opposite to those which naturally spring from it. There were gleams of benevolence and of gratitude; there was a twilight of good will. Compared to a condition of freedom, it was as the gray morning dawn, to the brilliancy of noon. Compared to the system of our own country, it is as that same morning dawn to the blackness of midnight.

It is true that we read of savage atrocities, exercised in those ancient times, by masters towards their slaves. The Spartans, we are told, were accustomed from time to time, to send out assassins who put to death the boldest and most intelligent of the Helots; and it is undeniable that the frequent servile insurrections which took place in the ancient states, were suppressed and punished by a series of the most dreadful cruelties.

But these fierce acts ought to be regarded as proofs not so much of the degradation of the slaves, as of an approach on their part, towards an equality with their masters. No repose is so perfect as the repose of absolute despotism. The unfrequent and always trifling disturbances among the slaves of America furnish palpable evidence how sunk they are. It is only where a certain portion of liberty is enjoyed, that more begins to be strenuously claimed, or boldly sought. To him that hath, shall be given; from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath. Such servile insurrections as take place in America, are faint flashes of folly or despair. The insurrections of slaves in ancient times, were the promptings of genius and of hope.

Had the Greek and Roman masters been the same indolent, scattered, untrained, unready people as are the American planters, such were the means, the courage, the spirit of their slaves that they could not have retained their dominion for a day. In those times the free were all soldiers. War was their constant study and pursuit. They lived too in cities, ready to combine and act at a moment's warning. Thus they were able, by constant preparation, and superior means, aided as they were by the moral causes above enumerated, to maintain their authority over slaves, enjoying an intellectual equality with themselves. Under the Roman empire, the standing army by which the emperors maintained their authority, served also to hold the slaves in subjection. Besides, the masters had a strong body of firm friends and

allies in the numerous class of freedmen. The emancipations constantly going on would soon, in fact, have put an end to the condition of servitude, had not the numbers of the enslaved been kept good by fresh importations and purchases. When at length these importations ceased, slavery in towns and cities soon came to an end; the slavery of the country was changed into villanage, and villanage ended at last, in liberty.

To a certain extent, many of these observations apply to slavery as it exists in Brazil and Spanish America. However disastrous may be the social condition of those countries, it is not destitute of alleviations. The slave is at least regarded as a man, and is always cheered by the prospect and the hope of freedom. His efforts to obtain it by purchase, by gaining the good will of his master, or by other peaceable means, are encouraged by the laws and by public opinion; and if he attempt to qualify himself for the more advantageous possession of it, so laudable an ambition is approved and applauded.

In America, so far as the slaves are concerned, there prevails a totally different system. It is laid down, as an indisputable maxim, that the freedom, the equality, the moral and social elevation of the servile class, or any of its members, are totally inconsistent with the dignity, the interest, the existence even of the privileged order. That contempt, that antipathy, that disgust which the degraded condition of servitude naturally inspires, is sedulously aggravated by the whole course of education, and is artfully, though imperceptibly, transferred from condition to race; and to crown the whole, the idea is earnestly and industriously inculcated, that these suggestions of prejudice and ignorance, are the very innate promptings of nature.

In consequence, the natural sympathies of humanity are first smothered and then extinguished. The privileged cease to consider the servile class as belonging to the same scale of being with themselves. The slaves in the estimate of their masters, lose all the at-

tributes of humanity. The kindest, the most tender-hearted, the most philanthropic of the privileged order, learn to be perfectly satisfied when the animal wants of the servile class are tolerably provided for. To make any account of their mental wants,—that is, to entertain the idea that they are men,—is considered an absurd, a misplaced and a fanatical tenderness, certain, if persevered in, to uproot the foundations of society, and to end in results indeterminate, but terrible.

For the slaves are regarded not merely as animals, but as animals of the wildest and most ferocious character. They are thought to be like tigers, trained to draw the plough, whom nothing but fear, the whip, and constant watchfulness, keep at all in subjection; who would take advantage of the slightest relaxation of the discipline that restrains them, to break away from their unwilling labors; and who if left to themselves, would quickly recover their savage nature, and find no enjoyment except to riot in blood.

Whether or not there is any thing of reason and truth in these ideas, is not now the question. Suffice it to say, that they are universally prevalent throughout the southern states. They are the received, the authorized, the established creed. They are interwoven into the very frame work of society; laws, customs, charities, morals, and religion, all are modified by them. Doubtless there are men of reflection and discernment, and men in whom a warm benevolence supplies the place of reflection and discernment, who perceive more or less clearly, the monstrous and extravagant absurdity of these popular ideas. But for their lives they dare not whisper the suspicion of a doubt. To do so would be high treason against the authority of the privileged order,—an order as jealous, fretful and suspicious as ever was the aristocracy of Venice; and as apt to punish too, on vague suspicion, without a trial, or a responsible accuser.

It is plain that emancipation can form no part of such a system. In South Carolina, Georgia, Alaba-

ma and Mississippi, no master can emancipate his slave, except with the express permission of the state legislature, a permission not easily to be obtained. In North Carolina and Tennessee, the emancipating master must have the approbation and consent of the County Court. In Virginia, he must remove the emancipated slave, beyond the limits of the State. In Maryland a similar law prevails. In Kentucky, Missouri and Louisiana, the master still retains the right of emancipation under certain restrictions. But throughout all the slave states, this exertion of power—the only act of justice which the owner of slaves, in his character of owner, is able to perform—is totally discouraged by public opinion. The emancipated class is studiously subjected to mortifications and disabilities without number. They are considered as noxious vermin whose extermination is required for the comfort and security of the privileged order. They are hunted down by legislative enactments as bears and foxes are in other states; and by depriving them of all the rights of citizenship, advantages of society, and opportunities for labor, the attempt is made to render them if possible, even more miserable than the slaves. These efforts have been to a certain extent, successful. The condition of the emancipated class, would seem to be wretched enough to satisfy their worst enemies. Yet wretched as they are, still they are envied by the slaves. What conclusive evidence of the miseries of servitude!

Some few emancipations occasionally take place; but it is obvious that the value of the boon is exceedingly diminished, by the miserable condition to which the emancipated class is studiously reduced. As to passing from the unprivileged into the privileged order, that is a thing entirely out of the question. No slave can expect it for himself, for his children, or even for his remotest posterity. The feeling which exists upon this subject throughout the South, is a perfect fanaticism. In one or two rare instances, a good-natured master has attempted to elevate his own

children, born of slave mothers, to the rank of freedom. But in every such case, the penalty of setting public opinion at defiance, has been dearly paid. The transgressor has been assailed in every form of ridicule, and reproach; he has been pursued with the most inveterate malice; has been overwhelmed with torrents of obloquy; and held up to public scorn and indignation, as a blasphemous violator of the decencies of life and the sacred laws of nature.

Here is the point at which the slaves of the United States sink into a depth of misery, which even the imagination can hardly measure. What is life without hope? All men of reflection, whether poets or philosophers, have agreed, that life even in the better aspects of it, if we did but see things as they are and as they will be, would be a dreary and a worthless thing. It is hope that cheers, supports, sustains us. It is in the anticipation of future joys, that we are happy. But what hope, what anticipations has the American slave? His hopes are all fears; his anticipations, if he has any, are anticipations of suffering. This is a state of existence which could not be endured by cultivated or reflecting minds. The slightest gleam, the faintest and most uncertain glimmer, a hope, a chance which to all beside ourselves may appear but the faintest, will suffice often to lead and guide us on, through defiles dark and gloomy as the valley of the shadow of death. But when that light goes out, that glimmer ceases, that hope expires, what shall save us from the horrors of despair?

SECTION VIII.

Wealth and luxury of the masters, as it affects the condition of slaves.

It is a fact well worthy of consideration, that with the progress of wealth and luxury among the masters, the sufferings, the misery, the degradation of the slaves has been steadily aggravated; till at length, in the wealthiest and most refined of our slave holding communities, a point has been reached, both in theory and in practice, beyond which it does not seem easy to go.

The mildest form of American slavery is to be found, not among the polite and well educated citizens of Richmond and Charleston, but amid the rude and wild abodes of the Creeks, the Choctaws, the Seminoles,—tribes whom we describe and stigmatize, as savages.

The indian slaves, are in many respects, almost upon a level with their masters. The wants of savage life are few and simple. The avarice of the master is not stimulated by the greediness of luxury. He is content with a moderate annual tribute of corn and other provisions; and provided this be paid, the slave is left at liberty to procure it as he pleases, and to employ his time and strength as he best sees fit. It thus happens that an Indian slave is sometimes richer than his master; and if he have talents and ambition, though still a slave, he may become one of the most influential persons of the tribe.

The indian slaves are well aware how superior is their condition to that of the miserable sufferers, who labor for white masters, upon cotton and sugar plantations; and the dread they have of that lot, as well as the influence they are able to exercise, may be clearly illustrated by the case of the Seminole war. That war, according to the statement of those best acquainted with the subject, had the following origin. It was not that the indians themselves had such serious ob-

jections to removal; but as the time for the execution of the treaty approached, their country was overrun with speculators and adventurers from the states, who came partly to set up claims, true or false, to certain indian slaves, on the ground that they were runaways, or the children of runaways, who had years ago fled to the Seminoles for protection; and partly to set on foot a slave trade with the indians, who, it was hoped might be induced at the moment of their removal to part with their servants for little or nothing. The indian slaves were filled with terror and alarm at this prospect of falling into the hands of white masters; and it is believed to have been by their instigation and encouragement, that the Seminoles were induced to resist the execution of the treaty, and to commence the war.

The small planter, who can neither read nor write, who has been bred up in poverty and ignorance, but who has wandered into some new settlement and has earned by his own personal labor, the means to purchase two or three slaves, next to the wild indian, is the most mild and indulgent master. He works with his slaves in the field, he converses with them and consults them. If either of them exhibits any peculiar shrewdness or good judgment, the master perceives it, and avails himself of it; and such a slave often becomes his owner's chief confident and adviser.

In his fits of drunkenness, or those bursts of passion to which the rude and uneducated are peculiarly liable, such a master beats and abuses his slaves. But he does the same thing to his wife and children. In general he treats them with a certain degree of tenderness and familiarity; and as they are always about him, by flattery, management and importunity, they are able to carry a thousand points, and to secure a thousand indulgences.

But as such a planter grows rich, and increases the number of his slaves, his feelings and his conduct change with his condition. He appears in the field, not as a laborer, but on horseback, whip in hand. He

begins to copy the airs and to imbibe the sentiments of his aristocratic, refined, and educated neighbors. He forgets the equal terms upon which he once lived with his slaves; he feels himself transmuted into a being of a superior order, born to be idle while they were born to work. He ceases to have any sympathies for them. He learns to despise them; to hear their complaints and appeals with indifference; and to push them to labors, which when he worked by their side, he did not exact.

Under this new discipline, and with the frugal habits which he acquired in his youth, this planter's property rapidly increases. He becomes one of the wealthiest men of the neighborhood; and his son and heir takes rank with the choicest aristocracy. Conscious of his own deficiencies in education and manners, the father secures for that son, the best instruction he can obtain. He is sent early to school, and perhaps to some northern college to finish his education. He returns well mannered, and accomplished, with the refinement of sentiment and the gentle bearing which education and good company impart. The father dies, and the son succeeds to the inheritance. He has no taste for agriculture; or if he has, he cannot bear the constant annoyances of a plantation. He leaves every thing in the hands of an overseer; and is almost a perpetual absentee.

Every reduction in the allowances to his slaves, is so much net addition to his own revenue. He is always in want of money; and as he finds it less disagreeable to retrench the comforts of his slaves than his own luxuries, the slaves are soon reduced to the merest subsistence. What are their sufferings or complaints to him? He is not at home to witness or to hear them. He leaves the execution of his orders to an overseer. This overseer is desirous to secure the good graces of his employer. The surest way of doing so is, to make a great crop. For this purpose the quantity of land in cultivation is increased. The tasks are extended, and the additional labor necessary

to their execution, is extorted by the whip. Between this new labor and these new punishments, the slaves grow insubordinate and discontented. The boldest and most enterprising take to the woods. They are pursued with guns and dogs; retaken; mangled with the lash, and loaded with fetters. These examples terrify the others. They submit in silence. Order is restored. The discipline of the plantation is spoken of, with admiration. The crop is unusually large. The owner is delighted with the result, and urgent for its continuance, and thus extortion and severity are carried to their highest pitch.

At the same time that the physical comforts of the slaves are diminished, all their moral qualities are deteriorated. Every bad passion is called into play. That state of hostility and warfare in which slavery orginates and consists, from being lulled, and half-quiescent, becomes open and flagrant. The masters learn to hate the slaves, as fiercely as the slaves hate the masters. Presently they begin to fear them. Fear and hate upon both sides! God have mercy upon the weaker party!

SECTION IX.

Improvement in physical condition, as it affects the condition of servitude.

Benevolence is one of those native impulses of the human heart, which never can be wholly eradicated; and which may be seen mingling itself with actions that proceed from motives of a totally opposite character.

It is plain that the whole system of slavery is in violation of the dictates of benevolence; yet no impartial observer, who has resided in the southern states

of America, attempts to deny, that mingled with all its wrongs and crimes, there may be perceived, in many cases, much kind feeling on the part of the masters. Indeed it is out of this fringe of benevolence with which the dark garment of slavery is more or less scantily ornamented, that most of its defenders have woven the frail texture of their apologies.

This benevolence however is of a very limited character. It is confined almost entirely to physical condition. It conforms itself to the established sentiment of the country; it considers the slaves not in their character of human beings, of men, but merely as animals.

It is asserted that within the last twenty or thirty years, as the tobacco cultivation has declined in Virginia, there has been a great amelioration in the treatment of slaves. Many benevolent individuals have exerted themselves to bring about this state of things, by creating in the public mind a spirit of reprobation against instances of excessive cruelty. It may be observed in passing, that this amelioration in the treatment of the Virginia slaves, is a strong confirmation of the doctrines of the preceding chapter. As the masters have grown poor, and have been obliged to retrench their splendors and their luxury, at the same time, they have grown comparatively humane.

The Kentuckians boast, that of all the American masters, they are the kindest and the best; and they take to themselves no little credit, for the liberal supply of food and clothing which they bestow upon their servants, and the moderate labor which they demand.

This course of treatment, so much applauded by its authors, is worthy of all approbation on the score of domestic economy. It is also gratifying to the humane feelings of all those persons of sensibility, to whom the constant presence of visible suffering, is the source of emotions far from agreeable. But when we consider the matter a little deeper, when we see how this merely physical kindness operates upon the intel-

lect and the heart, we may well doubt whether this sort of benevolence, however well intended, and however on that account worthy of applause, does not in fact, greatly aggravate the miseries of servitude.

So long as men are constantly pressed by merely physical wants, those wants absorb almost their whole attention. The peculiar attributes of humanity, are scantily, or not at all, developed. They have the form and the aspect of men, but in character they are little more than mere animals; and the gratification of their animal wants occupies their total attention.

But so soon as these merely physical necessities are satisfied, the mental and moral attributes begin to unfold themselves. The passions bud and blossom; the feelings, the desires, the aspirations of manhood display their various forms and colors. If they might bear their natural fruits, those fruits would be good and wholesome. But crushed, withered, blasted, plucked up as it were by the roots, their premature decay evolves a deadly miasm, which poisons the soul, corrodes the heart, and sets the brain on fire.

Let us consider this matter more minutely. We read in ancient fables and eastern tales, of men transformed by the power of magic into beasts. Here is an operation of an analogous kind. Here are men who have advanced so far as to feel that they are men, whom law, custom, prejudice, and the potent force of public opinion, confine to the condition of mere beasts of labor. The more their humanity developes itself, and the more conscious of it they become, the more irritating and oppressive this condition must be. To be penned up, driven to labor, and foddered by the hand of a master,—and what consequence is it though the fodder be plentiful, and the labor be light?—to be repulsed from that condition of manhood to which they now begin ardently to aspire; to be expelled from the circle of social emulation and made mere counters in a game, of which they so long themselves to be the players; to be despised, scorned, and degraded into a fellowship with

the beasts they drive; forbidden to indulge their natural and irrepressible inclinations; prisoners though at large; forever watched; forever thwarted; aggrieved still further by the constant spectacle of privileges, enjoyments, objects and pursuits to share in which they cannot even dream, but which increase in estimated value, with the hopelessness of their attainment;—what wonder, if in souls so beset with grievous temptations, there should spring up and grow, a fierce envy, a desperate hate, an impotent indignation preying on itself, a dark, ferocious, restless spirit of revenge, which delay irritates, concealment sharpens, and fear embitters? What wonder, if all the mild feelings which soften man, and make him capable of happiness himself, and of conferring happiness on others,—are choaked and blasted by a rank growth of deadly passions; and that he, who under better auspices, might have been an ornament and a benefactor to society, becomes a plague to others, a torment to himself?

Such are the effects which must inevitably be produced, upon that sensitive and irritable disposition, the usual accompaniment of genius; and the same effects, to a greater or less extent, may be expected to result in the case of every slave, whose physical wants are so far satisfied, that he becomes capable of reflection, and passes from the narrow circle of animal desire, into the boundless amphitheatre of human wishes.

Would it promote the happiness of our domestic animals, our horses and our oxen, supposing them to remain in their present external condition, to endow them with the passions and the intellect of men? Who will maintain the affirmative of a proposition so absurd? Yet the attempt to alleviate the condition of slavery, merely by improving the physical condition of the slaves, is an attempt, the absurdity of which, if it be less obvious, is precisely of the same nature.

Keep your slaves pinched with hunger and worn down with fatigue, and they remain merely animals,

or very little more. They suffer it is true; but they suffer as animals. There is a certain fixed limit to their misery. It has its intervals of cessation. The imagination has no power over it. What it is, it is. The present is the whole; for the past is forgotten, and the future is not anticipated.

But satisfy their hunger; put them physically at ease; give them leisure for thought,—and you create new sufferings more bitter than those you have removed. The man finds that yoke intolerable, of which the animal hardly perceived the existence. For two or three wants that you have relieved, you have created twenty others, or caused them to be felt, wants incessant, unquiet, unappeaseable; and for these wants there is no remedy,—no remedy, while you remain a master, and they slaves! After the sybil had cast two volumes into the fire, the third remained, as costly and as precious as all the three. In like manner, the chain of servitude loses none of its weight, by parting with a portion of its links. While one remains, that one is heavy as the whole! Nay, heavier;—and as it dwindles to the sight, still it peirces deeper to the soul; it frets and ulcerates the heart. At first it only bound the limbs; but now it penetrates, and with its murderous touch, tortures the vitals!

It is a common remark at the South, that the more intelligent a slave is, the more unquiet, dangerous, and troublesome he is. The remark is just. The more intelligent a slave is, the more greviously he feels the yoke of slavery. If a master then, through indulgence towards his slaves, has placed them in a situation of comparative physical comfort, so far from having a reason for stopping at that point, it becomes more imperatively his duty to go on. By doing what he has done, he has sharpened the appetite for liberty; and this appetite which he has sharpened, is he not the more urgently called upon to gratify?

Let it not be said that this argument is no better than an apology for a system of hard labor and

starvation, nor let any man so use it. God forbid! Those are obvious cruelties; and so clearly perceptible to the senses, that no man of common humanity, however thoughtless and unobservant, can fail to perceive them; and no man of common sensibility can bear to inflict them. I have desired to call attention to sufferings of another kind—mental sufferings,—not so obvious, yet far more excruciating; slavery's second growth, a rank and poisonous growth, more deadly than the first.

I have desired to point to the slave-holder, the fearful dilemma by which he is hemmed in. The moment he ceases to inflict tortures at which his sensibilities revolt, the moment he yields to those prayers for mercy which his own heart re-echoes to him, at that very moment he becomes the author of new sufferings ten times more severe, than those he puts a stop to. He irritates while attempting to soothe; and the oil which he drops into the wounds of servitude becomes a bitter and acrid poison.

This is one of those cases in which all must be done, or nothing. Half measures, palliatives, do but inflame the disease. The only cure for slavery, is, freedom!

CHAPTER SECOND.

POLITICAL RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM.

SECTION I.

General View of the Subject.

The great objects aimed at, or which should be aimed at, in the political constitution of a government, are 1st, *Security*, 2nd, *Freedom*, 3d, *Equality*.

Security has two principal branches, of which one relates to the person, and the other to property. A good degree of security in both these respects, is essential to the comfort, and to the advancement of society.

Freedom is either political or civil. *Political Freedom* consists in a participation, more or less direct, in the appointment of magistrates, the enactment of laws, and other public acts. *Civil Freedom* depends upon the supremacy of the laws. It guarantees every citizen against arbitrary and capricious interference. It admits of no punishments except according to existing statutes; and it allows the enactment of no law founded upon any other reason than the public good.

