THE

PRO-SLAVERY ARGUMENT,

AS MAINTAINED BY THE MOST

DISTINGUISHED WRITERS OF THE SOUTHERN STATES:

CONTAINING THE

SEVERAL ESSAYS, ON THE SUBJECT,

OF

CHANCELLOR HARPER, GOVERNOR HAMMOND,
DR. SIMMS, AND PROFESSOR DEW.

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indolence and carelessness triumphed over love of liberty, and demonstrated the fact, that free labor, made out of slaves, is the worst in the world.

So far we have adduced instances from among mixed populations alone. Some have imagined that the indolence of liberated blacks in these cases, has arisen entirely from the presence of the whites, acknowledged to be the superior race both by law and custom; that, consequently, if the blacks could be freed from the degrading influence exerted by the mere pressure of the whites, they would quickly manifest more desire to accumulate and acquire all the industrious habits of the English operative or New England laborer. Although this is foreign to our immediate object, which is to prove the inefficacy of free black labor in our country, where, of course, whites must always be present, we will, nevertheless, examine this opinion, because it has been urged in favor of that grand scheme of colonization recommended by some of the orators in the Virginia Legislature. Our own opinion is, that the presence of the whites ought rather to be an incentive and encouragement to labor. Habits of industry are more easily acquired when all are busy and active around us. A man feels a spirit of industry and activity stir within him, from moving amongst such societies as those of Marseilles, Liverpool, and New York, where the din of business and bustle assails his ears at every turn, whereas, he soon becomes indolent and listless at Bath or Saratoga. Why, then, are our colored free men so generally indolent and worthless among the industrious and enterprising citizens of even our Northern and New England States? It is because there is an inherent and intrinsic cause at work, which will produce its effect under all circumstances. In the free black, the principle of idleness and dissipation triumphs over that of accumulation and the desire to better our condition; the animal part of the
man gains the victory over the moral, and he, consequently, prefers sinking down into the listless, inglorious repose of the brute creation, to rising to that energetic activity which can only be generated amid the multiplied, refined, and artificial wants of civilized society. The very conception which nine slaves in ten have of liberty, is that of idleness and sloth with the enjoyment of plenty; and we are not to wonder that they should hasten to practice upon their theory so soon as liberated. But the experiment has been sufficiently tried to prove most conclusively that the free black will work nowhere except by compulsion.

St. Domingo is often spoken of by philanthropists and schemers; the trial has there been made upon a scale sufficiently grand to test our opinions, and we are perfectly willing to abide the result of the experiment.

The main purpose of the mission of Consul-General McKenzie, to Hayti, by the British Government, was to clear up this very question. We have made every exertion to procure the very valuable notes of that gentleman, on Hayti, but have failed; we are, therefore, obliged to rely upon the eighty-ninth numbers of the London Quarterly, in one article of which mention is made of the result of M'Kenzie's observations. "By all candid persons," says the Review, "the deliberate opinion which that able man has formed from careful observation, and the whole tenor of the evidence he has furnished, will be thought conclusive. Such invincible repugnance do the free negroes of that Island feel to labor, that the system of the code rural of 1826, about the genuineness of which so much doubt was entertained a few years ago, is described as falling little short of the compulsion to which the slaves had been subjected previous to their emancipation. 'The consequences of delinquency,' he says, 'are heavy fine and imprisonment, and the provisions of the law are as despotic
as can well be conceived.' He afterwards subjoins:—Such have been the various modes for inducing or compelling labor for nearly forty years. It is next necessary to ascertain, as far as it is practicable, the degree of success which has attended each; and the only mode with which I am acquainted, is to give the returns of the exported agricultural produce during the same period, marking, where it can be done, any accidental circumstance that may have had an influence.' He then quotes the returns at length, and observes—'There is one decided inference from the whole of these six returns, viz: the positive decrease of cane cultivation, in all its branches—the diminution of other branches of industry, though not equally well marked, is no less certain, than the articles of spontaneous growth maintain, if not exceed, their former amount.' We may further add, that even the light labor required for trimming the planting coffee trees, has been so much neglected, that the export of coffee in 1830, falls short of that of 1829, by no less than 10,000,000 lbs.' (See London Quarterly Review, No. 89, Art. West India Question.)