Equality divides itself into three sorts; 1st, *Political Equality*, or the equal participation in political privileges, and the equal chance to enjoy political power;—in other words the perfection of political freedom; 2nd, *Equality of property*, or the most equal distribution, consistent with security, of the wealth already existing, and the equal chance to produce or acquire new wealth; 3d, *Social Equality*, or the equal chance of acquiring estimation and regard by the exhibition of

amiable and useful qualities, or the performance of meritorious actions.

Now so far as regards the unprivileged class of the community, it is obvious at a single glance, that the constitutions of the Southern States, fail totally, in securing any one of the above objects. They not only fail, but they do worse; they make a deliberate sacrifice of them all.

This sacrifice is said to be necessary in order to secure the well being of the privileged class. If in fact it is so, it must needs be confessed that the alternative is very unfortunate. The Southern people, if we allow this necessity, are in the unhappy predicament of a savage tribe of which one half, in order to sustain existence, are driven to kill and to devour the other half. Before we can admit the necessity of any such horrible experiment, every other means must first have been tried, and must have failed. What should we think of a tribe of savages who lived fat and comfortable upon the blood and flesh of their brethren, without the slightest attempt to devise any other means of subsistence; and who repulsed with impatient anger and bitter reproaches, the benevolent efforts of those who would point out to them a more decent and innocent way?

It is clear that so far as the unprivileged class are concerned, the political results of slavery are most disastrous. Slaves suffer at one and the same time, all the worst evils of tyranny and of anarchy. The laws so far as they are concerned, are all penal; they impose a multitude of obligations, but they create no rights. The compendious definition of a slave is, a man, who has no rights, but with respect to whom the rights of his owner are unlimited. If the law in some respects, seems to protect him, it is not in his character of a man, but in his character of a thing, a piece of property. Exactly the same protection which the law extends to a slave, it extends to a dog, a horse, or a writing desk. The master does as he pleases with either. If any other person undertakes to dam-

age, steal, or destroy them, he is answerable to the owner, and is punished not as a violator of personal rights, but for having disregarded the laws of property.

The constant sacrifice of so many human victims, amounting in several states of the American Union to a majority of the population,—such a sweeping deprivation of rights as the slave-holding states exhibit, if it can be justified at all, must find that justification in some vast amount of good, which that sacrifice produces. This good must be principally sought for among the privileged class. If it exist at all it must be either political,—by increasing the security, freedom and equality of the privileged class; economical,—by increasing wealth, comfort and civilization; or personal,—by its beneficial influences on individual character. When Mr. McDuffee pronounces slavery the best and only sure foundation of a free government, if he has any meaning at all, if this declaration be any thing more than a passionate paradox,—he must mean to imply, that the political consequences of slavery are of a kind highly beneficial to the master; in fact so beneficial to the master as to form a counterpoise, and more than a counterpoise to all the evils it inflicts upon the slave. It becomes then an important question, what are the effects which slavery produces upon the political, economical, and personal condition of the privileged class? And in the first place of its political results.

SECTION II.

Slavery, as it affects the security of the privileged class.

I. We will consider in the first place how the security of property is affected by the institution of slavery.

Property is better secured in proportion as a greater part of the population is made to feel a direct interest in its security. The moral force of opinion in this as in other cases, has an efficacy greater than law. Laws unsustained by public opinion can only be enforced by a great and constant exertion of physical power.

1. With regard to the slave holding states, a large part of the population, to wit, the slaves, so far from having any personal interest in upholding the laws of property, have a direct and powerful interest the other way. The laws of property in their eyes, so far from being designed to promote the public good, and to confer a benefit upon all, are but a cunningly devised system by means of which the character and the name of *Right* is bestowed upon the rankest injustice, and the most flagrant usurpation. This attempt to monopolize the benefits of property, this system by which a large portion of the community are not only deprived of those benefits but are actually themselves converted into articles of property, has the necessary effect to create in the very bosom of the community, a state of feeling utterly hostile to security. Slaves are universally depredators upon the property of their masters. Such depredation they regard as perfectly justifiable and even praiseworthy. It requires the most incessant vigilance to guard against it, nor will the most incessant vigilance always suffice. The security of the slave-master is the security of a housekeeper who knows that he entertains a gang of thieves upon his premises, and who is in constant apprehension of being robbed.

Nor is this systematic spirit of plunder confined to

the unprivileged class. It embraces also the large class of free traders who gain their livelihood by a traffic in stolen goods. It is these persons who offer inducement for a large part of the depredations which the slaves commit upon their masters. These depredations, though small in the individual instances, are enormous in the total amount. The extreme severity with which the laws of the southern states visit the offence of trading with slaves in articles suspected to be stolen, and the terrible outrages occasionally committed upon this sort of offenders by planters who think the inflictions of the law to be too mild, or too uncertain, are a sufficient proof in how serious a light these depredations are regarded.

2. By the institution of slavery, the slaves themselves become the chief article of property. Property of all kinds has a certain tendency to take wings to itself and fly away. This is peculiarly the case with slave property. In addition to all the other accidents to which slaves, in common with other species of property, are exposed, they have a propensity to impoverish their masters by absconding. How frequently this propensity comes into exercise, any body may learn by examining the columns of the southern newspapers. Of the slaves that run away, the greater part are recovered: this is true, but still the master is a loser. He loses their services during their absence,—often at the most critical moment of the crop,—besides the expense of their apprehension and conveyance home, including the reward offered, which in itself is often equal to half the money value of the slave.

3. Many slaves submit with great reluctance to the station and duties which the law assigns to them. To keep these unquiet creatures in due subordination, it becomes necessary to wound, to maim, and sometimes to kill them. This chance of loss takes away in a certain degree, from the security of this kind of property.

4. We come now to a cause of insecurity of a more serious character than any yet enumerated. Property

in slaves is not a kind of property generally acknowledged. There are whole nations who deny that any such kind of property ought to exist. All the most enlightened people in the world are precisely of that opinion. Within the last fifty years, an effort has been begun,—an effort which every day gathers new force and earnestness,—for the total abolition of this kind of property. The alarm which this effort produces among the holders of slaves is natural, and it is great. An alarm exists at all times among slave-holders, because there is always a certain apprehension lest the slaves themselves may reclaim their liberty by force. But that alarm reaches an extreme height when it is known that there are other persons, over whom the slave-masters have no control, who sympathize with the slaves, and who profess the intention of using every moral means to bring about their emancipation. *Moral means* is a phrase which slave-masters find it difficult to understand. *Force, violence,* is the only means with which they are familiar; and this means which they themselves so constantly employ, they naturally apprehend, will be used against them. The degree of alarm thus produced, is sufficiently indicated by the ferocity with which the persons called abolitionists, have been assailed by the slave-holders, and by the savage barbarities exercised upon such abolitionists, or supposed abolitionists, as have fallen into their hands; exercised generally upon mere suspicion, and with hardly any evidence that the sufferers were guilty of entertaining the opinions ascribed to them.

Thus it appears that under a constitution authorizing slavery, one of the chief items of property, namely, slave property, from its very nature, its total want of any foundation of mutual benefit, is peculiarly insecure; and this insecurity spreads to every other kind of property, because the institution of slavery, by its necessary effect destroys all respect for property of any kind, in a large part of the population, and also creates a vast number of depredators.

II. We come now to that branch of Security, which relates to the person.

Here again the privileged class of a slave holding community are beset with alarms and dangers. These dangers and alarms are of two kinds,—dangers from the slaves, dangers from one another.

1. Dangers from the slaves. The master retains his authority only by the constant exercise of violent means. This violence is liable at any time to be retorted upon himself. The subjugation and cowardice of those over whom he tyrannizes, affords the master a certain degree of security. But passion often supplies the place of courage; and we frequently hear of terrible acts of vengeance committed upon the person or family of the master, by outraged and infuriated servants.

But this danger is trifling compared with that anticipated, from a rising of the servile class. Every two or three years the report of an insurrection, real or imaginary, spreads the most frantic terror through the southern states. The antics enacted upon such occasions, would be in the highest degree farcical, did they not generally terminate in bloody tragedies. Men who are individually brave, and who would march to the assault of a battery without flinching, work each other into a complete paroxism of fear. A single negro seen in the woods with a gun upon his shoulder, suffices to put a whole village to flight. Half-a-dozen unintelligible words overheard and treasured up by some evesdropping overseer, or invented perhaps by some miscreant, who delights himself with the public alarm, are enough to throw all the southern states into commotion, and to bring nights of agony and sleeplessness to hundreds of thousands. But this is not the worst of it. When terror makes cowards it always makes bloody-minded cowards.

Blood! blood!—nothing else can appease the general alarm. Committees of safety with the most absolute authority, are every where established. On these committees sit many a village Tinville, many a rustic

Danton. Before these tribunals the unhappy victims are dragged; accusation and condemnation keep close company. Hanging, shooting, and burning become the order of the day. The headlong ferocity of these proceedings betrays the greatness of that alarm which produces them.

It has been shown in another place, that notwithstanding the extreme degree of terror to which the apprehension of slave vengeance gives rise throughout the south, the actual danger is by no means proportionately great. Many causes contribute to this disproportion, of which one leading one is, a secret consciousness of the cruel injustice of slavery. Tyranny is ever timid, always full of fears.

2. Danger from one another. In this case, the alarm is less, but the danger is more real. Throughout the greater part of the southern states it is considered essential to personal safety, to carry concealed weapons. This single fact shows that personal security is at the lowest ebb. When a man must protect himself, for what is he indebted to the laws? These weapons are no doubt carried partly as a protection against the slaves; but they are chiefly used, in quarrels between freemen. Of these quarrels the laws take but little notice. In such a case it is considered the mark of a mean spirit to appeal to the law. If I am assaulted or beaten, it is expected that I stab or shoot the aggressor. In several of the southern states it seems to make very little difference, whether I challenge him to a duel, or assault him without previous notice given, in a tavern, or the streets. Murders are constantly committed in this way. For the most part they go entirely unpunished, or if punished at all, it is only by a short imprisonment, or a trifling fine. They fix no imputation upon a man's character. Persons guilty of homicide are to be met with in the best society of the southern states. If it be inquired what is the connection between this condition of manners and the existence of slavery, the answer is, that the imperious ferocity of temper which the exercise of despotic

power produces or inflames, is the main cause of the existence and the toleration of an insecurity of person and a recklessness of human life, such as hardly elsewhere prevails in the most barbarous countries.

But even this is not the worst aspect of the case. The panic terror which the rumor of an insurrection produces at the south has been already mentioned. That terror levels all distinction between slaves and freemen, and so long as it lasts, no man's person is secure. During the period of the Mississippi insurrection, or pretended insurrection, in the summer of 1835, the committee of safety appointed upon that occasion, by a tumultuous popular assembly, were vested with ample authority "to try, acquit, condemn, and punish white or black, who should be charged before them." By virtue of this commission, the committee proceeded to try a large number of persons, principally white men, accused of having instigated, or favored the alleged intended insurrection. Many of those tried were found guilty, and were hung upon the spot. A great many others were cruelly whipped, and were ordered to quit the state in twenty-four hours.

The case of Mr. Sharkey will clearly exhibit the degree of personal security existing in the state of Mississippi at that time. Mr. Sharkey was a magistrate, and in the exercise of his legal authority, he set at liberty three men, of whose entire innocence of the charges alleged against them he was well assured, although they had been seized by the pursuivants of the committee of safety. This gentleman was a planter, a man of property, a large slave-holder, brother to the chief justice of the state,—a person not very likely to be implicated in a slave insurrection. But his opposition to the despotic authority of the committee was considered to be plenary proof of guilt, and a large party was sent to arrest him. Mr. Sharkey had no relish for being hung upon suspicion; so he barricadoed his doors, built fires about his house, in order that the darkness of the night might not conceal the approach of the pursuivants, wrapped his

infant child in the bed clothes to save it from the bullets, loaded his muskets, and quietly waited the attack. His left hand was dreadfully shattered by the first fire of the assailants; but he succeeded in killing their leader, in wounding several of the rest, and in compelling a retreat. By this time his friends and connections began to collect about him, and a party was formed in his favor. Had he been less wealthy, or less influential, he would inevitably have perished.

SECTION III.

Slavery as it affects the liberty of the privileged class.

One of the chief branches of civil liberty consists in the unrestricted disposal of one's property. There are restrictions which are necessary; but the more these restrictions are multiplied, the more is liberty restrained.

By the institution of slavery, slaves become one of the principal kinds of property; but in the free disposal of this kind of property, the slave-master at the South is very much restricted. The "sacred rights of property," as to which he is apt to be so eloquent, with regard to that very subject-matter with respect to which he considers them most sacred, are closely restrained by laws of his own enacting.

To set a slave free, is certainly the highest act of ownership; the only one indeed which a truly virtuous man ought to exercise; and certainly the last one which a person of any manly spirit would be willing to surrender. But in the greater part of the southern states, the master is deprived by law of the right of emancipation. Here certainly is a most grievous infringement upon liberty.

The right to improve one's property so as to increase

its productiveness and give it an additional value, is an essential part of civil liberty. But this is a right of which, as respects his slaves, the southern master is in a great degree deprived. In most of the slave states it is a highly penal offence to teach a slave to read. Now reading and writing are essential to many employments. These accomplishments, and others which by their means the slave might acquire, would greatly tend to enhance his value, by making him capable of more valuable services. But the master is not allowed to improve his property in this way. The law interferes to prevent it.

Considering slaves merely as property, here are two grievous infringements upon the master's liberty. But consider them as men, and the infringement upon the master's freedom of action is still more intolerable. I am deprived by law of the capacity to be benevolent and just. I am ready to confer upon a fellow being the highest boon which man can give or receive;—but the laws do not permit me to confer it. Perhaps the slave is my own child. No matter; he shall remain a slave to the day of his death, unless I can obtain as a particular grace and favor, a special permission to set him free. Is this liberty? Is not the servitude of the father as miserable almost as that of the son?

The authors of these laws have plainly perceived that the natural dictates of humanity are at war with the institution of slavery; and that if left to their own operation, sooner or later, they would accomplish its overthrow. To perpetuate the slavery of the unprivileged class, they have fettered up those sentiments of the human heart, which are the foundation of morality and of all the charities of life. For the sake of brutalizing others, they have sought to barbarize themselves.

Liberty of opinion, liberty of speech, and liberty of the press do not exist in the southern states of the American Union, any more than under any other despotism. No doubt there are some subjects which

may be very freely discussed there; but the same is the case under all despotisms. Any body may freely discuss at Rome or Moscow, the merits and demerits of American slavery. The only prohibited subjects are, the plans of government and systems of policy upheld by the pope or the czar. So at Charleston or Richmond, one is at full liberty to discuss subjects having no obvious bearing upon the political system and social condition of Virginia or South Carolina. But approach *that* subject, lisp the word, slavery; dare to insinuate that the existing system of southern society is not the best possible system; assail ever so cautiously the tyranny of the slave-masters; point out ever so temperately the inevitable wretchedness of the slaves, and you will soon be taught that despotism is as jealous, as watchful, and as fierce, in America as in Europe.

The discussion of this prohibited subject is not only visited by severe legal penalties, under pretence that it has a tendency to produce insurrections,—the same reason, by the way, which is given at Rome and Moscow,—but it is still more effectually suppressed by the terrors of Lynch law, a system of procedure, which in cases of this sort is either openly countenanced, or secretly abetted by the gravest jurists of the South.

Not only is discussion prevented, but it is dangerous to receive, to read, even to have in possession, any book, pamphlet or newspaper which has been enrolled in the *Index Expurgatorius* of the slave-holding Inquisition, or which, though not proscribed by name, appears to treat upon the evils of slavery and their remedies.

The United States post-office at Charleston was violently assaulted by a mob, headed by the principal inhabitants of the city, and a large part of its contents publicly burnt, under pretence that among the newspapers and pamphlets contained in it, there were some of an *insurrectionary* character.

At Richmond a bookseller received a box of books containing copies of a certain work compiled by a

Virginia clergyman, to aid the Colonization Society. It was principally made up of extracts from speeches delivered in the Virginia House of Delegates in favor of a project for the gradual abolition of slavery by shipping off the slaves to Africa, broached shortly after the Southampton insurrection. This book was denounced as *incendiary* by the Richmond Committee of Safety, and by their order all the copies were delivered up, and burnt in the public square.

In the District of Columbia an unlucky botanist happened to have among his papers used for the preservation of plants, some copies of a prohibited newspaper. He was arrested, almost torn in pieces by the mob, thrown into prison where he lay upwards of six months, and it was with great difficulty that his acquittal was obtained.

It is a curious fact that at the very moment at which the *Richmond Whig* was assailing Louis Phillippe and his ministers for their restrictions upon the French press, the *Journal des Debats* was defending those restrictions by the example of Virginia! It must be confessed that the French restrictions are perfect liberty, compared with the law and practice of the southern states.

The Secret Tribunal of Venice, which received anonymous accusations, and which proceeded to judgement without notice given to the culprit, has been always denounced as an institution the most hostile to liberty that can possibly be imagined. Tribunals very similar, and in many respects much more to be dreaded, exist throughout almost the whole of the slave-holding states. They pervade the country and hold all the citizens in awe. The punishments inflicted are of the most dreaded kind,—death by the gallows or a slow fire, banishment, scourging, tar and feathers. This jurisdiction is known as *Lynch law*, and the accusers, judges and executioners are generally the same persons. As was the case with the Secret Tribunal, it confines itself principally to state crimes, that is, to such actions as are supposed to have a tendency to

overthrow the existing system of despotism. This system of Lynch law which sprung into existence among the barbarous settlers of the backwoods, where no law existed, and which was invented by them as a substitute for law, has of late been introduced into the oldest and most civilized of the slave states, and has been made to supercede the regular administration of justice in a variety of the most serious and important cases. The terror of this tribunal is sufficient to preserve a dead silence at the South, and to produce an apparent unanimity of opinion. There are no doubt numbers who still entertain the opinions of Washington, of Henry, and of Jefferson upon the subject of slavery; but no one dares in public or in private to utter those opinions. No one known or suspected to be an abolitionist,—and this word at the South obtains a very extensive signification,—ever reside or even travel in the slave states without imminent danger. Such, under a system of despotism, is the liberty even of those called free.

SECTION IV.

Slavery in its influence upon Equality.

Equality it has been stated, may be considered under three points of view, *Political Equality*, *Social Equality*, and *Equality of Wealth.*

Political and social equality are essentially dependent upon equality of wealth. The truth of this observation is confirmed by universal experience. Those who possess the property of a country, have always succeeded in obtaining the political power. Revolutions of property have always produced political revolutions.

Look for example to the history of England. So

long as the wealth of that country consisted principally in land, and that land was possessed by a few feudal and ecclesiastical barons, the whole political power of the country was in their hands. Towns having sprung into existence, inhabited by artisans and traders, whose industry created a new species of wealth, these towns presently attained a representation in the national legislature. Their influence at first was trifling; but it has steadily increased with the increase of manufacturing and commercial wealth, till now it has become almost predominant.

The history of France furnishes proof to the same point. So long as the nobility, the clergy and the magistrature, possessed the larger portion of property, they found no difficulty in maintaining their political superiority. But the progress of events presently threw a preponderancy of wealth into the hands of the *tiers etat*. This had no sooner happened, than those who possessed the preponderancy of wealth, began to devise means for obtaining the preponderancy of political power. Hence the French Revolution, which has resulted in putting the government into the hands of the more wealthy proprietors of the country. That government however will hardly stand unless its basis be enlarged, and a greater number of property holders be permitted to participate in it.

If in the Northern States of the American Union there exists a degree of political equality of which the world offers no other example on so large a scale, the equal distribution of property throughout those states, is not less striking and remarkable.

It is an observation as curious as it is important, that in countries in which industry is respectable, and where the fruits of labor are secure, property always tends towards an equal distribution. Every man possesses as a means of acquirement, his own labor; and though there be a very considerable difference in the capacity, the industry, the good fortune of individuals, yet this difference has its limits; and diversities of acquisition are still more limited; for in general the in-

dustry of the rich man is relaxed; he is more inclined to spend than to accumulate; while the poor man is still stimulated by the desire of acquisition.

It appears then that in civilized communities, the natural tendency of things is towards equality. Inequality can only be maintained by artificial means; by laws which give to some individuals exclusive advantages not possessed by others, such as laws of primogeniture, of entail, laws conferring hereditary rights and privileges; laws creating monopolies of any and every kind.

If political equality be dependent upon equality of wealth, social equality is equally dependent upon it. Social distinctions which appear to spring from other sources, rise in fact from this, and by means of this are kept in activity. Blood and family are esteemed of great importance, and according to a vulgar notion which we hear every day repeated, are said to afford a much nobler and more respectable aristocracy, than that of mere wealth. But the founder of every noble family was first rich before he became noble. It is his wealth transmitted to his descendants to which they are principally indebted for distinction. When they become poor they soon fall into contempt. This is so well understood that whenever a Marlborough or a Wellington is raised to the highest rank of the peerage for services or supposed services rendered to his country, an *estate* is bestowed by parliament, to accompany the *title*.

Equality in general, may be resolved into equality of wealth. All depends upon that.

Now it is a fact clear and indisputable, that the existence of slavery in a country, is the surest and most inevitable means of producing and maintaining an inequality of wealth. This is not said with any reference to the unprivileged class, who are to be regarded in this view not as men, but merely as things. Reference is had only to the free. Slavery necessarily produces a great inequality of wealth among the free.

The method of this operation is obvious. The la-

bor of each individual, is as we have seen, the natural and original source of individual wealth. But when a man is enabled to possess himself of the fruits produced by the labor of a large number of individuals, *to whom he is not obliged to make any compensation beyond a bare support*, his wealth tends to increase in a vast and disproportionate ratio, over the wealth of that individual who relies solely upon his own labor.

Moreover slaves are a sort of property much less valuable when held in small portions, than when possessed in masses. Where four or five hundred slaves are owned together, the doctrine of chances may be applied to the numerous casualties to which this kind of property is liable. The average annual loss and gain under ordinary circumstancs will be pretty regular, and may be made a subject of calculation. But the owner of only four or five slaves may at any time lose them all by a sudden disorder. They may all be taken sick at the same time, and the crop may perish for want of hands to tend it. They may all run away together. The income expected from them is thus liable to fail entirely, and the poor man is constantly thrown back in his attempts to accumulate, by the necessity he is under of investing his gains, or a considerable part of them, in a species of property which when possessed in small quantities, is peculiarly insecure.*

But there is another effect of the existence of slavery in a community, much more extensive and powerful in its operation. Wherever slavery exists, labor comes to share the degradation and contempt of servitude, while idleness is regarded as the peculiar badge of freedom. But when idleness is general, the great mass of the community, must inevitably be poor. In every country the number of those who inherit any considerable portion of wealth, is small. Personal industry is the only resource of the great bulk of the citizens. Where labor is honorable, it proves

* See Chapter III. Sec. II. for additional and important reasons of the tendency of slave-holding property to accumulate in a few hands.

to the prudent and industrious, a resource sufficient not only for support, but for the accumulation of wealth. When labor is not honorable, the mass of the citizens rather than degrade themselves by submitting to it, will be content with the merest subsistence. Thus it happens that in countries in which slavery has existed for a considerable length of time, the citizens are divided into two classes, of which the first and much the smaller, comprises a few rich proprietors who at the same time are large slave-holders, while the second class contains the great mass of the free people, persons of little property, or none at all.

This was the state of society in all the republics of ancient Greece. Those republics were constantly divided into two parties or factions. The oligarchical or aristocratic party, composed of the few rich and their immediate connections and dependents, and the democratic party, as it was called, composed of the bulk of poor freemen, headed and led on by some ambitious deserter from the aristocratic ranks. The history of ancient Greece consists for the most part, in the mutual struggle of these two parties. In general, the aristocratic party had the ascendency; when the opposite faction came into power, it was only by a sort of accident commonly of very limited duration.

This serves to explain a curious part of ancient history, to which we have no parallel in modern times, namely, the frequent projects for an artificial distribution of property, and of laws for the remission of debts. It was clearly perceived by many politicians of antiquity, that a certain equality of wealth was absolutely essential to political equality. They saw that the nominal equality of all the citizens amounted to but little, so long as all the wealth of the state was possessed by a few, and the great bulk of the citizens not only had nothing, but were even deeply in debt to the few rich. Hence the various projects for abolishing debts, prohibiting usury, limiting the amount of property which any individual might possess, and making new and equal distributions of existing wealth.

But these schemes did not touch the root of the evil. So long as slavery existed, it was a natural and inevitable consequence that all property, however equally it might at first be divided, should presently concentrate in the hands of a few, leaving the mass, idle and poor,—poor, because idle.

The operation of the same cause is very evident in the history of the Roman Republic. A few patricians were possessed of enormous wealth, counting their slaves by tens of thousands, and owning almost entire provinces, while the great bulk of the citizens were in a state of the most deplorable poverty, depending for their support upon distributions of corn from the public granaries, upon gratuities bestowed upon the commonality by the ambitious rich, and on the pay and plunder of the military service.

Such are some of the instances which history affords, of the natural effect of slavery in concentrating wealth in a few hands, and in reducing the mass of the free, to poverty and political degradation. History also furnishes instances of the contrary process, by which liberty has given a spring to industry, and has thus operated to disseminate wealth, and to create an intermediate body between the rich and the poor, a body which with the increase of civilization and knowledge, is destined perhaps to embrace the great mass of mankind. About the tenth century of the christian era the greater part of Europe was reduced by a combination of causes, to a most barbarous condition. A few great lords, who were in fact little better than so many Tartar or African chiefs of the present day, possessed all the land, the only sort of property which remained in existence. This land was cultivated by slaves. The mass of the free population depended for its support upon the bounty of the feudal chiefs, which bounty was repaid by the constant attendance and warlike services of those who received it. The sole occupation of the free, was, hunting and war.

In this state of things we can discover no element

of social improvement. What then has changed the condition of Europe to the state of comparative advancement in which we now see it? A few serfs flying from the tyranny of their lords, founded here and there, a little settlement. They built walls to protect themselves from feudal aggression. In many cases they resorted to some ancient city, a remnant of former times, dwindled to a ruin, but which their industry helped to repair, and their courage to defend. They applied themselves to the mechanic arts and to trade. Gradually they amassed wealth. In these cities slavery was not tolerated, and the serfs of the neighborhood found first protection, and presently citizenship. These cities thus founded and thus built up, are the origin of that great class of merchants, manufacturers, and industrious men, to whom Europe is indebted for its present advancement, and on whom its future hopes depend.

The same tendency of servitude to produce great inequalities of condition among the free is as visible in the history of America as of Europe. The insurrection of the slaves of St. Domingo had for its immediate occasion a violent quarrel between the aristocracy of rich planters, and the *petit blacks* or *poor whites*. While these two factions were engaged in a bloody contest for political ascendency, the slaves seized the opportunity to reclaim their liberties.

Slavery produces the same effects in the southern states of the American union, which it ever has produced in all the world beside. Several cases have hitherto operated to retard, or to disguise these effects, but they are becoming every day more and more visible.

The poor whites of the old slave states have hitherto found a resource in emigration. All of them who had any spirit of enterprise and industry have quitted a home where labor was disgraceful, and in the wide regions beyond the mountains have attained a comfortable livelihood, and have amassed wealth by means which however innocent or laudable, they could not

employ in the places where they were born, without a certain degree of self-abasement. But by a fatal oversight, a most disastrous ignorance, they omitted to exclude that great source of evil, the bitter effects of which they had experienced in their own persons; and that same train of causes is now in full operation in Kentucky and Tennessee, Missouri and Arkansas, which drove the original settlers of those states from Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina.

As to the southwestern states, they offer no resources to the poor whites. The cultivation of cotton has attracted thither, and still continues to attract, a host of slave-masters, and whole gangs of slaves. No man can emigrate to those states who expects to live by the labor of his hands, unless he is prepared to brave that very ignominy, and to plunge anew into that very social condition which makes him uneasy, and cuts him off from all chance of advancement at home.

Political parties in the slave-holding states, within a few years past, have begun to assume an aspect entirely new, and one which gives fearful omen that these slave-holding republics are about to follow in the career of those ancient states, whose policy was founded, like theirs, upon a system of slavery. There is already, throughout most or all of the slave-holding states, an aristocratic party, and a party which calls itself democratic. The aristocratic party is composed of the rich planters, and of those whom their wealth enables them to influence and control. The democratic party, so called, is composed in a great measure of the *poor white folks*, with a sprinkling of ambitious aristocrats for leaders. This miscalled democratic party,—for it is in fact only a faction of the white aristocracy,—by the natural operation of the slave-holding system, is rapidly increasing in numbers, and with the increase of its numbers, the social degradation and the destitution of its members will also increase. Measures of enlightened policy are hardly to be expected from such a party, even if it could obtain power and keep it, which indeed is hardly to be ex-

pected. Such is the force of habit, the power of prejudice, the invincible stupidity of ignorance that these people seem incapable of perceiving the real cause of their own degradation. They are apparently as much attached to slavery and are as ardent in its support as is the aristocratic party, thus regarding with a blind and fatal reverence those very institutions which crush them to the dust. The influence, however, of such a party, composed of men, poor, degraded, ignorant and ferocious, and headed by some desperate Catiline of the aristocracy, may at times, prove extremely disastrous, not to the southern states alone, but to the whole union.

SECTION V.

Education in the Slave-holding States.

That the state ought to provide for all its citizens the means of at least that primary education which consists in the knowledge of reading and writing, has come to be a political maxim generally acted upon in all civilized communities. Even such despotic governments as Austria and Prussia have admitted this most important article into their political code; and primary instruction is provided by those governments for all the people at the public expense. This shows the progress which the idea of equality has lately made; for *equality of knowledge* is a most essential part of political and social equality.

The despotisms existing in the southern states of the American Union, are almost wholly regardless of this important political duty of general education. We have already seen that so far as regards the unprivileged class, the attempt to impart any instruction to them, so far from being considered a duty, is de-

nounced as a crime. There are also obvious reasons why no general public provision for the education of the privileged class has ever been established.

The privileged class consists, as we have seen, of an oligarchy of rich planters, and a comparatively large body of persons with little or no property. The rich planters know the value of education, and their wealth enables them to secure it for their own children by the employment of private tutors, or by sending them to schools and colleges at the North. The poor whites, bred up in ignorance, have no adequate idea of the value of knowledge, or of the importance of its diffusion. The rich planters have no inclination to tax themselves for the benefit of their poor neighbors. Their wealth, education and influence, enables them to control the legislation of their respective states; and perhaps they imagine that they shall best secure their own importance and political power, by keeping the mass of the free population in ignorance. The same stroke of policy which they play off against their slaves, they play off also against their poorer fellow citizens.

What has been done in a public way for the advancement of education in the southern states, has consisted almost entirely in the establishment of colleges,—institutions of but little use to the mass of the population, and which are almost exclusively frequented by the sons of the rich planters. For this purpose money has been liberally appropriated.

It is true that in Virginia, South Carolina, and perhaps in some other of the slave-holding states, a trifling sum is annually appropriated expressly for the education of *poor children.* But the very form of this appropriation, which extorts from those who wish to avail themselves of it, a humiliating confession of poverty, is an insult to those for whose benefit it is intended. That aid which might be justly demanded as a right, is made to assume the character of a charity. Besides, the amount of these appropriations is so small, and their management is so miserable, that little or no benefit results.

The facts of the case then, appear to be these. Not one of the slave-holding states possesses any thing like a regular system of common schools, or has made any provision at all worthy of notice, for disseminating the rudiments of education among its citizens. Inequality of wealth has produced, as a natural consequence, inequality of knowledge.

This condition of things tends greatly to aggravate the social and political inequalities which prevail throughout the southern states. It is in vain that people who cannot read, boast of their political rights. There is no power more easily abused for the promotion of private ends, than the power conferred by superior knowledge. A man who cannot read, may be said to be politically blind. Those who see may miss the way, but the blind have hardly a chance to find it. Nothing is more easy than leading them into the pit, and thus making them the instruments of their own destruction. It is the extreme ignorance of those who compose what is called the democratic party at the South, which incapacitates that party from projecting and carrying through any real and useful reforms in the social polity of those states, and which converts it into the mere tool and stepping-stone of artful and ambitious men, who insinuate themselves into its confidence, and then employ that confidence for the accomplishment of their merely private ends. In the nature of things, the aristocracy of rich planters, as they possess all the wealth and all the knowledge, will succeed, in the long run, in usurping the whole political power. As might be expected, South Carolina, the state in which slavery is most predominant, is also the state in which the aristocracy of rich planters domineers without control. Already the doctrine, sanctioned by the constitution of that state, that every freeman is entitled to vote at elections, is violently assailed by the leaders of the aristocratic faction. They insist upon a property qualification. It is easy to see whither this doctrine will lead. By the concentration of wealth in few hands,

which is the natural result of slavery, the number of those who possess the requisite qualifications, will continue to diminish, till at last the whole political power concentrates in form, as it now does in fact, in the hands of a little oligarchy of rich slave-holders.

But though the equality secured to all freemen by the constitutions of the slave-holding states, is little more than nominal, though the few wealthy and well informed, generally succeed in obtaining the political control, and then employ it to promote their own private ends, it is not, therefore, to be hastily concluded that the constitutional rights of the poor freemen are valueless, or that the loss of those rights with which they are threatened, is not a thing to be most seriously deprecated. Having a vote at elections, every freeman, however humble his condition, is sure of being treated with a certain degree of respect. If the mass of the people are cajoled out of their votes, they still receive for them a sort of equivalent, in kind words and fair speeches. Let them be deprived of this title to consideration, and the native insolence of power would soon display itself, and they would be trampled under foot with the same remorseless violence now exercised upon the free blacks and the slaves.

SECTION VI.

The military strength of the Slave-holding States.

The military strength of states, has ever been esteemed of the highest importance in a political point of view; since it is upon their military strength that states are often obliged to depend for their defence against internal, as well as external foes. In this particular the slave-holding states of the South present an aspect of extreme weakness.

When all the inhabitants of a country have arms in their hands, and are ready and zealous to meet and repulse any invader, the military strength of a country may be said to be at the highest point, for experience has abundantly demonstrated how easy it is to transform citizens into soldiers. But those citizens who are capable of being transformed into soldiers must be principally drafted from the laborious classes of society. The hardy cultivators of the soil, when driven to the dire necessity of beating their plough shares into swords, have ever furnished the best and most patriotic soldiers,—soldiers, who after repulsing the hostile invader, have willingly resumed again the useful labors of their former calling. Men of this class composed those armies of the revolution to whose courage, fortitude and patient spirit of endurance, we are indebted for our national independence.

But in the slave states, these cultivators of the earth, these very men upon whom reliance ought to be principally placed in the hour of danger, would in that hour, be regarded with more dread and terror even than the invaders themselves. In case of a threatened invasion, so far from aiding in the defence of the country, they would create a powerful diversion in favor of the enemy.

When the French, in the first years of the revolution, marched into the neighboring countries proclaiming "liberty and equality," they were received with such good will on the part of the inhabitants as ensured a speedy triumph, notwithstanding the superior force arrayed to resist their progress. The events of those wars placed in a strong light, the fact obvious enough in itself, but which had not then attracted sufficient attention, that the inclination of the inhabitants of a country is much more apt to decide its fate, than the strength of armies in the field. When half the inhabitants of a country wish success to invaders, it is not easy to resist them.

Considering the odious light in which slavery is now regarded by all civilized nations, it is not likely,

in case the United States became involved in war with any people of Europe, that any repugnance would be felt on the part of the hostile state, in seeking aid at the hands of the slaves. A lodgement being effected upon some part of the Southern coast, by an army of respectable strength, and emancipation being promised to all such slaves as would join the invaders, a force would soon be accumulated which the unassisted efforts of the slave-holding states would find it impossible to resist. If the invaders were expelled it would only be by troops marched from the North. In such a crisis the fear of outbreaks on their own plantations would keep the planters at home; or if they assembled in force to resist the invaders, their absence would be likely to produce such outbreaks. When a servile was added to a foreign war, between the rage of the masters and the hatred of the slaves, it would assume a most savage aspect.

According to Colonel Napier, in his work entitled "*England and her Colonies*," an experiment of this sort was projected during the war of 1812, and nothing but the fact that Great Britain at that time, had slave colonies of her own, prevented it from being carried into effect.

The difficulty of raising troops in the slave-holding states is obvious from the fact, that Massachusetts alone furnished more soldiers to the revolutionary armies, than all the slave-holding states united. The obstacles in the way of raising troops in those states, have greatly increased since that time.

The military weakness of a slave-holding community was strikingly illustrated in the capture of the city of Washington by the British in 1814. Could such an army have marched such a distance, and effected such destruction in any of the free states? To that question let Concord and Lexington reply. Had the slaves of those counties through which the British army marched, been free citizens, had not Washington itself been a slave market, the British troops would never have arrived within sight of the capitol.

Should the slave-holding states become involved in a war, which it would be necessary for them to prosecute from their own resources, they would be obliged to depend upon a standing army levied from among the dregs of the population. Such an army would be likely to become quite as much an object of terror to those for whose defence it would be levied, as to those against whom it would be raised. It would not be easy to disband an army composed of men destitute of every other resource, but who had found in military service a means of living at the expense of others. It would be insisted, and with some show of justice too, that the country was bound to maintain and provide for those to whom it was indebted for defence and even existence.

One other observation will place the military weakness of the slave-holding states in a clear point of view. They are dependent for all manufactured articles upon foreign supply. Even the very tools with which the plantations are cultivated, are furnished from abroad. Every article of equipment necessary to enable an army to take the field, must be imported, and unless their agricultural productions can be freely exported in return, they have no means whereby to purchase, or to pay. The coast of the slave-holding states is but scantily furnished with harbors; all the trade of export and import, centres at a few points. These points may be easily blockaded by a small naval force. The slave states have no facilities for equipping or manning a fleet. In a naval warfare, half a dozen of the fishing towns of New England might compete with the whole of them, and a strict blockade of their harbors for three or four years, would reduce the whole of the Southern States to a condition of the greatest distress.

In point of military strength the slave-holding states are not by any means all to be placed upon the same level. Such states as Kentucky and Tennessee where the proportion of slaves is small, are very strong in comparison with Carolina and Louisiana, where the unprivileged class form a majority of the population.

CHAPTER THIRD.

ECONOMICAL RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM.

SECTION I.

Effect of Slavery upon the Sources of Wealth.

The public wealth consists in the sum total of the wealth possessed by all the individual members of the community. Generally speaking a community is wealthy in proportion to the relative number of its members who are possessors of property. A few very rich men may make a great show, and create a false impression as to the wealth of a community; but a large number of small properties added together will far outrun the sum total of a few large ones. The pay of the officers of an army is very large compared with that of the rank and file; but the sum total of the pay of the rank and file, far exceeds in amount the sum total of the pay of the officers.

That the slave states of the American Union are excessively poor compared with the free states, is conceded on all hands. The slaves, forming in some of the states, the majority of the population, are incapable of holding property. They are not the owners even of their own labor, and of course they can contribute nothing to the sum total of the public wealth. The class of poor whites, including a large proportion of the free population, are possessed of a very trifling property. Almost the entire capital of the country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of slave-holders; and of the property which they possess, a great portion consists in the minds and muscles of the unprivileged class. In free communities, every

man is the proprietor of his own muscles and intellect; but as these commodities however valuable, are not the subject of bargain and sale in the market, they are not usually reckoned as property. Compare the tax valuations of the slave-holding states with that of the free states, and it will be discovered, that almost the only kind of property, in the usual acceptation of that word, which exists at the South, is, the land, and the buildings upon it. Exclude the slaves, and the amount of what is called personal property existing in those states, is exceedingly small; and upon examination it will be found to fall greatly short of the amount of debt always due to the North and to Europe.

In estimating the actual wealth of the slave-holding states, the amount of this debt ought always to be taken into account. A great part of the banking capital of those states is borrowed; and so of the money invested in rail-roads and other public works. A large proportion of the planters have beside great private debts of their own, secured by mortgage upon their plantations and slaves, many of them being little better than tenants at will to some northern capitalist, to whom all their property in fact belongs.

As the Southern States possess advantages of soil and climate peculiar to themselves, it becomes an interesting inquiry, what is the cause of this comparative poverty?

1. Political economists have generally agreed that *labor* is the sole source of wealth. Whether this doctrine be literally and absolutely true, may perhaps be doubted; it is however beyond all doubt, that labor is a very principal source of value.

The great motive to labor, the great inducement to exertion, that motive, that inducement which has raised man from the primitive barbarism of the woods to such degrees of refinement and civilization as have yet been attained, has been, *expectation of reward.* There is in this motive a sort of creative power, which seems to give new strength and alacrity. It even

possesses the capacity of making labor delightful. The only other motive powerful enough to overcome the natural indolence of man, is the *fear of punishment;* but that is a melancholy and miserable motive which seems to add a new distastefulness to labor, and to wither up the energies of those whom it influences.

Now with respect to the whole unprivileged class, that is to say the principal laboring class in the slave-holding states, their only motive to industry, is this second, this enfeebling motive, the fear of punishment. Their labor is compulsive and reluctant, and its results are proportionably small.

With respect to the other laboring class at the south, to wit, the poor whites, their industry is paralyzed by a fatal prejudice which regards manual labor as the badge of a servile condition, and therefore as disgraceful,—a prejudice which not even the expectation of reward is strong enough to overcome. It is a prejudice similar to this which has operated in no small degree to keep Spain in a stationary state, two centuries behind the civilization of the rest of Europe. But even Spain in this respect, is more fortunate than the American slave holding states. It is the mechanic arts which the Spaniards regard as derogatory, whereas agriculture is comparatively respectable. In the slave holding states of America, agricultural labor is the most derogatory of all, because the labor of the field most assimilates the condition of a freeman to that of a slave. Whenever such notions prevail, they are fatal to public prosperity. Poverty keeps pace with pride.