We subjoin here, to exhibit the facts asserted by Mr. M'Kenzie in a more striking manner, a tabular view of some of the principle exports from St. Domingo, during her subjection to France, and during the best years of the reigns of Toussaint, Dessalines, and Boyer,* upon the authority of James Franklin, on the present state of Hayti.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Produce</th>
<th>French</th>
<th>Toussaint</th>
<th>Dessalines</th>
<th>Boyer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1791.</td>
<td>1802.</td>
<td>1804.</td>
<td>1822.‡</td>
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<td></td>
<td>lbs.</td>
<td>lbs.</td>
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<td>lbs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar,</td>
<td>163,405,220</td>
<td>53,400,000</td>
<td>47,600,000</td>
<td>652,541</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coffee,</td>
<td>68,151,180</td>
<td>34,870,000</td>
<td>31,000,000</td>
<td>85,117,854</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cotton,</td>
<td>6,286,126</td>
<td>4,050,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>891,960</td>
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* It is known that under Boyer there was a union of the Island under one government.

† The other years give the returns of the French part of the Island;
There has been a gradual diminution of the amount of the products of Hayti, since 1822. In 1825, the whole value of exports was about $8,000,000, more than $1,000,000 less than in 1822, and the revenue of the Island was not equal to the public expenditure. Is not this fair experiment for forty years, under more favorable circumstances than any reasonable man had a right to anticipate, sufficient to convince and overwhelm the most sceptical as to the unproductiveness of slave labor converted into free labor?

But the British colony at Sierra Leone is another case in point, to establish the same position. Evidence was taken in 1830, before a committee of the House of Commons. Capt. Bullen, R. N., stated that at Sierra Leone, they gave the blacks a portion of land to cultivate, and they cultivate just as much as will keep them, and not an inch more. Mr. Jackson, one of the Judges of the mixed Commission Court, being asked—"Taking into consideration the situation of Sierra Leone, and the attention paid by government to promote their comfort, what progress have they made towards civilization or the comforts of civilized life?" makes this answer—"I should say very inadequate to the efforts which have been made to promote their comfort and civilization." Capt. Spence, being asked a similar question, replies—"I have formed a very different opinion as to their progress of industry. I have not been able to observe that they seem inclined to cultivate the country farther than vegetables and things of that kind. They do not seem inclined to cultivate for exportation. Their wants are very few, and they are very wild; and their wants are supplied by the little exertion they make. They have sufficient to maintain them in clothing and food, and these are all their wants."

this for the Spanish and French, ought therefore, to be proportionally greater.
Our own colony, upon the coast of Africa proves, too, the same fact. It has been fed slowly and cautiously, with emigrants, and yet Mr. Ashmun's entreaties to colonization friends in the United States, to recollect that rice did not grow spontaneously in Africa, to send out laboring men, of good character, &c., but too conclusively show, in spite of the colored and exaggerated statements of prejudiced friends, the great difficulty of making the negroes work even in Liberia;* and we have no doubt, that if 6,000 or 60,000 could be colonized annually in Africa, there would not be a more worthless and indolent race of people upon the face of the globe, than our African colonies would exhibit.

We have now, we think, proved our position, that slave labor, in an economical point of view, is far superior to free negro labor; and have no doubt that if an immediate emancipation of negroes were to take place, the whole southern country would be visited with an immediate general famine, from which the productive resources of all the other States of the Union could not deliver them.

It is now easy for us to demonstrate the second point in our argument—that the slave is not only economically but morally unfit for freedom. And first, idleness and consequent want are, of themselves, sufficient to generate a catalogue of vices of the most mischievous and destructive character. Look to the penal prosecution of every country, and mark the situation