Take the slave-holding states together, and the free inhabitants are about twice as numerous as the slaves. Yet all the great articles of production in which the wealth of the slave-holding states consists, cotton, tobacco, rice, sugar and flour, are produced almost exclusively by slave labor.

What then is the occupation of the free? One class, the larger slave-masters, contribute absolutely nothing to the public stock. They hardly bestow a thought

even upon the management of their own estates. Their sole business is, to receive the income and to spend it. Another class of the free population obtain a livelihood by acting as overseers or viceroys for their richer neighbors. They are thus saved from the degradation of manual labor; but it is a hard service by which they earn their bread. So hard, that it is very seldom performed to the satisfaction of their employers. The planters give a terrible character of the overseers as a class. According to their account, the overseers as a general rule, are ignorant, stupid, obstinate, negligent, drunken and dishonest. For their ignorance they are hardly to blame, considering what scanty means of education this class enjoys. Stupidity and obstinacy are the natural fruits of ignorance. Negligence and drunkenness they learn from their employers; and if overseers are dishonest it is little to be wondered at, considering the temptations and opportunities by which they are surrounded, and the total confusion of all ideas of right and wrong, justice and injustice, which the nature of their employment is likely to produce.

The third and largest division of the privileged class, compelled by absolute want to the disgraceful necessity of manual labor, work with an unwillingness as great as that of the slaves, and with still less of efficiency. The produce of their labor is very small. In general it is hardly sufficient to support them in that rude and semi-barbarous condition to which they have been accustomed.

The disastrous effects of slave-holding upon free industry, are particularly obvious in the families of the small planters, and of those farmers who possess but five or six slaves. These slaves suffice to perform the labors of the farm, and when the land is fertile the owner of it lives in a rustic plenty. A family of sons grows up around him. He has no occasion for their assistance on the farm, and if he had, they would regard the labor as an intolerable disgrace. The boys grow up in idleness, with little or no education, be-

cause there is no system of public instruction, and the father cannot afford to send them to a distance in pursuit of schools. They arrive at man's estate without having been bred to any regular employment. Each has his horse, his dog and his gun; and while the father lives the sons have a home; they spend their time in hunting, or in riding about the country, or at horse-races, frolics, barbecues, or political meetings. There are thousands of young men in Kentucky and Tennessee in this unhappy predicament. Full of spirit and ambition, active, capable, eager for some honorable employment; but condemned by the social system of which they form a part, and by the unhappy prejudices against useful industry which that system engenders, to an idleness which presently becomes as irksome to themselves, as it is fatal to the public prosperity. When habit has made indolence inveterate, and when they are too old to apply themselves with zeal or success to a new course of life, the death of the father cuts off the support they have hitherto enjoyed. His property divided among a numerous family, gives but a pittance to each. That pittance is soon spent. Want stares the unhappy sufferers in the face. They lose by degrees their standing and respectability. The weaker spirited among them sink down to the lowest depths of poverty and vice. Those of more energy emigrate to the new states of the far west, and having escaped the charmed circle in which they were so long bound up, they develope a new character, and like their fathers before them, by means of their own personal industry, they bring a farm into cultivation and gradually acquire wealth. But if they have settled in a slave state, that wealth is generally invested in slaves; and their own children are bred up in that same style of helpless indolence of which they themselves were so near becoming the victims, and which their children perhaps will not so fortunately escape.

Thus it appears that one plain and obvious effect of the slave-holding system is, to deaden in every class

of society that *spirit of industry* essential to the increase of public wealth.

2. The spirit of industry is not however alone sufficient for the accumulation of property. Industry quickens production; but to accumulate, it is necessary not only to produce but to save. *Economy* then, may justly be regarded as the second great source of public wealth.

But to expect any thing like economy from the unprivileged class, would be extremely ridiculous. Economy is like industry, it is like every other virtue,—it never will be exercised unless there is a motive constantly operating to produce it. Now in the condition of servitude no such motive exists. In fact, the motives are all the other way. The slave receives from his master a certain weekly allowance of food. Any attempt to lay by a part of it, would be absurd, for as soon as a store was accumulated, the master, if he discovered it, would stop the allowance till that store was consumed; or at all events, he would immediately diminish an allowance which experience had shown to be more than sufficient. It would be the same with respect to clothing. But why dwell upon this topic? Is it not plain that he who is incapable of possessing property is alike destitute of motives to produce or to save?

If slaves are improvident with respect to themselves, it is not remarkable that they are still more so, with respect to their owners. No matter what occurs; if the cotton house is on fire; if the fences are down, and the cattle destroy the corn; if the horses stray away; if the tools are lost or broken; it there happens one or all the thousand accidents which are always liable to diminish the value of their master's property, and which a little care or foresight might have prevented,—any or all of these occurrences are a matter of perfect unconcern to the slave, nor will he voluntarily lift a finger to prevent them. If indeed he has any feeling about the matter, it is rather an inclination to destroy than to save. He experiences a

secret delight, in the losses and sorrows of a master whom he hates.

Nor is economy likely to be practiced to any considerable extent by the hireling overseers to whom the management of the great plantations is intrusted. These overseers are frequently changed, and they have little or no interest in the economical management of the property intrusted to their charge.

As little can we look to the conduct of the slave-masters for any exhibition of the virtue now under consideration. It is an old observation that what comes easy goes easy. This saying is verified by the conduct of brigands, pirates, and robbers, and all that class of men who live upon plunder. It applies with equal force and for the same reason, to slave-masters, who generally contrive to spend all they get and to run into debt all they can.

We have thus seen that with respect to the slaves and their owners, idleness and improvidence keep close company. The same is the fact with respect to the poorer class of freemen. Though their resources be next to nothing, they still contrive to imitate in their small way, the careless extravagance of their richer neighbors.

It thus appears that there is a great deficiency of the second principal source of public wealth, to wit, economy, among all classes of the population of the slave-holding states of America.

3. A third great source of public wealth consists in *invention*, by which is meant, the discovery of new and more productive applications of industry. But to call this great means of increasing the productive power of a community into action, industry must be honorable. That ingenuity which busies itself in observations and experiments for the discovery of means to produce the same effect with less labor, seldom displays itself except in communities in which the useful arts are held in high esteem. Even inventions made elsewhere, are for the most part brought into use with great difficulty, in those societies in which

men of education and reflection, if such there are, despise useful industry, and in which the great business of production is intrusted to ignorant and stupid slaves, and to overseers equally ignorant and stupid. Under these circumstances every thing proceeds in the same dull round, without change or attempt at improvement. The more men know, and the more they reflect, the more convinced they are how limited is the actual extent of their progress. Ignorance is arrogant, dogmatical, certain that it knows every thing already. The idea of improvement does not enter into all its thoughts. Hence it is that the early progress of a people from barbarism to civilization takes place by such hardly perceptible steps, and is subjected to so many hindrances and interruptions, as almost to discourage the most sanguine believers in human perfectability, and to have given rise to the common opinion that savage nations are incapable of being civilized; while on the other hand, the history of our own age serves to show, how civilization, once set fairly in motion, advances with an impulse continually accelerated, and which not even the most serious obstacles can long retard.

The southern states derive no inconsiderable advantage from their close and intimate connection with the free states of the north, of which the social system is so essentially different. By this means the natural effect of the institutions of the south, are to a certain extent counteracted, especially in those newly settled states into which there has been a considerable influx of northern population.

SECTION II.

Slavery as it affects the amount of capital required for industrious undertakings.

All enterprises of industry, whether agricultural, mechanical or mercantile, require a certain amount of capital for their successful prosecution. Every thing which enables these enterprises to be carried on with a less amount of capital, contributes to the increase of national wealth; and on the other hand, every thing which causes a greater amount of capital to be required, is an obstacle in the way of all new undertakings.

In free communities, where the laborers have their own labor at their own disposal, and where in consequence, they are ready to sell it, either by the day, the year, or the hour, in any quantities, that is, in which it may be needed, beside the fixed capital invested in lands, workshops, tools, ships, steamboats, &c., there are required two separate portions of floating capital, one to be invested in the stock to be operated upon, and the other to be employed in paying the wages of labor. But no more labor need be paid for than is actually employed. Whenever a smaller quantity will answer, a portion of the laborers may be dismissed; whenever more is needed, more laborers may be employed.

But in a slave-holding community, in addition to these three portions of capital, another and a very large portion is required, in order to commence any industrious enterprise whatever; for though in such a community there is no payment of wages, yet a corresponding quantity of capital is necessary to furnish food, clothing, and medicines for the slaves. A fourth and additional portion of capital is also required, to be invested in *the purchase of the laborers themselves*,—a necessity which constitutes a great obstacle in the way of all industrious enterprises.

Take the business of agriculture for example. In the new cotton-growing states, a very small sum of money will suffice to purchase a plantation of several hundred acres; but a very large sum of money is needed to purchase the laborers necessary to carry on the cultivation of it. Could laborers be hired by the month or the day, as in free communities, a moderate capital would enable the planter to command the labor he would need, whereas, under existing circumstances, no person can start a new plantation in Alabama or Mississippi, who is not already possessed of a large capital, or able to command it in the shape of loans.

We shall fall, probably, much under the mark, if we assume that a capital of five thousand dollars invested in hired labor, would enable as many acres to be cultivated, as a capital of fifty thousand dollars invested in slave labor. The consequence of this state of things is obvious. It gives a monopoly of the command of labor to those who are already possessed of large means, either in the shape of property or of credit. Persons of small capital have no chance to compete with persons of large capital, because by this system, a large capital is rendered absolutely necessary to obtain that command of labor without which no industrious enterprise can be carried on. This single fact is sufficient to explain that tendency of the wealth of a free community to concentrate in a few hands, which has been stated in a preceding chapter.

This system not only gives a monopoly of the command of labor to those who are already rich, but it is also a very wasteful and extravagant system. It compels the operator to purchase and to support a much larger number of laborers than he ordinarily has occasion for. He is obliged constantly to own and to feed the largest number ever necessary in his business, or else to submit, occasionally, to severe loss, for want of a sufficiency of labor. In the cotton planting business, for instance, a given number of slaves can cultivate a considerably larger quantity of cotton than they can gather in; so that the planter is

either obliged to submit to an annual loss of a portion of the crop which he has brought to maturity, or else to cultivate less than he otherwise might, for the sake of gathering all.

The cotton crop, however, as it extends the labor of cultivation and gathering in, through almost the entire year, is less surely attended with this sort of loss, than are the grain crops and farm cultivation of the more northern slave-holding states. In those states, during the winter, there is comparatively little occasion for labor on the farms. During all that time, the capital invested in the ownership of slaves, is unproductive, and the slave-master is saddled in addition with the expense of supporting laborers, for whose services he has no occasion.

What a great discouragement to the poor, that is, to the great mass of the free population, this system presents, will be evident from a few considerations. In those parts of the slave states in which slavery predominates, it is impossible to hire free laborers. To work at all, even on one's own little tract of land, is considered a sufficient degradation; but to work for another person, to put one's self under his direction, seems to approach too near to the condition of slavery, to be at all endurable. If a person, therefore, wishes to employ any other labor than his own, he must have recourse to slave labor. But the employment of the labor of other people is in general absolutely essential to the accumulation of wealth. Where a man merely hoards up the profits of his own labor, his wealth increases only as money does when placed at simple interest, and the industry and economy of a long life will accumulate but a moderate sum. But if those profits are invested in the employment of the labor of other people, his wealth then increases like money at compound interest.

But when to employ other labor than one's own, it is necessary to buy the laborers, a considerable sum must be first accumulated, before it can be employed at all; and as has been shown in another place, so

long as the number of slaves which a person possesses, is small, the investment is exceedingly precarious.

The necessity of a great capital, and the wastefulness with which that capital is employed, sufficiently explain the fact, why in all those occupations in which the industry of the free states has come into competition with the labor of slaves, the free states have been able to undersell their rivals. Slave labor is only profitably employed in those kinds of business, such as the cultivation of cotton, rice, and sugar, in which the climate and soil of the northern states prevent the people of those states from engaging. In the cultivation of grain, the raising of stock, and all the operations of farming agriculture, the profits of the slave-holding cultivators are notoriously small, and many a large slave-holder grows poor in that same pursuit, which enriches the farmer of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York, who begins life with no other resource than his own capacity to labor. Hence that heavy drain of emigration, hence that fatal domestic slave trade, which aggravates the poverty of the older of the slave states, by carrying off that labor, which constitutes the principal means of economical prosperity.

This same necessity for a great capital, in order to undertake any industrious enterprise, and the same necessary wastefulness in the employment of that capital, afford also one reason among many others, why it has been found unprofitable to set up manufacturing establishments at the south. It is not only necessary to build your factory, and to buy your machinery and stock, but before you can commence operations, you must expend a still larger sum in the purchase of laborers. Apart from everything else, a sufficient reason for the non-establishment of manufactures at the South, is to be found in the fact, that at the North, the same annual quantity of manufactured products can be turned out, with the employment of much less than half the amount of capital, which would be necessary for the same purpose at the South.

SECTION III.

Agriculture in the Slave-holding States.

If we may believe John Taylor of Carolina, the author of *Arator*, or Mr. Ruffin, the ingenious editor of the *Virginia Farmers' Register*, the best agricultural periodical ever published in the United States, agriculture at the South does not consist so much in cultivating land, as in *killing* it. The process is as follows.

A quantity of virgin soil, in those of the slave states in which any such soil is yet to be found, is cleared up every winter. The trees are cut down and burnt, or merely girdled, and left to decay and fall with the lapse of time. When tobacco is the crop, this fresh land is planted with tobacco each successive year till its fertility is exhausted. When it will no longer produce tobacco, it is planted with corn or wheat, till it will not afford a crop worth gathering. It is then *turned out*, that is, left unfenced and uncultivated, to grow up with thickets of sassafras or persimmon bushes, or with forests of the short-leaved pine,—a majestic tree in appearance, but the timber of which is subject to so rapid a decay, as to be of little or no value.

In the cotton-growing states, corn and cotton are planted alternately, till the land is completely worn out. When its original fertility is exhausted, no further attempt is made at its cultivation. It is turned out, and the labor of the plantation is applied to new fields, which presently undergo a similar fate. Thus, every year, a certain quantity of land is given over as worthless, and new inroads are made upon the original forest. Agriculture becomes a continual process of opening new fields, and abandoning the old.

This brief account of southern agriculture, will serve to explain the remarkable fact, that what we should call improved lands, that is, lands which have been

brought into cultivation, are generally of inferior value and price to the adjoining wild lands which must be cleared up before they can be planted. Every crop taken from a field diminishes its value; and as the number of successive crops which can be taken without reducing the land to a state of barrenness, is not great, the diminution in its value, is sufficiently rapid. This is one cause of the sparseness of population at the south. No planter ever thinks he has land enough. Knowing that he destroys a quantity every year, he is anxious still to enlarge his domain so as to be certain of having a supply sufficient to meet the consumption.

Almost the only wealth in the southern states consists in lands and slaves. But slaves are only valuable as cultivators of the soil; and as the productive power of the soil diminishes, the value of slaves must decline with the decreasing amount which they are able to produce. The inevitable consequences to which this system of agriculture must finally lead, are sufficiently obvious. The soil in its whole extent, being at length exhausted, the slaves will hardly be able to produce enough for their own support. They will cease to possess any marketable value; and the entire mass of the population will sink down into a state of miserable poverty, from which they can emerge only by a complete change of manners and habits, and a thorough revolution in the social system.

Nor is this period by any means so distant as may at first appear. For though the superficial extent of the slave holding states is very great, the quantity of land which they afford of sufficient natural fertility to admit of being cultivated according to the southern method, is not great. Deduct the mountains, the morasses and the vast pine barrens, and but a moderate extent of land will remain, a part of which has already been exhausted and deserted, and all of which, with the exception of some alluvial tracks, along the water courses, is of a description not fitted long to withstand the destructive processes of southern agriculture.

This progress of pauperism, presents itself under very different aspects, in different states of the union, according to the antiquity of their settlement, and the density of their population. In the newer states, in which the proportion of virgin land is still very great, to a superficial view it is altogether non-apparent. Its early operation suggests nothing but ideas of public prosperity and increasing wealth. But there is a certain point where the tide turns. The spendthrift, so long as his money holds out, has the appearance and enjoys the reputation of abundant riches. It is only when his resources begin to fail, that the reality of his condition, and the true nature of his conduct become apparent.

Virginia is the oldest of the slave states. All the rest are treading in her footsteps. From her unfortunate condition at the present moment it is easy to portend what theirs must presently become. Eastern Virginia, including all that portion of the state east of the Blue Ridge, presented to the original colonists, a most inviting country. Washed on one side by a spacious bay, into which poured numerous rivers, broad, deep and navigable, all the lower part of the state had received from the hand of nature such unusual facilities of water communication, that hardly a point could be found twenty miles distant from navigable waters; and for the most part, every plantation had its landing place. These numerous rivers were stored and still continue to be stored with such an abundance of fish, fowl and oysters as might alone suffice to support a numerous population. Above the falls of the rivers was a hilly diversified country, generally rich, and if it had some barren tracts, affording spots of the most exuberant fertility.

When Eastern Virginia first began to be settled, it afforded beyond all question, the richest and most desirable country any where to be found along the Atlantic coast of the union.

The cultivation of tobacco soon became so profitable, that the more industrious of the colonists grew

rich by it. Most unfortunately they invested these profits in the purchase of slaves from Africa. The introduction of slave labor presently proved fatal to the industry of the free. But this circumstance was little thought of or regarded, so long as the tobacco cultivation continued to increase, and to bring in rich returns. The wealthier planters rose to the condition of nabobs. They extended their plantations, increased the number of their slaves, and spent freely the large incomes which their estates produced. The apparent wealth and prosperity of the country was very great.

By degrees, the entire surface in the older portions of the state, had been cleared, planted and exhausted. Tobacco requires a rich soil, and the impoverished land would no longer produce it. It became necessary to abandon this species of cultivation, first in the tide-water districts, and afterwards in all that portion of the state north of the James River. The culture of tobacco in Virgnia is now confined, for the most part, to a few of the southern counties, in the vicinity of the Blue Ridge, in which some virgin land is still to be found.

The cultivation of grain succeeded to that of tobacco. These crops were far less profitable; but even these, when taken in constant succession from the same soil, are scarcely less exhausting. The lands have continued to deteriorate till large tracts have been abandoned as absolutely worthless. Meantime, a constant stream of emigration has been pouring out of Virginia. It was first directed to Kentucky, and the states north-west of the Ohio. It then consisted of the poorer portions of the white population, who were the first to suffer from the general decline. This emigration is now directed towards the cotton growing states of the south-west. It is greater than ever, and embraces the wealthiest men and the largest slave-holders, who find that slave property, which is valueless in Virginia, except as an article of exportation, can be put to profitable use in the cultivation of cotton. The

domestic slave-trade produces another equally serious drain upon the population of Eastern Virginia. In default of crops, the planters have no other means to meet their expenses, except selling their slaves. This affords a momentary relief, but it is fatal to the permanent prosperity of the country, which in losing its laboring men, in losing its cultivators, loses the only means whereby it can recover from its present decline.

That part of Virginia which lies upon tide waters, presents an aspect of universal decay. Its population diminishes, and it sinks day by day, into a lower depth of exhaustion and poverty. The country between tide waters and the Blue Ridge is fast passing into the same condition. Mount Vernon is a desert waste; Monticello is little better; and the same circumstances which have desolated the lands of Washington and Jefferson, have impoverished every planter in the state. Hardly any have escaped save the owners of the rich bottom lands along James River, the fertility of which it seems difficult utterly to destoy.

This thriftless system of cultivation, which consists in exhausting a field and then abandoning it, prevailed originally in the more northern states as well as in Virginia. So long as the quantity of new land appeared inexhaustible, this method of culture was a natural and profitable operation, and it was continued by habit long after its bad policy became apparent. Soon after the close of the revolutionary war the same symptoms of exhausted fertility which begun to show themselves in Virginia, made their appearance also in the more northern states. The farmers presently became fully sensible of the ruinous course they were pursuing, and the more intelligent began to turn their attention towards an improved method of cultivation. The custom of manuring, introduced by degrees, is now considered in all the older parts of the country, an essential part of husbandry. A proper rotation of crops is very generally attended to, and at present it is well understood, that lands under a proper system of cultivation ought to increase rather than decline

in fertility. In fact, within the last twenty years so great has been the improvement in agriculture in the older portions of the northern states, that the face of the country has assumed a new aspect, and large tracts which were formerly considered as naturally barren, and worthless, have been transformed into fertile and productive farms. Improvements in culture keep pace with increase of population, and the soil, instead of being constantly deteriorated, is constantly increasing in productiveness and value.

Some patriotic citizens of Virginia have from time to time made great exertions to promote in their own state, an emulation of these northern improvements. But their well-intended efforts have utterly failed. Indeed they are opposed by irresitible obstacles. In the free states the land is portioned out into small farms, tilled by the hands of the owners, whose attention is exclusively bestowed upon the business of agriculture. There is a certain portion of intellect devoted to the improvement of every hundred acres. In Virginia the land is held for the most part in portions ten or twenty times larger, and even were the owners zealous for improvement, on farms so large that same careful oversight and attention could not be bestowed on every part. But then the owners of the land will not give their attention to the matter. It is contrary to the whole tenor of their habits, taste and education. They have slaves, and can hire an overseer. Why should they plague themselves with the details of a business which they do not like, and do not understand?

From the overseer and the slaves, as they have no interest in improvement, of course nothing is to be expected. In fact it is the obvious interest of the overseer to scourge as much out of the plantation as possible, without the slightest regard to future consequences, especially if he is paid, as overseers often are, by a portion of the crop.

But there are obstacles, to be encountered still more serious than these. Improvements cannot be made except by the expenditure of a certain portion of capi-

tal upon the land. Either additional slaves must be purchased, or else a certain portion of the labor now employed in producing a small crop, must be diverted from immediate production, and employed in operations undertaken with a view to distant returns. But this is an expenditure which the greater number of planters cannot afford. As it is, with all their slaves employed in scourging out of the land the greatest immediate produce, their expenses exceed their incomes, and they are running into debt every year. They are in no condition to risk the loss or curtailment of a single crop by changing the established method of cultivation, and attempting the introduction of improvements.

More yet, it is positively bad economy for a Virginia planter to undertake the improvement of his estate. Labor is the only means of resuscitating the exhausted lands of Virginia. Slave labor is the only kind of labor which in the present condition of things can be employed for that purpose. But in the slave market, the Virginia planter, even though he has money at command—which is a case sufficiently unusual,—cannot afford to compete with the slave traders from the South west. The profits which he can possibly derive from slave labor will not warrant him in paying so high a price. Of course he does not purchase; the slaves are driven off to be employed upon cotton plantations, while the lands of Virginia are left unimproved, and still declining in value. Even as regards the labor of slaves already in the planter's possession, it is a much more profitable operation to emigrate with these slaves to Mississippi or Louisiana, and there to employ their labor in raising cotton, and *killing* land, than to attempt the improvement of the worn out lands at home.

That high price of slaves in the south western market, which the Virginians regard as a fortunate addition to their diminishing resources, is likely to prove in its ultimate results, the greatest curse with which the state could be visited. If it were not for the do-

mestic slave trade, slaves would scarcely have an exchangeable value in Virginia; the great cheapness of labor would facilitate agricultural improvements, and the total impossibility of going on any longer in the old way, would lead to important changes in the existing system. As it is, the laboring population of the country, that population upon which all its wealth and consequence depends, is daily drained away. The state is bleeding at every pore, and a fatal lethargy must be the consequence. The richest soil, the most exuberant fertility without labor is unproductive and worthless. What will be the condition of a state which has sold to the slave traders, the only laborious part of her population, whose most enterprising citizens have deserted their homes, and whose exhausted lands hold out no temptation to emigrants from abroad?

In addition to the obstacles already pointed out in the way of agricultural improvement at the South, there is one yet to be mentioned, of a still more permanent and decisive nature. It is a well established doctrine, that a rotation of crops, a variety and a very considerable variety in the articles cultivated, is essential to a highly improved state of agriculture. But such a rotation and variety is impossible in a country which is exclusively agricultural, and which must necessarily confine itself to some crops that will pay the expense of distant transportation. The number of these crops is exceedingly few, and they are all of a very exhausting character. The greater number of vegetable productions are only of use to be consumed on the spot; and such a consumption cannot take place to any considerable extent, except there be in the neighborhood a manufacturing population to take off the extra supply. Agricultural improvements have ever kept pace with the extension of manufacturing industry. The reasons have been already given why the creation of a manufacturing population under existing circumstances, is impossible at the south, and that subject will be further considered in the following section.

The condition of agriculture in Eastern Virginia, is in a greater or less degree, its condition in Maryland, in North Carolina, in South Carolina, and in the older parts of Georgia. In the two latter states the cultivation of cotton has been attended by consequences exactly similar to those produced in Virginia, by the culture of tobacco. After pouring in upon those states a momentary flood of wealth, which glittered and disappeared, it has left the soil in a state of exhaustion and barrenness, for which no present remedy appears.

The south-western states, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana are now the El Dorado of the slave-holders. In those states, cotton at present prices is a very profitable crop. The demand for slaves is brisk. Good field hands sell for eight hundred, or a thousand dollars. The slaves of Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina are purchased up in droves for this market, and numbers equally large are moved off to the south-west by emigrating planters. But these slaves, if they are lucratively employed in cultivating cotton, are employed at the same time, in killing land. Slavery will presently visit the south-west with the same blight of exhaustion and barrenness, which has already alighted upon Virginia and the Carolinas. In proportion to the rapidity with which the apparent immediate prosperity of the south-western states is now advancing, will be hastened the era of their decay.

In the free states of the Union, the wealth of the west promotes the wealth of the east. The more prosperous are the new states, the more prosperous are the old. At the south it is not so. The new states are aggrandized at the expense of the old ones. But this aggrandizement has nothing in it, solid or permanent. For a short time a great annual income is obtained; but it is obtained only by the annual consumption of a portion of that natural fertility, in which consists the only real capital of those communities, and this capital being presently exhausted, their short lived prosperity vanishes like a shadow.

SECTION IV.

Manufactures and Commerce in the Slave-holding States.

No merely agricultural nation ever yet attained a high degree of prosperity, or civilization. To attain that result it is necessary that manufacturing and commercial industry should combine with agriculture. All these three branches of industry are so sympathetically connected, that neither of them alone can be carried to any great degree of perfection.

There have already been suggested several reasons why manufactures cannot prosper in the slave-holding states. It is necessary here to recapitulate them and to bring them together in a single point of view.

1. Skill in the greater part of the mechanic and manufacturing arts, is not consistent with the state of total ignorance and barbarism in which it is judged the best policy that the unprivileged class should be kept. Skilled laborers are and must be, more intelligent and better informed, than those of an ordinary kind.

2. Such skill is still less consistent with that social condition which deprives those subjected to it, of all motive to acquire that degree of expertness, on which the success of most mechanical operations so essentially depends.

3. With respect to the laboring part of the free population, the acquisition of manufacturing skill is little to be expected from the state of ignorance, indolence and depression which are to them, the natural results of the existence of slavery in the community of which they form a part.

These three reasons go to cut off the supply of that kind of labor essential to the prosecution of manufacturing operations. But besides labor, there is needed knowledge, tact, skill and judgment in the oversight and direction of labor, and capital to set it in operation.

2. With regard to the oversight and direction of manufacturing operations, persons are very rarely to be found among the native population of the southern states, possessed of the necessary qualifications. The whole course of their education and habits is averse to that system of order, economy, and minute and exact attention, which such a business requires.

2. As regards capital, it has been shown in a previous section, under what disadvantages all industrious operations labor at the south, from the comparatively large amount of it, necessary to set them in operation. In any manufacturing business for example, it is necessary to have capital enough over and above all that is required for the fixtures and stock, to *purchase* the laborers who are to carry it on.

From the combined operation of these several causes it results, both in theory and in fact, that manufacturing processes, on any large scale, are almost unknown at the south, and that even the commonest mechanical arts are at a very low ebb.

It is obvious at once, when the condition of the various classes of the population at the south is considered, and when regard is had to the state of manufactures, that trade must be at a low ebb. The unprivileged class have nothing to sell except what they steal, and of course they have but little to buy. The laboring freemen, produce but little, and of course are able to purchase but little. The class of wealthy slave-holders is very limited in number, and a large part of their income is often spent at a distance from home. The principal mercantile operations consist in the purchase and shipment of the great agricultural staples, a business which is carried on for the most part by means of English or northern capital, and at the same time by English or northern agents, and English or northern shipping.

Neither manufactures nor commerce can be regarded as adding any thing considerable to the wealth of the slave-holding states.

SECTION V.

Instability and uncertainty of values in the Slave-Holding States.

The necessity which the southern planters are under of confining themselves to the production of a few great staple crops, has been already stated and explained. Slave labor in the United States, was first applied to the cultivation of *tobacco.* But the foreign demand for that article has been stationary ever since the revolutionary war, while the domestic demand increases only in proportion to the increase of the population. Since the facilities of transportation between the western states and the Atlantic seaboard have been so much increased by the construction of canals and railroads, the farmers of Ohio have gone extensively into the cultivation of tobacco. They produce it by free labor, and the quantity of slave labor which can be profitably employed in this culture is more likely to increase than to diminish.

The second application of slave labor in the United States, was to the cultivation of *rice.* That cultivation however is and always has been, confined to a narrow tract of country along the sea coast of South Carolina and Georgia; and as the demand for the article is nearly stationary, any considerable increase of the production would so diminish the price as to make it an unprofitable business.

Sugar is produced only in the southern districts of Louisiana. This culture has been fostered by a protective duty, but the climate is too cold and unsteady for its successful prosecution. A few favorable seasons created a very false idea of the profits of this cultivation. A series of cold seasons has corrected these hasty impressions. The value of sugar plantations has declined, and there is but little inclination or inducement to open new ones.

The cultivation of *cotton,* an article of which the

consumption has so remarkably increased within the last forty years, has alone prevented the entire depreciation of southern property. There has been thus furnished a crop, to the production of which the labor of slaves could be profitably applied, and which has prevented such a competition in the other limited applications of slave labor above enumerated, as would have rendered them utterly ruinous.

The cotton cultivated in the United States is of two distinct kinds, known in commerce, as Sea island, and upland or short staple. The Sea island cotton, has a long silky fibre which adheres so slightly to the seed, as to be easily removed by means of two wooden rollers turning upon each other, which suffer the cotton wool to pass between them, but which exclude and separate the seed. This kind of cotton is employed only in the finest manufactures, and its consumption is very limited. It bears a much higher value than the other description but it is less productive, and requires great care and labor in its preparation for market. The sea air seems essential to it, and its cultivation is limited to an alluvial tract along the sea coast of South Carolina and Georgia. The cultivation of this kind of cotton was introduced about the conclusion of the revolutionary war; but it has always been of so limited an extent as to hold out no relief to the great body of the slave-holders.

The upland or short staple cotton, has a short fibre adhering with such tenacity to the seed, as to require the saw gin, an invention of the ingenious Whitney, for its separation. This kind of cotton succeeds as well in the interior as near the sea, and it is this kind, the consumption of which has so rapidly increased. It first began to be cultivated as a crop about the beginning of the present century. For the first twenty years its production was principally confined to Georgia and the Carolinas. Since that time it has spread into the new states of the south-west, which now produce more than two thirds of the entire crop, which in the period since the peace with Great Britain in

1815, has risen from two hundred thousand bales, to eighteen hundred thousand, per annum.

The cultivation of cotton is the only employment of slave labor which admits of profitable extension. The price of cotton regulates the price of slaves, and incidentally, the value of all kinds of property at the south. When all values are thus made dependent upon a single pursuit, they are necessarily subject to great fluctuations. When there is a great variety of employments, there is established in consequence, a sort of average permanency of profits. Agriculture may be flourishing, though manufactures and commerce are suffering a temporary depression; and some branches of agriculture may be profitable, though others fail. At the south, every thing is staked upon the cast of a single die; and as is apt to happen in all such cases, the planters are either in a state of high prosperity which leads to great speculations and the creation of great debts, or else in a state of depression, ruinous both to northern lenders, and to southern borrowers.

The commercial fluctuations of the United States generally take their origin at the south. A high price of cotton creates at the south a feeling of wealth and a strong disposition to contract debts, while it produces at the north, a strong disposition to give credit. Even though the price of cotton continues high, the expectation of the planters runs so far beyond the reality, that they presently become unable to fulfil their engagements; and if a decline in the price of cotton should follow, their inability becomes total, and the severe losses experienced in consequence by the merchants and manufacturers of the north, throw their business also into a temporary confusion.

There is much reason to expect that these violent fluctuations in the value of southern property will presently terminate in a general and permanent depreciation. Whether lands and slaves, ten years hence, shall have any considerable value in any of the southern states, seems to depend very much upon the fact, whether or not the consumption of cotton

shall keep pace with its production. If production should overrun consumption, the market will be glutted, the price will fall, the business will become unprofitable, and unless some new, extensive and profitable application of slave labor should unexpectedly be discovered,—an event which is highly improbable—land and labor throughout the south, must undergo a great decline in value.

There are weighty reasons for anticipating this result within a moderate period. Once already within the last twenty years the production of cotton has so overrun consumption as to reduce the profits of the business to the lowest ebb. The price has since rallied, but this rise of profits has produced a new rush into the business, and a vast emigration from the more northern of the slave-holding states, which must result in a great increase of the production. On the other hand the consumption of cotton goods has already reached a point, which makes its extension continually more difficult. There is no reason to suppose that it can go on increasing for twenty years to come, as it has for twenty years past. That increase has been principally caused by cotton fabrics superceding for certain purposes, the use of linen and woollen cloths. That is a process which has a certain limit and which cannot be repeated. The consumption of cotton goods will doubtless continue to increase; but this increase of consumption will be more upon a par than heretofore, with the increased consumption of other manufactures.

Whatever the increased demand for cotton may be, the slave-holding states of the Union, are liable to encounter a severe competition in supplying it. All that portion of the American continent south of the United States is well fitted for the production of this article. Cotton of a very superior quality is produced to a large amount, in Brazil, and the new republic of Texas will presently be entering the market as a rival.

Great exertions are now making in India, by British cultivators, to improve the quality of Indian cotton,

and not without success. The quantity of this article worked up by the British manufacturers is steadily increasing; and when we recollect how completely the British indigo planters in India, succeeded in destroying the cultivation of indigo in the United States, which was once a very considerable business, by producing a superior article at a less price, the competition of the Indian cotton planters, however some ignorant persons may ridicule it, is by no means to be despised.

Additional competition is to be expected from Africa. The Egyptian cottons are already well known as of very superior quality; and it seems highly probable that the French will presently introduce the same sort of cultivation into their Algerine possessions.

On the whole it must be confessed that the single prop of the cultivation of cotton, forms a most slender, fragile and uncertain support, on which to rest the prosperity of an extensive and increasing population.

SECTION VI.

Comparative Progress and Prosperity of the Free and of the Slave-holding States.

It is a fact too obvious to be denied even by the most prejudiced observers, that the slave-holding states of the Union are far inferior to the free states, in every thing that constitutes civilization,—in wealth, in education, in the useful and ornamental arts, in public institutions, in public spirit, in literature, in science, in density of population, in facility of intercourse, in the splendor of cities, the neatness of towns, the comforts and conveniency of individual dwellings.

Of the thirteen states which originally composed the Union, slavery still prevails in six. It is abolished in the other seven, where indeed it never existed to any

considerable extent. These seven states include an area of about one hundred and fifty thousand square miles; the extent of the six slave states is upwards of two hundred thousand square miles. By the first census in 1790, the six free states contained a population of 1,908,000 souls; the population of the slave states amounted to 1,848,000. Forty years after, by the census of 1830, the population of the seven free states amounted to 5,256,000, while the population of the six slave states was only 3,571,000. The census of 1840 will show a still greater contrast;—for while the population of the seven free states has been increasing during the last eight or nine years, in a greater ratio than ever before, in the six slave states the drain of emigration has been so great as to have prevented any considerable increase.

Density of population, and the existence of towns and cities, are essential to any great degree of social progress. Brought thus into contact, mind acts upon mind; what is discovered by one soon becomes known to all; emulation leads to new discoveries and enterprises; competition constantly exerts its beneficial influence; the division of labor, that essential means of improvement, is not practicable among a scattered population; cities are the central points from which knowledge, enterprise, and civilization stream out upon the surrounding country.

In the six free States above referred to, we find three large cities, New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the first of which is generally regarded as the commercial metropolis of the Union. There are not less than twenty other considerable towns which are growing with rapidity, and several of which promise to rise to the first importance. Villages containing five or six thousand inhabitants, are quite numerous; new ones are springing up every day, and others are passing from the class of villages into that of towns.

How different a picture is presented by the six slave States! They contain but one city deserving the name, and that one, be it observed, is situated upon

the verge of the free States, and owes the principal part of its importance to that very circumstance. In wealth, trade and public institutions, in literature, science and general refinement, Baltimore is far inferior to either of the great cities of the north. Charleston is a little more than a place of deposite for the produce of the surrounding country, and a retreat for the neighboring planters from the unhealthiness of their plantations. It has been about stationary for this last twenty years, and the same is true of Alexandria, Norfolk, Savannah, and other ancient towns. Jamestown, the original capital of Virginia, has ceased to exist, the ruins of an old church steeple are its only memorial. Williamsburg the second capital of Virginia, has long been in decay. Such existence as it has, it owes to the ancient college established there. Richmond, the present capital presents a more thriving appearance,—but to judge by the depopulation and impoverishment of the surrounding country, it must soon share a similar fate.

What are called towns in these States, would for the most part, be esteemed at the north, as little better than villages. In addition to the small number scattered along the sea-coast, there are a few of more recent growth, situated on the great rivers, generally at the head of steam-boat navigation. They are points at which the produce of the country is collected for shipment, and whence imported goods are distributed through the adjoining country; but so few and far between, as scarcely at all to vary the dull monotony of a poorly peopled country which presents at the same time, all the rudeness of a new settlement, and all the marks of old age and decay.

If the slave holding states formed a separate and insulated nation, cut off from communication and intercourse with the free states of the north, there is good reason to suppose that they would fall rapidly behind hand, in the career of civilization. As it is, they are sustained and dragged along by the energy of their northern sisters. Improvements are first started and

put into execution at the north, then slowly and faintly imitated at the south. The best educated and most accomplished men of the southern states have passed their youth at northern schools and colleges; such seminaries for education as the southern states possess, are supplied almost entirely with northern or foreign teachers. The whole trade of the south, so far as relates to transactions on the large scale, is in the hands of northern merchants who carry on this important branch of business for which the native citizens of those states, seem to lack the requisite knowledge, sagacity, perseverance and application. The learned professions, physic, divinity, and even the law, are more or less, recruited from the same source. The newspapers have northern editors; even the compositors who set the types are imported. The same is the case with all mechanics who have any considerable skill in the art they profess. Southern rail roads are built with northern capital and by northern engineers and contractors. It is hardly possible to erect a large hotel, or block of ware-houses without the aid of northern artificers. The southern states are supplied with books and periodicals from northern presses; and it seems to be only by a close and intimate union with the north, that civilization at the south is enabled to make any progress, or even to preserve itself from decline. It is worthy of special remark however, that those northern men who emigrate to the south imbibe by degrees, the feelings and the habits, the indolence, and the incapacity of the population by which they are surrounded. They are unable to transmit to their children any of those qualities which they carried with them from home. These children, bred up after the southern fashion, are thoroughly southern. It is constantly necessary that new blood should be transferred from the warm and vigorous circulation of the north, to revive and quicken the veins, palsied, and made stagnant by the poison of slavery.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

PERSONAL RESULTS OF THE SLAVE-HOLDING SYSTEM.

SECTION I.

Personal Effects of Slavery upon the members of the privileged class.

By personal results of the slave-holding system those results are intended, which exhibit themselves in the personal character of the members of a slave-holding community.

Slavery has already been explained to be in its nature, a protracted state of war. All its results are sufficiently conformable to such an origin.

Soldiers possess a free and self-confident air, and when among friends and not irritated or opposed, they exhibit a frank, good humor, an easy, companionable, disposition, which renders their society agreeable, and causes their company to be generally courted. Their military duties often leave them an abundance of leisure; for long intervals, they often have nothing to do but to seek amusement, and they give a warm and hearty welcome to all who are disposed to join and aid them in that pursuit.

These same traits of manners are sufficiently conspicuous among the privileged class of our southern aristocracies. Though a large portion of that class is destitute of education, and of any real refinement, yet almost every member of it has more or less, a certain patrician bearing, a consciousness of his own superiority which gives him an air of manliness and dignity,

but which it must be confessed, degenerates too often into rudeness and braggadocio. The wealthier and better educated, passing almost the whole of their lives in a round of social pleasures, have attained to a considerable perfection in the art of pleasing; and those who visit the southern states of the Union for the first time, are generally captivated by the politeness, the hospitality, the attentions, the good humor of the people.

Manners however are far from being any certain index of character, and they are often carried to a high pitch of refinement, in cases where all the virtues which they seem to indicate, are lamentably deficient.