* We understand, from most undoubted authority, that Mr. Barbour, a negro gentleman from Liberia, who lately visited the Virginia Springs, for the purpose of re-establishing his health, which had given way under the deleterious influence of an African climate, bears most unequivocal testimony to the idleness of the blacks in Liberia—thinks that the statement which has been generally given of the colony greatly exaggerated—considers it a partial failure at least; and laughs at the idea of its being made a recipient for the immense and rapidly increasing mass of our whole black population.
of those who fall victims to the laws. And what a frightful proportion do we find among the indigent and idle classes of society! Idleness generates want, want gives rise to temptation, and strong temptation makes the villain. The most appropriate prayer for frail, imperfect man, is "lead us not into temptation." Mr. Archer, of Virginia, well observed in his speech, before the Colonization Society, that "the free blacks were destined by an insurmountable barrier—to the want of occupation—thence to the want of food—thence to the distresses which ensue from that want—thence to the settled deprivation which grows out of those distresses, and is nursed at their bosoms; and this condition was not casualty, but fate. The evidence was not speculation in political economy—it was geometrical demonstration."

We are not to wonder that this class of citizens should be so depraved and immoral. An idle population will always be worthless; and it is a mistake to think that they are only worthless in the Southern States, where it is erroneously supposed the slavery of a portion of their race depress them below their condition in the free States; on the contrary, we are disposed rather to think their condition better in the slave than the free States. Mr. Everett, in a speech before the Colonization Society, during the present year, says: "they (the free blacks) form, in Massachusetts, about one seventy-fifth part of the population; one-sixth of the convicts in our prisons are of this class." The average number of annual convictions in the State of Virginia, estimated by the late Governor Giles, from the penitentiary reports, up to 1829, is seventy-one for the whole population—making one in every sixteen-thousand of the white population, one in every twenty-two thousand of the slaves, and one for every five thousand of the free colored people. Thus, it will be seen, that crimes among the free blacks are more than three times as numerous as among the
whites, and four and a half times more numerous than among the slaves. But, although the free blacks have thus much the largest proportion of crime to answer for, yet the proportion is not so great in Virginia as in Massachusetts. Although they are relatively to the other classes more numerous, making the one-thirtieth of the population of the State, not one-eighth of the whole number of convicts are from among them in Virginia, while in Massachusetts there is one-sixth. We may infer, then, they are not so degraded and vicious in Virginia, a slaveholding State, as in Massachusetts, a non slaveholding State. But there is one fact to which we invite particularly the attention of those philanthropists who have the elevation of Southern slaves so much at heart—that the slaves in Virginia furnish a much smaller annual proportion of convicts than the whites, and among the latter a very large proportion of convicts consist of foreigners or citizens of other States.

There is one disadvantage attendant upon free blacks, in the slaveholding States, which is not felt in the non-slaveholding. In the former, they corrupt the slaves, encourage them to steal from their masters by purchasing from them, and they are, too, a sort of moral conductor by which the slaves can better organize and concert plans of mischief among themselves.

So far we have been speaking of the evils resulting from mere idleness; but there are other circumstances which must not be omitted in an enumeration of the obstacles to emancipation. The blacks have now all the habits and feelings of slaves, the whites have those of masters; the prejudices are formed, and mere legislation cannot improve them. "Give me," said a wise man, "the formation of the habits and manners of a people, and I care not who makes the laws." Declare the negroes of the South free to-morrow, and vain will be your
decree, until you have prepared them for it; you depress, instead of elevating. The law would, in every point of view, be one of the most cruel and inhuman which could possibly be passed. The law would make them freemen, and custom or prejudice, we care not which you call it, would degrade them to the condition of slaves; and soon should we see, that "it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that has been washed, to her wallowing in the mire." "Ne quid nimis" should be our maxim; and we must never endeavor to elevate beyond what circumstances will allow. It is better that each one should remain in society in the condition in which he has been born and trained, and not to mount too fast without preparation. If a Virginia or South-Carolina farmer wished to make his overseer perfectly miserable, he could not better do it, than by persuading him that he was not only a freeman, but a polished gentleman likewise, and consequently, induce him to enter his drawing room. He would soon sigh for the fields, and less polished but more suitable companions. Hence, in the Southern States, the condition of the free blacks is better than in the Northern; in the latter, he is told, that he is a freeman and entirely equal to the white, and prejudice assigns to him a degraded station—light is furnished him by which to view the interior of the fairy palace which is fitted up for him, and custom expels him from it, after the law has told him it was his. He, consequently, leads a life of endless mortification and disappointment. Tantalus like, he has frequently the cup to his lips, and imperious custom dashes it untasted from him. In the Southern States, law and custom more generally coincide: the former makes no profession which the latter does not sanction, and consequently, the free black has nothing to grieve and disappoint him.
We have already said, in the course of this review, that if we were to liberate the slaves, we could not, in fact, alter their condition—they would still be virtually slaves; talent, habit, and wealth, would make the white the master still, and the emancipation would only have the tendency to deprive him of those sympathies and kind feelings for the black which now characterize him. Liberty has been the heaviest curse to the slave, when given too soon; we have already spoken of the eagerness and joy with which the negroes of Mr. Steele, in Barbadoes, returned to a state of slavery. The east of Europe affords hundreds of similar instances. 1791, Stanislaus Augustus, preparing a hopeless resistance to the threatened attack of Russia, in concert with the states, gave to Poland a constitution which established the complete personal freedom of the peasantry. The boon has never been recalled, and what was the consequence? "Finding (says Jones, in his volume on Rents) their dependence on their proprietors for subsistence remained undiminished, the peasants showed no very grateful sense of the boon bestowed upon them; they feared they should now be deprived of all claim upon the proprietors for assistance, when calamity or infirmity overtook them. It is only since they have discovered that the connection between them and the owners of the estates on which they reside is little altered in practice, and that their old masters very generally continue, from expediency or humanity, the occasional aid they formerly lent them, that they have become reconciled to their new character of freemen."