The soldier nursed in blood and robbery, however mildly and gently he conducts himself, is at best, only a tame tiger, not rashly to be trusted. His passions are violent and unmanageable, accustomed to indulgence, and impatient of control. It is the same with the slave-master. Habituated to play the tyrant at home, unshackled regent and despotic lord upon his own plantation, where his wish, his slightest whim is law, the love of domineering, possesses all his heart. The intercourse of society has taught him the policy and the advantages of mutual concession in little things, and the trifling points of ordinary politeness he yields with the ready willingness of a well bred man. Beyond this he is not to be trusted. Alarm his prejudices, his self-love, his jealousy, his avarice, his ambition; cross his path in any shape whatever; assume the character of a rival or a censor; presume to doubt his perfect wisdom and immaculate virtue; and from a laughing, good natured companion, he is changed at once, into a fierce, furious, raving and raging enemy. He boils and almost bursts with passion; he answers argument with invective; instead of reasons, he replies to you with insults. Not content to restrain his hate within the usual limits of civilized life, he thirsts for your blood. He murders you in a duel; assaults you in the streets with pistols and Bowie knife; or deliberately shoots you from the door of his house, with

a double-barrelled gun. The fear of the law does not restrain him. In the southern states, a *gentleman* is never hung. The most cold-blooded and deliberate murderers, in the upper classes of society, escape with a fine or a short imprisonment. The gallows is reserved for abolitionists, negro-stealers, and *poor* white folks.

I. The condition of society in the southern states, even among the most refined and best educated portion of the people, exhibits frightful evidences of FEROCITY OF TEMPER, such as a state of everlasting war might be expected to produce. Thucidides remarks, that from the time the Athenians laid aside the custom of going armed, civility and refinement began to make a steady progress among them. This is a point to which the people of the southern states have not yet attained. They generally carry arms; but the pistols, knives and dirks, their favorite weapons, are of a kind more fit for foot-pads and assassins, than for well-intentioned citizens. In several of the states it has been attempted to suppress by penal enactments, this barbarous practice of carrying deadly weapons. These laws are never enforced, and it is scarcely possible they should be. To carry arms in the state of things existing at the south, seems absolutely necessary. If his slaves resist, how else shall the master maintain his authority? Those who have been subdued by force, must be kept under by force; and if the armed conquerors, in moments of anger, sometimes turn their weapons against each other, that is what is liable to happen among all collections of armed men. What wonder if that inhuman and blood-thirsty spirit, which the tyrannical rule they exercise, keeps more or less alive, in the bosom of all slave masters, often bursts out in full fury in their quarrels with each other? The familiarity with which, under the influence of excited passion, they talk of murder is only to be equalled, by the savage ferocity with which, under the same influence, they often commit it. The atrocity of southern duels has long been

notorious,—but what duel can be compared with those "rencontres" of which we so often read accounts in the southern papers,—accounts which among the people of those states seem to carry with them all the interest of a bull-baiting or a cock-fight,—in which two men or more, armed to the teeth, meet in the streets, at a *court-house* or a tavern, shoot at each other with pistols, then draw their knives, close, and roll upon the ground, covered with dust and blood, struggling and stabbing till death, wounds, or the submission of one of the parties, put an end to the contest? These scenes, which if they take place at the north at all, appear but once an age, and then only among the lowest and most depraved of the emigrant population, are of frequent and almost daily occurrence at the south, among those who consider themselves the most respectable people. Andrew Jackson, late president of the United States, and regarded as a most illustrious citizen, has been engaged in several such affrays.

II. IMPROVIDENCE is a vice of the most dangerous character. The ancients were so impressed with the multitudinous evils and miseries to which it gives occasion, that they raised *prudence* to the dignity of one of the four cardinal virtues. Improvidence is however a failing, which is apt to prevail to a great extent in a slave-holding community. The careless, headlong rapidity with which a planter spends his money, is proverbial. This childish profusion has even been raised among them to the rank of a virtue; it is described as the mark of a noble minded man; while economy is decried and stigmatized as mean and little. This sort of profusion may dazzle and delight the weak-minded and the thoughtless. It is very clear however that it seldom implies any of that benevolence or magnanimity which it has been supposed to indicate.

It generally originates in the desire to gratify some whim of the moment, or, what is oftener the case, in the desire to be admired as a person of wealth and liberality. It is one way of gratifying the universal de-

sire of social superiority. A planter will spend some hundreds upon an entertainment, and the next morning will refuse an extra pair of shoes to a lame old negro, who has labored for him all his life. Ask one of these lavish spendthrifts to do an act, not of benevolence merely, but of justice, by setting a slave at liberty, and he will laugh in your face. We hear of many acts of profusion at the south, few acts of generosity. It is not there, that institutions are endowed for purposes of public charity. No associations exist there, or next to none, for charitable purposes. When a subscription is to be raised for some object of public benevolence, the contribution of our southern planters is extremely scanty. They lavish thousands on their own pleasures, and the companions of those pleasures; they bestow little or nothing upon the sufferings of strangers. Indeed it would be absurd to expect it. They who are not moved by the scene of poverty, degradation and distress, which their own plantations every day present, how can they be affected by the comparatively little miseries of which they only hear, or which they but casually see?

The quantity of money that can be got is a limited sum; the quantity that can be spent is indefinite. Take the southern states throughout, and it is probable that seven slave-masters out of ten, live beyond their income. The labor, the fruits of which would have sufficed to make fifty families comfortable and happy, being engrossed, with the exception of the barest subsistence to the laborers, by a single family, does not suffice to make that single family happy or even comfortable. Improvidence subjects to all the miseries of actual poverty. Men in the possession of large estates are tormented all their lives by sheriffs and duns, and at their death, leave large families brought up in all the luxury of wealth, and the helplessness of habitual indolence, penniless and unprovided for, a prey to the bitterest miseries of want.

III. Idleness, says the copy book, is the mother of all the vices. If any one doubt the truth of this

ancient and homely maxim, to be convinced of it, he need only spend a year or two in the south. He will find a great many idle people there. Almost all the owners of slaves have hardly any occupation except to amuse themselves. Born and bred to this occupation they become incapable of any other. One would suppose that having so much leisure time, they might turn their attention to the study of agriculture, an art upon which so wholly depends not their private income only, but the public wealth of the communities to which they belong. But no,—they have no taste for such pursuits, and they leave the management of their plantations, entirely to their overseers. This neglect however ought not to be wholly ascribed to their disinclination for regular and useful pursuits. If they go much upon their plantations, so many cruel sights come under their view, they are so harrassed by petitions and complaints, they find themselves so oppressed by the cares of authority, that they hasten to relieve themselves from the burden, and to shift it to the shoulders of some case-hardened manager. All despotisms are alike. What happens to an oriental sultan, happens to an occidental slave-master. The weight of empire presses too heavily upon their effeminate and feeble necks. Both alike spend in idle luxury all that can be spunged from the forced labor of their subjects, but both alike transfer the task of spunging to a vizier, or an overseer.

Thus freed from all the cares of business, it might be imagined that the wealthy slave-masters of the south, would bestow their time and thoughts upon the pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of literature, and the agreeable arts. We might suppose that they would push scientific investigations to their utmost limits, astonish the world with new discoveries in morals and in physics, or delight it with all the graces of poetry, the beauties and sublimities of painting, sculpture, music and architecture.

In these expectations we are totally disappointed. Books are a rare commodity at the south; literature

is uncommon and science still more so. Libraries, whether public or private, are seldom to be met with. A few classics thumbed over at school, a few novels old or new, a sprinkling of political pamphlets, and some favorite newspaper, form the whole circuit of letters and learning, ordinarily trodden by the most studious of the planters. The education of the females, even among the wealthiest classes, is still more superficial. In this connection, it ought to be remembered, that a very considerable portion of the privileged class, are totally destitute even of the rudiments of learning. To read is an accomplishment they have never acquired. Of course, it is not to be expected that persons so unfortunately circumstanced, can find employment for their leisure in literary pursuits.

Thus situated, with no resources for the occupation of their time, the privileged class are constantly beset by a weariness of soul, perhaps the most distressing disorder to which men are subject. "Thank God I am not a negro!" said a planter one day, as he sat beneath the shade of his porch, and watched his slaves in a neighboring field, at work beneath a burning sun. Yet it may well be doubted whether the most miserable of those slaves was half as miserable, as their unfortunate master, who lived in a lonely part of the country, and suffered from a forced idleness and solitude, the most poignant distresses.

It is a common remark among the planters that the slaves are happier than the masters. Many will reject this idea with indignation, as a mere falsehood, invented to gloss over the abominations of tyranny. No doubt the observation is generally urged with that intent. But the truth of a fact does not depend upon the use intended to be made of it, by those who assert it. The more closely a man meditates upon the state of things at the south, the more inclined he will be to admit the truth of the above remark touching the comparative happiness of the masters and the slaves. Instead however of saying that the masters and the slaves are equally happy, the idea might be more

clearly and distinctly expressed by saying, that both masters and slaves are equally miserable. Slavery is an invention for dividing the goods and ills of life into two separate parcels, so as to bestow all the ills upon the slaves, and all the good upon the masters. So far as regards the slaves, this attempt is successful enough. The miseries of life are concentrated upon their heads in a terrible mass. But as respects the masters the experiment fails entirely. The coveted good, like that manna which the too greedy Israelites sought wrongfully to appropriate, corrupts, putrefies, changes its nature, and turns into evil. Occupation too long continued is destructive to happiness, but idleness is not less so; and it may well be doubted whether the compulsive labor of the slaves, is any more copious a source of misery than the forced idleness of the masters. I say *forced* idleness, for in depriving themselves of the motives to labor and exertion, they force themselves to be idle.

To obtain some relief from the weariness that constantly besets them, the planters seek to divert and occupy their thoughts by social intercourse. This is the origin of that *hospitality* for which the people of the south are so famous, and which is often brought forward as a virtue ample enough to cover the acknowledged multitude of their sins. Hospitality, it is true, bears a certain relation to benevolence; but it is to benevolence no more than is the flounce to the garment. The attempt to conceal the nakedness of the land by such a rag, is as contemptible as it is futile. In truth, the visiters who arrive at a plantation confer a real benefit upon the lord of it. They give him occupation. The efforts necessary to entertain, are not less agreeable to him who makes them, than to those for whom they are made. If the visiter be a total stranger so much the better. There is the zest of novelty added to the excitement of occupation. If he come from a distant part of the country, better yet. He will probably be able to suggest a great many new and interesting ideas, likely to give an agreeable mo-

tion to the stagnant soul of his host. Hospitality has ever been a virtue abundantly practiced among all idle and indolent races. The indian tribes of America, are all celebrated for its exercise. The plundering Arabs of the desert, look upon it as a religious duty,—for conscience and inclination are always apt to pull together.

But the exercise of this virtue among the people of the south, becomes the occasion of several practices of the most dangerous and deleterious kind. It is not the cause of those practices, but only the occasion for them. In itself, it is essentially good, and displays the character of the slave-holder in the most amiable light it ever assumes. Hospitality is benevolence on a small scale, and how can benevolence on any other scale be expected, from men whose total existence is a continued violation of its clearest and most urgent commands?

1. The spirit of *improvidence*, above described, as one of the evil results of the slave-holding system, when it becomes associated with the passion for hospitality, is reenforced by two very powerful motives, which give it new impetus; first, the desire of attracting visiters, by the superior luxury and expensiveness of the entertainment offered; and second and principally, the love of superiority, that spirit of emulation and rivalry, which leads each planter to outvie his neighbor in the profusion of his hospitality. It is astonishing what a number of southern planters have been ruined in their pecuniary affairs by the joint operation of these means.

2. The Hospitality of the south, not only stimulates improvidence, it is the nursing mother of the vice of DRUNKENNESS, which prevails throughout the whole country to a frightful extent. Dinner parties end too often in general intoxication. What is called the *Temperance Reform*, has made but trifling progress in the slave-holding states. The obstacles in its way are immense. To drink is absolutely necessary as a means of killing time. Among the lower orders of the

privileged class, every social meeting ends in drunkenness. Attend an election, and by the time the polls are closed, you will find a great collection of citizens at the place of voting, all or most of them, "gloriously drunk." Stay long enough and you will see a fight. In Kentucky such occasions are apt to wind up, with what is called a free fight, that is, a general and indiscriminate knock-down, in which every body present is at liberty to participate. This is the grand finale, or concluding chorus; but before this part of the performance is reached, there are duets, trios, quartets and quintets, in all possible variety. In Mississippi and Tennessee, laws have lately been enacted, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in small quantities. Some movements have also been made in Georgia and South Carolina, towards obtaining the passage of similar laws. Laws of this kind are easily enacted in those states, much more so than at the north, because in those states, the wholesale trade in liquors is almost entirely confined to a few northern merchants and traders, who have no political influence, while the retail trade is in the hands of a set of poor white shopkeepers, rendered odious and infamous by their habit of secret traffic with the slaves, and belonging to that inferior class of the privileged order, which though it exceeds in numbers, is deprived for the most part, of any political authority. But however easy it may be to enact such laws, it will be impossible to enforce them, so long as the very legislators by whose votes they are enacted, are themselves perpetually in the habit of excessive drinking. These laws will fall into the same total neglect with the statutes against wearing concealed weapons already referred to, and those against gaming, to which we shall presently refer.

3. But such is the total stagnation of intellect and sentiment at the south, that even the stimulus of intoxicating liquors is not enough to give life and zest to social intercourse. There is need of more potent means. Necessity is the mother of invention. That means is at hand. It is GAMING.

This vice, more dangerous and dreadful, if possible, even than drunkenness itself, is equally prevalent at the south. Many attempts have been made to eradicate it. There are penal laws against it, in all the slave holding states. Of late, we have seen the summary process of Lynch Law applied to the same purpose. In Vicksburgh, one of the principal towns in the state of Mississippi, the most respectable people of the place, assembled in the month of July, 1835, and after pulling down several buildings used as gambling houses, proceeded to seize the persons of *five* professional gamblers and to hang them on the spot, without judge or jury. "These unfortunate men," says the *Louisiana Advertiser*, "claimed to the last the privilege of American citizens,—the trial by jury,—and professed themselves willing to submit to any thing their country would legally inflict upon them; but we are sorry to say, their petition was in vain! The black musicians were ordered to strike up, and the voices of the suppliants were drowned by the fife and drum. Mr. Riddell, the cashier of the Planter's Bank, ordered them to play Yankee Doodle, a tune which we believe has never been so prostituted before, and which we hope, and we trust will never be again. The unhappy sufferers frequently implored a drink of water, but were refused. * * * * The wife of one of them, half distracted at the cruel treatment and murder of her husband, trembling for her own safety, in tears begged permission to inter her husband's body,—but in vain. She was afterwards compelled to fly, with her orphan child, in an open skiff, for her personal security. The same fate was threatened to any person who should dare to cut down the bodies before the expiration of twenty-four hours. At eleven o'clock the next day, they were cut down and thrown together into a hole, which had been dug near the gallows, without coffins or any other preparations, except a box into which one of them was put."

Of the persons who assisted at this execution there

was not probably one, who was not himself in the constant habit of gambling. Yet is the horror of this vice so great in the southern states, and its ill effects, brought home to the public mind by constant experience are so generally acknowledged, that the actors in this tragedy were never called to account before any judicial tribunal, and their conduct, throughout the entire south, was either openly approved, or very faintly condemned. The tone of reprobation in which the *Louisiana Advertiser* speaks, found but a slight and indistinct echo from the other southern prints.

Yet notwithstanding all the horror, with which this vice of gambling is regarded, the indulgence in it, at least among the men, is next to universal. The two present senators from Kentucky (1840) are men of whose talents any country might be proud. But a few years since they were both as much celebrated for a reckless spirit of gambling, as they were then and still are, for patriotism and ability. When such men lead, followers are always plenty. Every little village of the south has its race-course, its billiard room, its faro table, and its gambling house, and of the three latter, perhaps several. This grows out of the moral necessity of things. Men, in all ages, and in every country, who have had much leisure on their hands, which they know not how else to employ, have ever sought relief in some sort of gambling. It is so always with savages, sailors and soldiers, and so it is with the idle population of the south. The habit once acquired, it becomes almost impossible to resist its seductions. To reform a gambler is much the same difficult task as to reform a drunkard. The planter who has been secluded upon his estate for a week or a month, in irksome and wretched indolence, his heart all the time devouring itself, orders his horse or his carriage in a fit of desperation, and sets out for the nearest village. The gaming table offers him the speediest and most certain means of excitement, the surest method of shaking off the listless misery which oppresses him. To the gaming table he goes. It

stands always ready,—for the necessity of the case has created a peculiar class of men at the south, who are gamblers by profession. It was to this class that those men belonged who were hanged at Vicksburg. This is a profession which has sprung up naturally at the south, and as has been said necessarily, and which can boast of more talent and accomplishment among its members, than the three learned professions of law, physic and divinity united.

The institution of slavery deprives a large portion of the people of their natural occupation. But as man is essentially an active animal, to supply this deficiency it is necessary to create artificial occupations. Gambling is the employment, which under similar circumstances, has ever presented itself to men, as a means of killing time. In order that this employment may be indulged in, whenever the want of it is felt, it is necessary that a peculiar class should exist, as it were, the priesthood of the gaming table, always ready at all times, to gamble with all comers. These are the professional gamblers. They practice gaming not for amusement, but as a livelihood. If they left every thing to chance and strictly observed the laws of play, it would be impossible for them to live by their business, because, in the long run, they would be certain to lose as much as they won, and so could have nothing left whereupon to live. Hence they are compelled to play *false*. They must *cheat*, or starve. They are not merely gamblers, but swindlers. This explains the odium attached to their occupation. Merely to gamble is no imputation upon any body's character in the southern states, or at most it is an imputation of which nobody is ashamed. To be a gambler by profession is infamous, because it is well understood, that every professional gambler is a cheat.

But though the profession is infamous, still it is crowded. Its members throng the steam-boats, the hotels, the cities, and the villages of the south, and among them may be found, the most gentlemanly, agreeable, insinuating, talented, well informed men of

the whole population, constantly on the watch, and always laboring to attract, to allure, to please, many of them attain a peculiar polish and elegance of manners. New recruits are always crowding in. The planter who has ruined himself by improvidence, dissipation or losses at the gaming table, the young disappointed heir, bred up in indolence and luxury by a father who dies insolvent,—these persons find scarcely any other way of gaining their daily bread, except to adopt gambling as a profession. There is no other business for which they are qualified, there is no other art, which they understand. It seems hard to hold these individuals strictly responsible for the evil they do. You cannot expect them to starve. They are the victims of a social system intolerably bad.

The professional gamblers are above described such as they are, when at the head of their profession, and in the heyday of success. In general, they soon begin to go down hill. Proverbially improvident, they are abundantly supplied with money, or wholly without it. The latter presently comes to be their habitual condition. Their fate closely resembles that of prostitutes in a great city. Drunkenness relieves their distresses for the moment, but by destroying their health and their intellect, soon precipitates them into lower depths of misery. They become at last a burden upon relatives and friends; find in an early death a refuge from despair; or are precipitated into crimes which carry them to the penitentiary or the gallows.

The vice of gambling is not confined to the superior portion of the privileged order. It pervades the lower class also. There are blacklegs and gambling houses adapted to the taste and manners of all.

To the business of gambling, the professional gamblers from time to time, add several other occupations. They become passers of counterfeit money, horse-thieves, and negro-stealers. Nothing except the extreme poverty of the country, prevents them from organizing an extensive system of plunder. Horses and slaves are almost the only thing, capable of trans-

portation, which can be stolen. In general, to pick the pockets of the planters by the help of a faro table or a pack of cards, is not only a safe, but a surer operation than to attempt it in any other way.

Party politics, state and national, afford the only topic, to any extent of an intellectual character, in which any considerable number of the southern population, take any deep interest, or which serves to any considerable extent, to dispel the fog of wearisome idleness, by which they are constantly threatened to be enveloped. Politics at the south, are rather speculative than practical. Every slave-holding community is essentially conservative, and opposed to all change. The southern politicians puzzle and lose themselves in vain attempts to reconcile the metaphysical system of liberty acknowledged by their own state constitutions, with the actual system of despotism amid which they live. Their ablest reasoners, can boast no more than to be subtle logicians, and ingenious sophists. Statesmanship is a thing they have no idea of. Yet the study of politics, barren, empty and profitless as southern politics are, has saved many of the finest minds at the south from a total stagnation, and affords to great numbers a stimulant altogether more harmless than gambling and strong drink. Great numbers of the southern planters are as great adepts in political metaphysics, as the Scotch peasantry are or were, in calvinistic divinity. Grant their premises,—which for the most part are utterly false,—and they reason like a book.

There have been enumerated above, five capital defects in the character and conduct of the privileged class at the south, viz: ferocity of temper, improvidence, idleness, drunkenness, and gambling. It is but justice to say, that the female portion of the privileged class are in general entirely free from the two last mentioned faults, nor does ferocity of temper exhibit itself among them, to any thing the same extent as in the male sex. Idleness and improvidence are their greatest and most striking defects.

Among the men however, the whole five are palpable, obvious, undeniable. As to this matter there cannot be any dispute. It must be confessed, however unwillingly that these faults are characteristic of the southern people. It has been shown how they are all aggravated, and rendered incurable, by the existence of slavery. Any attempt to remove or palliate them, while that cause of aggravation remains, can have only a partial and limited success. It is impossible to make men virtuous or happy unless by giving them some steady employment that shall innocently engage their attention, and pleasantly occupy their time. The most essential step in the progress of civilization, is, to render useful industry, respectable. But this step can never be taken, so long as labor remains the badge of a servile condition.

SECTION II.

Personal effects of slavery upon the members of the unprivileged class.

Extremes meet. The truth of this proposition, in a physical point of view is evident from the fact that every motion upon the earth's surface describes an elliptical curve. Experience would seem to show that this proposition is almost as true in morals as in physics. At all events it is a curious fact, that the existence of slavery in a community, instead of producing such diversities as might be supposed, does in fact, in many very important particulars, operate almost exactly alike upon the masters and the slaves. Ferocity of temper, idleness, improvidence, drunkenness, gambling—these are vices for which the masters are distinguished, and these same vices are conspicuous traits in the character and conduct of slaves.

1. *Ferocity of Temper.* The first access of suffering softens the heart, the long continuance of suffering tends to harden it. Suffering when long continued, begins to be looked upon as a thing of course. He who constantly fears to feel the whip upon his own shoulders, ceases to weep because it falls upon another. Those who are accustomed to see authority exercised almost solely in the infliction of pain, form presently a close association between the two things. They seem to be inseparable, and a liberal use of violent means comes to be looked upon as the only method of showing one's power. Now the love of power, or to speak more correctly, that love of superiority, which the exercise of power is a means of gratifying, is one of the native, and one of the strongest impulses of the human heart. The slave feels it like other men. He indulges it, when, where, and as, he can, upon his wife, his children and the horse he drives, or upon such of his companions as superior strength, or the appointment of his master has submitted to his control. He exercises his authority in the same way in which authority has been exercised over him. In this as in many other respects, he closely copies the example of his master.

Let it be recollected also that ferocity of temper is a peculiar trait of a savage or barbarous state of society. In civilized countries, it is principally to be seen among the most ignorant and least refined. Civilization is perhaps more remarkable for its effect in softening the tempers of men than for any other single thing. Slaves are purposely kept in a state of barbarism and ignorance. That they should have little control over their tempers, and should give way to violent and sudden gusts of passion, is a matter of course.

2. *Improvidence.* Among freemen, the pleasures of accumulation are perhaps not inferior to the pleasures of consumption. The pleasure that a house keeper enjoys from knowing that he has laid by a stock of provisions sufficient to support his family through the winter, is sufficient to counterbalance a great deal of

saving and self-denial. But the pleasures of accumulation are pleasures which a slave cannot enjoy. His sole pleasure consists in consuming. It is therefore his object to consume all he possibly can. To gratify a present appetite is almost all he ever thinks of. He knows that his master will not suffer him to perish for want of absolute necessaries. Any thing he should lay by, he would be in constant danger of losing, because property is a thing which the laws do not allow him to possess. When he has consumed a thing he is sure of it, and only then—

> Be fair or foul, or rain or shine
> The joys I have possessed in spite of fate are mine,
> Nor heaven itself upon the past has power,
> But what has been, has been, and I have had my hour.

The slaves never read either Horace or Dryden, but they feel and they reason in the same way.

The spirit of improvidence has for its associate on the part of the slaves as well as on the part of the masters, a remarkable disposition for hospitality. But the hospitality of the slaves may justly be regarded as a virtue of a much higher order, than the hospitality of the masters, inasmuch as the slaves bestow out of their necessities, whereas the masters in general, give from their abundance. Sunday for the most part is allowance day, and on those plantations where meat forms a part of the allowance, it often happens, where the vigilance of masters or overseers does not prevent it, that within six hours, the portion of meat given out for the whole week, is consumed in treating friends and acquaintances from some neighboring plantations, where meat is a luxury that forms no portion of the regular allowance. The slaves are as fond of nocturnal entertainments as the masters are of dinner parties, and the profuse liberality with which, from the scanty means within their power, they contribute to get them up, shows them in point of good fellowship, to be not less free hearted than their masters.

3. *Idleness.* The natural stimulus of labor is, the hope of reward. The expectation of reward is capable of exciting the most strenuous exertions, and when properly presented, never fails of effect. Where this motive does not exist, industry is unknown. The fear of punishment cannot produce it. The most it can do is, to produce an empty appearance of it, which is in fact little better than idleness in the disguise of labor.

But it is not alone the absence of reward that makes a slave necessarily idle. In his mind labor is associated indissolubly with the lash. Pain, weariness, fear, the sense of inferiority, these are in his eyes, the natural companions of labor. What wonder if he regard it with disgust? On the other hand, idleness, to his limited view, appears to be the distinguishing badge of freedom, and with freedom he associates every idea of pleasure and content.

Idleness again, in point of fact, is in the case of a slave a real luxury, a true delight, much more so, than it ever can be in the case of a freeman, and that for three reasons. First, because rest is ever delightful to the weary, and those who labor by compulsion are always weary. Second, because being idle, as has been shown in a previous chapter, is a sort of means whereby the slave is enabled to regain, as it were, a certain portion of his liberty. Third, because idleness is a means of lessening the value of that stolen labor upon which the master has seized, and so of indulging that indignation and hatred which the slave naturally feels. Do we not commonly destroy our property, whether public or private, whenever that is the only way to save it from falling into the hands of an enemy?

To make men industrious, who have all these motives for idleness, is out of the question. The experience of the world has proved ten thousand times over, and every individual who will but consider his own motives of action, must be abundantly, satisfied, that the only stimulus that can be relied upon as able to

produce a life of regular industry is,—the hope of reward,—a fair prospect of being permitted to enjoy undisturbed, the fruits of our labor.

4. *Drunkenness.* The excitement which drunkenness produces is of so very pleasurable a kind, that those who have once experienced it, have need of very strong motives to enable them to resist the temptation it holds out. Especially is this the case with those who lack that steady, regular yet innocent stimulus supplied by a daily occupation in which they take pleasure. When occupation is wanting, or when instead of being pleasurable the occupation to which a man is obliged to submit, is irksome and disagreeable, there results a miserable weariness of soul, against which drunkenness offers an opiate so tempting that even the most intelligent and best educated are not always able to resist it. That the slaves as a body should greedily snatch at it, is not surprising.

5. *Gambling.* That same wearisome state of mind, which among both bond and free is the greatest temptation to drink, proves also the strongest inducement to gamble. The human mind craves excitement. It is the very vital air of the soul, as essential to it as motion is to the health of the body. If this desire cannot be gratified by innocent means, means of gratification will be devised which are not innocent. Of these means gambling is one of the most potent, and pernicious; and a means as popular among the slaves as among the masters. It ought to be observed however with respect both to this vice and to that of drunkenness, that both of them prevail to a much less extent among the slaves than with the free, because the opportunities, means, and facility for these kinds of indulgences which the slaves possess, are far inferior to those possessed by the free.

It is proper also to observe that the five great defects of character and conduct common as we have seen to the privileged and the unprivileged classes at the south, all exhibit themselves among the free, in a form more aggravated, and more disgusting—

at all events in a form far more pregnant with mischief than among the slaves. Slavery it would seem is but the foster-mother of vice; tyranny is the real parent,—for the privileged class at the south have not yet reached that point of refinement indicated by Burke, at which vice by losing all its grossness loses half its evil.

The ferocity of the slaves is a mild thing compared with the ferocity of the masters. It is rare to hear of a slave murdered by a slave, while the murder of white men by white men, is an every day occurrence. The instrument of vengeance which the slave most commonly employs, is his fist, or at most a club. The master uses pistols, dirks, knives, and double barrelled guns. With all the bad reputation of Spain and Italy, assassinations were never a quarter so common in those countries as they now are in the south-western states of the American Union. The chance or rather I might say, the probability of dying a violent death is far greater in the states of Mississippi and Arkansas, than in any other part of the known world, not even Texas excepted.

Idleness we must consider, presents itself to the slaves under the aspect of a pure good. In them it cannot be regarded as a vice. Is it a crime to evade as far as possible, the violence of robbery?

The privileged class on the contrary, are able to view idleness in its true light. It is not only the cause, and to the privileged class perceptibly the cause of all those evils traced to it above, but the love of idleness is in fact, the real foundation of slavery. The masters wish to enjoy without working; to reap where they have not sowed, to gather where they have not strawed. This is the whole secret of the social system of the south. This unjust desire, which in the nature of things never can be fully gratified---for the enjoyment thus obtained is poisoned and corrupted by a certain secret inherent flavor of bitterness—

—Medio de fonte leporum,
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat,—

this unjust desire to possess without labor, may be looked upon as the fruitful source of all the evils which the system of slavery involves. Under such circumstances, idleness ceases to be merely a vice, it becomes a crime, and a crime too of the very blackest die, for it is the immediate cause of all kinds of crimes which men have agreed most to stigmatize, and those crimes too not perpetrated one by one, and in defiance of law, but perpetrated wholesale and systematically, not by individual upon individual, but by one half the community upon the other half, and that too with the sanction of legislatures and tribunals.

As regards improvidence, drunkenness and gambling, on the part of the slaves they are comparatively venal offences. The harm they can do is limited, and is confined almost entirely to the person of the offender himself. There is no danger that by giving way to them, he will precipitate a whole family into poverty and distress. There is no danger that his example will have a pernicious influence upon society at large. What is the example of a slave? Nor is there any likelihood that by giving way to these temptations he may render useless gifts which properly exercised might have redounded to the benefit of the community. The only talent proper to a slave is the talent of handling a hoe. With him, these vices terminate for the most part in themselves. The secondary evils which they produce are comparatively speaking, inconsiderable. Among the privileged class these indulgences give rise to a train of secondary evils of which the mere catalogue would fill a volume; evils, which instead of confining themselves to the person of the offender, overflow, spread abroad, sweep away whole families, and inundate society. No language is too strong to describe the dangerous and fatal character, which when practised by the privileged class, these vices assume.

SECTION III.

Points of diversity in the character of the privileged and the unprivileged classes.

1. Courage is one of those chivalrous virtues much boasted of among the freemen of the south. They are brave beyond question. All freemen are so. Courage is a virtue which always exists in the greatest perfection among freemen, because among freemen, it is most esteemed and most cultivated. Courage is essential to the maintenance of liberty. When it happens that freemen are also tyrants, courage is cultivated and fostered for the additional reason that it is essential also to the maintenance of tyranny. What importance is attached to this virtue at the south, may be conjectured from the braggadocio spirit, which so universally prevails there. Listen to southern conversation, or read the southern newspapers, and one would suppose that every mother's son of the free population, was an Orlando Furioso, or a Richard *Cœur de Lion* at the least. What wonder if courage abound where it is so highly esteemed and so greatly encouraged.

The slaves, on the other hand, are cowards. A brave man may be found among them here or there, but cowardice is their general characteristic. If it were not so, the system of slavery would be very short lived. To organize a successful insurrection, something more than mere courage is no doubt necessary. But courage alone is sufficient to produce a series of unsuccessful insurrections, and however individually unsuccessful; a series of insurrections would shortly render the masters' empire not worth preserving. If the slaves are cowards, it is a vice to which they have been diligently trained up from their earliest childhood. Were a tenth part of the pains bestowed to make them brave, which are taken to render them otherwise, they would be as courageous as their masters. The

boldest heart very soon becomes subdued, when every indication of spirit, every disposition to stand at bay is shortly visited by the whip, irons, or a prison.

2. The CHASTITY of their women is another chivalrous virtue, much boasted of by the freemen of the south. The southern people have reason to be proud of their women. From the most disgusting vices of the men, they are, as we have mentioned already, in a great measure free, and such active virtue as is to be found at the south, at least the larger portion of it, is to be looked for among the female sex.

If however the women have escaped to a certain extent, the blighting influences of tyranny it is because they are sedulously shielded from its worst effects.

Chastity like courage is to a great extent, an artificial virtue, the existence of which principally depends upon education and public opinion. Both education and public opinion are stretched to their utmost influence to preserve the chastity of the southern women, while the free and more luxurious indulgence which the men find elsewhere, causes the seduction of free women to be a thing seldom attempted.

Among the slaves, a woman, apart from mere natural bashfulness, has no inducement to be chaste ; she has many inducements the other way. Her person is her only means of purchasing favors, indulgences, presents. To be the favorite of the master or one of his sons, of the overseer, or even of a driver, is an object of desire, and a situation of dignity. It is as much esteemed among the slaves, as an advantageous marriage would be, among the free. So far from involving disgrace, it confers honor. Besides, where marriage is only a temporary contract, dissolvable at any time, not by the will of the parties alone, but at the caprice and pleasure of the masters, what room is there for any such virtue as chastity ? Chastity consists in keeping the sexual appetite under a close restraint except when its indulgence is sanctioned by marriage. But among slaves every casual union, though but for a day, is a marriage. To persons so

situated, we cannot justly apply ideas founded upon totally different circumstances. If we choose however to understand by chastity the restriction of one's self to a single partner, chastity is very far from being so rare a virtue among the women of the unprivileged class as is often asserted, and generally supposed. Though the union may be dissolved in a moment, at the slightest caprice of the parties, such separations are much more rare than might be imagined. More husbands and wives among the slaves are separated by the hammer of the auctioneer, than by the united influence of infidelity, disgust, or the desire of change.

3. FRAUD, FALSEHOOD, AND DISHONESTY are represented by the masters, as distinguishing traits in the character of the unprivileged class. This charge is unfounded. It has been shown already, that as between master and slave, from the very nature of that relation, mutual confidence, trust and reliance, are out of the question. To deceive his master is almost the only means of self-defence in the power of the slave. What ground of mutual confidence is it possible to establish between the robber and the robbed? To hold those promises binding which are extorted by force, to maintain that one is obliged to keep faith with a plunderer, is to surrender up, to the hands of violence, through the influence of a weak and cruel superstition, or a piece of miserable and empty sophistry, not the body only, but the soul; not only actions, but the will; the future as well as the present;—it is to strip weakness and suffering of their last defence, and to give omnipotence to tyranny.

In their transactions with each other the members of the unprivileged class at the south, are by no means deficient in the great and necessary virtues of truth, honesty and fidelity. The difficulty of inducing them to betray each other is proverbial, and is a matter of grevious complaint among masters and overseers. There are among the slaves, as among all bodies of men, some who set up honesty for sale, and who become instruments of tyranny in the hands of the pri-

vileged class. There are others shrewd and slippery, upon whom no dependence whatever can be placed, even by their friends and relations. Characters of this sort, are quite as common among the privileged order. Indeed more so. There has been already mentioned that great class of professional gamblers, whose sole business it is to prey upon the community, to inveigle the unwary, and entrap the ignorant. There is no such class among the slaves. There is still another great class among the privileged order, who live almost wholly upon the plunder of their richer neighbors, the receivers, namely, of stolen goods, the keepers of the petty trading stores, scattered throughout the south. They take in the corn, cotton and rice stolen by the slaves, and give in exchange whisky and other luxuries. This class of traders is very large. The severest laws have been enacted to suppress them, but without success. Lynch law is now and then administered upon them in all its severity, but the nuisance cannot be abated. These men, compared with the slaves, are wholly without excuse. They live by constant violations of laws, by constant breaches of a social compact to which they have themselves assented. This is a case in which the receiver, even in a legal point of view, is a thousand times worse than the thief. Yet to speak within bounds, for every five or six acts of theft, (or what is called so,) committed on the part of slaves, there is at least one act of reception committed on the part of some freeman. We may therefore consider it to be reduced to an arithmetical demonstration, that so far as relates to violations of property, the offences of the free are greater than those of the slaves. To this conclusion we must come, even without taking into account the appalling fact that the entire existence of a large part of the privileged class is but one constant, steady violation of all those principles upon which the very idea of property depends, and upon which the virtues of truth, honesty, justice and fidelity must rest for their only sure support. We may apply to the southern

slave-holders, a *jeu d'esprit* of Talleyrand's. A certain person was complaining that every body considered him a worthless, infamous fellow, yet said the complainant, I do not know why, for I have never committed but one fault in my life. "Ah!" said Talleyrand, "but when will that one fault be ended?"

To those accustomed to look only at the outside of things, the results to which this chapter has brought us, will no doubt seem strange. It is impossible, they will say, that men whose circumstances are so contradictory, and whose whole appearance is so different, can after all, be so much alike. Such readers will do well to call to mind the lines of Shakspeare,—

> Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
> Robes and furr'd gowns, hide all. Plate sin with gold,
> And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks
> Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

That gold however, with which the system of southern slavery is plated, is not the true metal. 'Tis but a fairy, shadowy, imaginary gold which cannot cross the running waters of truth, without being changed back again to its original worthlessness.

CONCLUSION.

The slave-holding system had been introduced into the southern states of the Union, and domesticated there for many years, before the attention of any body was much attracted towards its evils consequences. It had spread even to the north, and of the thirteen provinces which first confederated to form the *United States of America*, there was not one, in which slavery did not exist at the time of the union, to a greater or less extent.

For a considerable period however, prior to the revolutionary war, the people of Virginia,—that state in which the system of slavery had originated, and whence it had spread south and north, became aware of its evil effects, at least to a certain degree, and grew exceedingly urgent with the mother country to put an end to the African slave trade, or at all events to the importation of slaves into Virginia. This boon was denied, through the influence with the government at home, of those British merchants engaged in the African trade; and this refusal is specially set forth in the Declaration of Independence, as one of those grievances which justified the Revolution, and the civil war by which it was attended.

The revolution led to a general discussion as to the nature of government, and the foundations of civil society; and gave an almost universal currency to a metaphysical theory of human rights, fully stated in the Declaration of Independence and elsewhere. This theory, though it is not a true one, and has led, and always will lead to great errors and mistakes, if logic-

ally carried out,—is nevertheless a noble and a glorious theory, and the cause of humanity has been not a little indebted to it. The axioms of this metaphysical theory of rights,—which remains to this day, the generally received doctrine throughout the United States,—are at total variance with the whole system of slavery, and in a very short time after those maxims began to prevail, they came into conflict with it.

In those states in which the slave-holding interest was weak, to wit, in *Massachusetts*, *New-Hampshire*, *Rhode Island*, *Connecticut*, *New-York*, *New-Jersey* and *Pennsylvania*, the metaphysical theory of human rights triumphed, sooner or later, over the slave system, and slavery was abolished in all those states. Being abolished however not upon a full, clear, sound and philosophical view of the matter, but merely upon certain points of metaphysics, no proper means were taken to ensure to the enfranchised class the practical enjoyment of the rights bestowed upon them; and they remain to this day, a degraded caste, subject in every one of those states, to legal disabilities greater or less, and to social disabilities without number.

In the states farther south, the matter worked differently according to the different situation of those states. In *Delaware*, *Maryland*, *Virginia* and *North Carolina*, the evil effects of the slave-holding system, even in its economical operation, had become very apparent. This was an argument easily felt and understood; for it is a fact too true, that most men feel and reason best through their pockets. Accordingly in these four states, the metaphysical theory of human rights made a goodly struggle with the system of slavery. All the great men of those states, at that time, Washington, Jefferson, Henry, in fact every citizen who attained to any eminence during the revolutionary struggle, was in favor of emancipation. The reason given by Washington for not at once emancipating his slaves, was, that emancipation, in order to be effectual for the public good and the benefit of the emancipated, ought to be universal, brought about by

a general law,—and for such a law he always professed himself ready and desirous to go. This argument in favor of retaining one's slaves, did not however prevail with the more ardent and enthusiastic, and even with the most sober and discreet, including Washington himself, when they came to sit down calmly and make their wills, it seemed to lose the greater part of its force. Thus it happened that although no attempt was made to obtain any general law of emancipation,—ignorance, selfishness and prejudice being too prevalent,—it nevertheless came to pass that by private manumission, the number of the emancipated began rapidly to increase.

In *South Carolina* and *Georgia* the state of public opinion was different. Slave labor in those states was still very valuable, and their leading men, with a few honorable exceptions, were great sticklers for slavery and the slave trade. Indeed they absolutely refused to become parties to the Federal Constitution, unless the Federal Government would renounce the right to prohibit the foreign slave trade, prior to 1808.

As regards the growing empire of the north-western states, *Ohio*, *Indiana*, *Illinois*, *Michigan* and *Wisconsin*, they owe an eternal debt of gratitude to Thomas Jefferson, who was the original author of that celebrated section of the ordinance, of 1787, by which the introduction of slavery into the territory north-west of the Ohio, is forever prohibited. That ordinance, at the time of its passage, embraced all the unsettled territory belonging to the United States.

Vermont, formed out of lands the possession of which had been disputed between New-York and New-Hampshire, and *Maine*, a more modern offset from the vigorous stem of Massachusetts—were free states from the beginning. *Kentucky* and *Tennessee*, set off from Virginia and North Carolina, inherited from their mother states, the infection of slavery.

Meanwhile the struggle between the metaphysical theory of human rights, and the slave-holding system, still went on in Virginia, Maryland and North Caro-

lina. But by degrees the spirit of despotism gained the ascendency; and fearful lest individual humanity should accomplish that emancipation by private beneficence, which the Legislatures refused to bring about by any general law, the force of public opinion, as well as of legislation, was brought so to bear, as in a great measure to put an end to voluntary emancipation. The existing regulations upon that subject, in the several slave states of the union, have been stated in a previous chapter. So jealous has the slave-holding spirit of the south become, that in those constitutions which have been latest remodeled, the Legislatures are expressly deprived of the power of passing any general act of emancipation.

It may be stated as a general fact, to which only some slight exceptions occur, that ever since the conclusion of the revolutionary war, the slave-holding spirit of the south has been growing more violent, bitter and exclusive. This fact is easily explained. A careful comparison of opinions and prices current, will prove beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the attachment of the southern people to the institution of slavery, has always been most precisely graduated by the market value of slaves;—a circumstance well worthy of observation, because it goes very far to show, that after all, the question of slavery at the south, is neither more nor less than a mere question of money, and a question therefore, which, money, after all, may be able to settle.

During the revolutionary war the value of slave property in Virginia and the neighboring states, sunk to a very low ebb; and the people at that time, exhibited a certain disposition towards emancipation. When the war of the French Revolution had created a vast foreign demand for American agricultural produce, the value of slaves rose, and the disposition to emancipate, sunk in proportion.

Thus it happened that when in the year 1803, the territory now comprised in the states of Alabama and Mississippi was obtained by the United States, from

the state of Georgia, by purchase, it was no longer possible to make that section of the ordinance of 1787 which secured perpetual freedom to the states northwest of the Ohio, applicable to this newly acquired territory. Indeed this territory by an express article of the compact of cession, was excluded from the operation of that section of the ordinance of 1787, though all the other sections were extended to it. In this way, *Alabama* and *Mississippi* became slave-holding states, and were admitted as such into the union.

Nor did Mr. Jefferson, when by his famous treaty with France, he doubted the geographical extent of his country, and acquired the vast territory of Louisiana, deem it prudent to bring forward any ordinance for the perpetuation of freedom through those vast regions. The state of *Louisiana* was admitted into the union, just before the commencement of the war of 1812, a period of great political excitement upon other topics, which precluded, as is probable, any discussion of the question of slavery at that time.

When however, in 1819, the territory of Missouri applied for admission into the union, the question whether slavery was to be allowed to spread unchecked over the vast regions of the west, came fairly up for discussion.

In the decision of the Missouri question, the friends of freedom, have been generally represented as having sustained a severe defeat. This representation however does not seem to be entirely correct. Slave-holders with their slaves had been allowed to settle in Missouri, and they had formed a state constitution, by virtue of which slavery was tolerated. Under these circumstances it was not easy to refuse the State admission into the union, nor was it easy to dictate what kind of a constitution it should have. That controversy was finally settled by a compromise, according to which it was agreed, that slavery should be allowed in *Missouri* and *Arkansas*, into which territories it had been already introduced, but that throughout the whole remaining portions of the Louisiana territory,

it should be forever prohibited. By virtue of this compromise, the new territory of *Iowa* will presently take its place among the free states.

It was just about the time of the Missouri controversy that the territory of Florida, was ceded to the United States by Spain. This territory had at that time some small Spanish settlements, and the slave-holding system had existed in it for some two centuries. An ineffectual attempt was made to prohibit the introduction of new slaves into the Territory. But the friends of freedom had been discouraged by the result of the Missouri controversy, and the attempt proved unsuccessful. *Florida* will therefore come into the union a slave state.

Upon this question of slavery the United States may be classed as follows; 1st. *Free States*, viz, Maine, New-Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, *fifteen* states; 2nd, *slave states*, viz. Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky, *fourteen* states. Whole number of states, *twenty-nine.* It is hardly probable that any addition will be made to that number for many years to come.

It was well settled in the first Congress which assembled under the Federal Constitution, that the government of the union possesses no power to abolish or to modify, the institution of slavery, within the limits of any of the states. This decision is generally assented to, and has never yet been seriously called in question.

It is maintained however at the north, and even at the south it is generally conceded, that the Federal Government does possess the power to abolish slavery in the Federal District of Columbia, and the power also to abolish the domestic slave-trade, as between the different states, that is to say, to prohibit the transportation of slaves from one state to another for the purpose of sale.

It is upon these points, that the friends of liberty in the United States have of late concentrated their political efforts, and it is to be hoped that they will steadily persevere till both these points are carried.

During the period that elapsed from the settlement of the Missouri controversy down to the year 1833, the value of slave property having greatly diminished especially in the more northern of the slave-holding states, and the Southampton insurrection having attracted public attention to the dangers of slavery, a considerable disposition was at one time exhibited, especially in Virginia, to do something for the emancipation of the slaves. The plan however brought forward at that time, connected as it was with the colonization scheme, of which further mention will presently be made, failed to be adopted, and has since been generally abandoned even by its warmest advocates.

Since that time, the tide has set decidedly the other way. The spirit of despotism has grown more obstinate and violent, and a sect has arisen at the south, which boldly maintains that the system of slavery ought to be perpetual, because it furnishes the only solid foundation for a free republican government! At the head of this new school of politics, stand Mr. Calhoun and his friend and first disciple, Mr. McDuffie.

Some superficial, or prejudiced observers, have ascribed the late exacerbation of slave-holding ferocity, to the reaction produced by the proceedings of those people in the northern states, known as abolitionists. The true reason is to be found in the excessive prices of the slave-market for the few years past, caused by the high price of cotton. As that great staple of slave production has again settled down to a price barely sufficient to pay the cost of producing it, the value of slaves will fall also; and as that value falls, it may be hoped and expected, that the south will grow more soft-hearted, rational, and humane.

Notwithstanding the bold paradoxes mentioned above, as having been recently advanced by Mr. Cal-

houn and his disciples, touching the advantages and the permanancy of the slave-holding system, it still remains a pretty universal opinion, at the south as well as at the north, that slavery is a bad thing, and that sooner or later, it must be and will be abolished.

That slavery is a bad thing, the preceding pages have perhaps gone far to prove; that it will sooner or later be abolished, may be reasonably concluded from the universal past experience of the world in similar cases. That same sort of slavery which disgraces and damnifies the United States, existed half a century ago throughout the whole extent of the American continent. In all the independent states, late Spanish American colonies, it has been totally abolished through the influence of political revolutions. In Hayti, the slaves have vindicated their liberties, with their own strong hand. In Jamaica and the other British West Indies, those subjected to servitude have obtained emancipation through the bounty of the English people, a piece of philanthropy on a larger scale, than the world's history had before that time afforded. The same causes which have carried emancipation thus far, will sooner or later extend it to Brazil, the French West Indies, the Spanish West Indies, and the United States of America.

It is obvious that all the means whereby an emancipation of the slaves in the United States can be brought about, may be classed under one of these two heads, 1st, force, 2nd, the consent of the masters.

I. Force. If the system of slavery in the United States be not first extinguished by some peaceable means, it will sooner or later, come to a forcible termination.

To those who have read the foregoing pages it must be obvious, that any unassisted insurrection on the part of the slaves alone, is very unlikely ever to be successful. But nevertheless there are still three ways in which the slave-holding system may be forcibly terminated.

1. *Foreign wars.* Should the United States be-

come involved in a foreign war with Great Britain, France, or any other first rate power, the slave-holders would have every thing to apprehend from a foreign invasion accompanied as it would be, by a proclamation of freedom to the slaves, at the announcement of which all the civilized nations of the world would shout Amen! In such a contest the sympathies of all mankind would be against us, and what is worse, our own better feelings too.

That such a project of invasion was planned during our last war with Great Britain has been already mentioned. The reasons which then prevented its execution, exist no longer. It is to be observed too that the recent improvements in steam navigation, have rendered the Atlantic a much less protective barrier than once it was. These things are not wholly overlooked by the southern people. The excessive fluttering with which our late difficulties with France about the treaty of indemnity, and our present difficulties with Great Britain touching the boundary question, were and are regarded at the south, are a sufficient proof what peculiar terrors the idea of a foreign war has, for that part of our country.

2nd. *A dissolution of the Union.* A dissolution of the Union, would almost certainly be followed by a war between the separated states. This subject has been already treated in the introduction. Such a war could not fail to prove fatal to the slave system at the south.

3d. *Political disturbances and civil war in the slave states themselves.* Such events are perhaps much nearer and more threatening, than most people imagine. Hitherto that portion of the free population, impoverished and degraded by the influence of the slave system, has found an open asylum by emigration to the new states. That asylum is fast closing up. Already the poisonous influence of slavery is almost in as full operation in the new states as in the old. In some of the new states its operation is even more obvious and more terrible than in the old ones. The

old slave states were originally all of them free communities, inhabited wholly, or almost wholly, by free citizens. It has thus happened that there still remains to a greater or less degree, in all those states, a certain relish and tincture of freedom, which not all the deleterious influences of slavery, have yet been able wholly to eradicate. Some ideas still prevail there, and exercise a certain degree of influence, which are wholly averse to the existing state of things,—ideas derived from the days of ancient freedom and equality. These same ideas have been transplanted into Kentucky and Tennessee, and prevail there to the greater extent on account of the smaller proportion of slaves to be found in those states.

Mississippi on the other hand, and the same is true to a certain extent of Alabama and Louisiana, may be regarded as states which have been founded, and have grown up, under almost the sole influence of the slave-holding system. Slavery appears there in all its horrors, totally stript of that patriarchal character with which it is sometimes more or less invested in some of the older states. Almost every planter is a slave-trader, as well as a slave-holder, and the slaves driven in gangs from Maryland and Virginia, are subjected to new severities, compelled to harder labors, and under new and unfamiliar masters, wholly deprived of all those privileges, presents and holidays, to which at home they had established a sort of prescriptive right.

The masters too, emigrating from the older states, and for the most part young men, leave behind them all those prejudices, and remnant influences of freedom, which still prevail at home, and all restraint thrown off, act out the character of slave-masters to the full pitch. Who does not know the terrible condition of society in those states, in which, it may justly be said, that there is no tolerable security either for property or life.

In all the southern states, and most of all in those states in which the evils of slavery have reached the highest pitch, there are great bodies of desperate men,

belonging to the privileged class, without property, or any other stake in the institutions of society, from whom there is hardly any danger that may not be reasonably apprehended. Such are those bands of gamblers of whom an account has been given, and who can hardly be expected to keep any terms with a community, which keeps no terms with them. These bodies of destitute and desperate men, are rapidly increasing, since the southern states throughout their whole extent are beginning to be exposed to the full force of those causes, by which the privileged class in every slave-holding community, is necessarily divided into two distinct portions,—a few rich, and many poor.

That these desperadoes should sooner or later plan, and carry out a political revolution of which the unprivileged class would be the instruments, and the few rich the victims, is by no means improbable. Indeed if we can put reliance upon the stories told in southern newspapers, such schemes and conspiracies have been already formed. There are many circumstances which would lead to the conclusion, that every year adds to the likelihood of such attempts, and to the probability of their success. Any such enterprise, if successfully carried out, or if only partially successful, would of course involve the overthrow of the system of slavery.

If the system of slavery in the southern states should be brought to an end by any of these forcible means, however beneficial the ultimate result might be, the immediate consequences must of necessity be excessively disastrous; and roots of bitterness in such a struggle, would be left deeply planted, to spring up and bear fruits centuries afterwards.

Are these not then peaceable means, means of CONSENT, whereby this disorder of the body social and politic, may more easily, more safely, and more pleasurably be eradicated? Is it not possible to devise a method, by which the extinction of slavery, instead of being brought about by the conflict of all the bad passions of human nature, in fact by that very operation

in which slavery first had its origin, to wit, by war,—may on the contrary, be charmed, as it were, out of life and being, by the potent wand of knowledge and humanity?

Glorious idea!—that this evil of slavery, the greatest evil to which human society is subject, because it consists in fact, of a combination of all possible social evils,—may yet be made the occasion for an exercise of virtue and of wisdom such as the annals of the world have not yet furnished an example of! If the American States, after the close of the eight year's war, by means of which they secured their emancipation from the yoke of the mother conntry, sat down calmly and peaceably to make a constitution for themselves conformable to the prevailing theory of human rights, a thing which no nation had ever done before,—why not too, upon this matter of slavery, act also, in a calm and peaceful way, and again do, by consent, a great thing which, as in the other case, has been hitherto accomplished in most other countries, only by force?

Two methods of consent, have been already brought before the public, for the emancipation of the slaves. Each of these methods, in its practical application, is capable of being indefinitely modified; but it would seem that all possible schemes of emancipation, must conform in their general principles, to one or the other of these two proposals. The one may be distinguished as the Colonization scheme; the other, as the scheme of Abolition.

1st. *The Colonization scheme.* This scheme is founded upon existing prejudices, and is therefore well calculated to catch the fancy of superficial thinkers. It takes for granted, that there is a natural incompatibility between the two races, which renders it impossible, or at least, highly inconvenient for them to live together, in any other relation than as masters and slaves. This idea is not peculiar to the United States, nor is it confined to the natural relation of the English and African races. Whenever the circumstances of the population have been similar, the same ideas have

been current. Humbold in his Essay on New Spain, speaking of the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants of Mexico, at the beginning of the present century has the following passage. "The lawyers who detes. innovation, and the Creole proprietors who frequently find their interest in keeping the cultivator in degradation and misery, maintain that we must not interfere with the natives because on granting them more liberty, the whites would have every thing to fear from the vindictive spirit and arrogance of the Indian race. The language is always the same, whenever it is proposed to allow the peasant to participate in the rights of a freeman and a citizen. I have heard the same arguments repeated in Mexico, Peru, and the kingdom of New Grenada, which in several parts of Germany, Poland, Livonia and Prussia, are opposed to the abolition of slavery among the peasants." At the time this passage was written, the Indian race throughout Spanish America, was in a condition, not greatly superior in point either of law or fact, to the existing condition of American slaves. Since that time Indians have been emancipated, and raised to an equality, in civil and political rights, with their Creole neighbors. Those countries have since been much distracted by civil wars, but in no single instance has there occurred a war of races. All these wars have grown out of the quarrels of the Creoles among themselves.

The colonization scheme, founded upon this idea of the incompatibility of the races, proposes to abolish slavery by transporting all the slaves to some distant country,—the coast of Africa is generally proposed—thus leaving the remainder of the population, white and free.

That this scheme is totally impracticable, and that any attempt to carry it into execution must be attended by the most fatal consequences to the economical prosperity of the south, has been abundantly shown, both by the enemies and the friends of emancipation, by

Professor Dew of William and Mary College on the one hand, and by Thomas Jefferson on the other.

The value of land and of all other property at the south as well as elsewhere, is dependent to a great extent upon the density of the population. The scheme for shipping off all the laboring hands of the south, is a scheme for reducing all those states to a condition of miserable poverty.

It is indeed proposed by the defenders of the colonization scheme, that this process of transportation shall be exceedingly gradual, and that as fast as the colored laborers are shipped off, white laborers shall flow in to supply their places. If white laborers would flow in, even then the evils of slavery would be indefinitely protracted; and during the long period in which the transportation was going on, the state subjected to its operation, would be kept at best, in a condition perfectly stationary. But in point of fact white laborers would not flow in. If it be desired to rear up at the south, a system of free industry, the system of slave labor must first be razed to its foundations. It is utterly out of the question to be pulling away the slave system at the bottom, and at the same time to be building up the free system at the top.

It has indeed been so clearly demonstrated, that this colonization scheme can never accomplish the emancipation of the slaves, that even in the minds of its most ardent supporters, it has dwindled down into little better than a means of expatriating the free colored population. In the slave states, this part of the population is regarded as a nuisance, and it is generally thought that the colonization society may be usefully employed as a means of abating that nuisance. Its merits, in that respect, this is not the place to discuss.

2nd. *The Abolition Scheme.* This scheme proposes the full emancipation of the whole unprivileged class, and their elevation by due degrees, to an entire participation in all the political rights of citizens. There has, it is true, been a vast deal of dispute about *immediate* and *gradual* emancipation; but among

those who are actually in favor of emancipation at all, any differences upon that point, might, it is probable, be easily reconciled. The greatest sticklers for the most gradual emancipation, are for the most part, those who are desirous of making emancipation so very gradual as to render it in fact, no emancipation at all, or at least to put it off to the last possible day.

Those who are most afraid of revolutionary movements and sudden changes, if indeed they are really sincere in their avowed love of freedom, must at least admit the policy and the desirableness of a total repeal, throughout the slave-holding states, of all those laws by which voluntary emancipations on the part of the masters, are embarrassed or prohibited. In the present state of public feeling, such a change in the laws of the southern states, could not fail to be followed by very important consequences.

Three objections are principally relied upon, by that portion of the southern people who profess to regard slavery as an evil,—that is to say by the great majority of the privileged class,—as standing in the way of the abolition scheme.

1. It is objected that emancipation would not in fact improve the condition of the unprivileged class;—and the degradation of the free colored people,—that is to say, of the emancipated slaves, at the north,—is referred to, as proof to the point.

It must be confessed there is much plausibility in this objection. It is a sort of *argumentum ad hominem*, which a northern man does not find it so easy to answer. It is to be hoped however that the efforts now making by the friends of freedom at the north, to elevate the condition of the colored people, and to render the gift of freedom valid and available, will shortly blunt the edge of this objection.

2. The prejudices and false opinions, heretofore mentioned, as lying at the foundation of the colonization scheme, are brought forward, and urged with much vehemence and great apparent sincerity, as presenting an unsurmountable obstacle to the abolition

proposal. It is alleged that there is such a natural repugnance and antipathy between the two races, that it is impossible for them to live together upon any terms of equality. That either one race or the other must rule, or one race or the other must be exterminated.

Let us reply, that the whole tenor of human history, stained as it is by violence and blood, gives the lie direct to this narrow and cruel theory, the greatest libel upon human nature ever yet propounded. All the nations of Western Europe, the most civilized and enlightened communities in the world, have been formed by an intermixture of races so complicated that it is utterly impossible to trace it. Even that Saxon blood of which we boast, is far more Celtic than Teutonic, formed by the intermixture of two races, utterly diverse in their appearance, their institutions, their temper and their manners, who for centuries alternately reduced each other to slavery, and who are set down by all antiquaries and historians as being natural and irreconcilable enemies.

He who reads the story of the human race with a calm, an impartial, a philosophic mind, will learn to rise above the prejudices, and passions, and narrow notions of those who have written it. He will learn to receive with proper distrust those libels, which under the name of histories, men have written of each other; he will learn, before making up his mind, to examine deliberately, both sides of every controversy.

The Slavonic tribes, in the days of ancient prejudice, were denounced by their Teutonic neighbors as fit only for servitude; and the word slave is derived to our language from their name. Has not Koscuesko, have not the latter days of unhappy Poland shown, how undeserved was that reproach?

With respect even to the African race, the history of America during the present century has done much to dissipate the blunders of ignorance and the prejudices of self conceit. Of all the new Republics, our neighbors, which have lately sprung up in the two Ameri-

cas, not one is to be found, the government of which has been so stable, and on the whole so mild and just, as that of Hayti. Those who hold up Hayti, as a raw-head and bloody-bones to frighten us out of reason and humanity, are not perhaps aware that the eastern portion of that island, is principally inhabited by a white population,—the descendants of the first Spaniards who ever emigrated to America,—and that in the Haytian Congress, men of all colors, from pure white to pure black, meet upon terms of perfect equality, and the best good fellowship.

In all the Spanish American states, the African race enfranchised, and permitted to aid in the struggle for liberty, has contributed its fair proportion of civil and military talent to that great enterprise, and in several of those republics, the mixed race, sprung from the intermarriage of the Spaniards and the Africans, furnishes a large proportion of the most enterprising, trust-worthy, and respectable of the people. The British West Indies are about to give a new lesson upon this subject, the force of which, it will not be easy for prejudice itself to withstand.

3. But it is objected thirdly and lastly, that the emancipation of the slaves, inasmuch as it will deprive their masters of a vast amount of property legally held under the constitution and laws of their country, would demand, on the part of the state governments, by whose authority alone the emancipation could take place, an amount of compensation wholly beyond their power to pay.

Beyond all question, the emancipation of the slaves at the south, so far from diminishing the total value of southern property, would, if not immediately, yet certainly within a very short time, greatly enhance it. On the whole then, the pecuniary loss would be nothing. It must be conceded however, that such a revolution of property could not take place, without very severe losses to particular individuals. Every change, however beneficial to society at large, is in the necessity of things, always attended with a loss, greater or

less, to some individuals. This loss, considered merely in itself, is an evil. It is in fact a small evil which we are obliged to submit to, as the price of a greater good. It is the part however of a beneficent system of legislation, to reduce this price of evil, to the smallest possible limit. If indeed the problem of emancipation can be reduced to a mere question of money, assuredly it is solved already. The resources of the slave-holding states, are no doubt small; but the resources of the union are vast and ample; and where is the northern citizen who would hesitate to strain those resources to the utmost, could he thereby command the means of compounding a lotion, potent enough to wash out from his country's future, the fatal twin plague spots of servitude and despotism?

END.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library