"The Polish boors are, therefore, in fact still slaves," says Burnett, in his 'View of the present state of Poland' "and relatively to their political existence, absolutely subject to the will of their lord as in all the barbarism of the feudal times."

"I was once on a short journey with a nobleman, when we stopped to bait at a farm-house of a village. The peasants
got intelligence of the presence of their lord, and assembled
in a body of twenty or thirty, to prefer a petition to him. I
was never more struck with the appearance of these poor
wretches, and the contrast of their condition with that of their
master: I stood at a distance, and perceived that he did not
yield to their supplication. When he dismissed them, I had
the curiosity to inquire the object of their petition, and he
replied, that they had begged for an increased allowance of
land, on the plea that what they had was insufficient for their
support. He added, 'I did not grant it them because their
present allotments is the usual quantity, and as it has sufficed
hitherto, so I know it will in time to come. 'Besides,' said
he, 'if I give them more, I well know that it will not in reality
better their circumstances.' Poland does not furnish a
man of more humanity than the one who rejected this appar-
etly reasonable petition; but it must be allowed that he had
reasons for what he did. Those degraded and wretched be-
ings, instead of hoarding the small surplus of their absolute
necessaries, are almost universally accustomed to expend it in
that abominable spirit, which they call schnaps. It is incred-
ible what quantities of this pernicious liquor are drunk by the
peasant men and women. The first time I saw any of these
withered creatures was at Dantzic. I was prepared by print-
ed accounts, to expect a sight of singular wretchedness; but
I shrunk involuntarily from the sight of the reality. Some
involuntary exclamation of surprise, mixed with compassion,
escaped me; a thoughtless and a feelingless person (which
are about the same thing) was standing by—'Oh, sir,' says
he, 'you will find plenty of such people as these in Poland;
and you may strike them, and kick them, or do what you
please with them, and they will never resist you: they dare
not.' Far be it from me to ascribe the feelings of this man to
the more cultivated and humanized Poles; but each such in-
cidental and thoughtless expressions betray too sensibly the general state of the feeling which exists in regard to these oppressed men.” The traveller will now look in vain, throughout our slaveholding country, for such misery as is here depicted; and in spite of all the tales told by gossipping travellers, he will find no master so relentless as the Polish proprietor, and no young man so “thoughtless” and “feelingless” as the young Pole above mentioned. But liberate our slaves, and in a very few years we shall have all these horrors and reproaches added unto us.

In Livonia, likewise, the serfs were prematurely liberated; and mark the consequences. Von Helen, who travelled through Livonia in 1819, observes: “Along the high road through Livonia are found, at short distances, filthy public houses, called in the country Rhatcharuas, before the doors of which are usually seen a multitude of wretched carts and sledges belonging to the peasants, who are so addicted to brandy and strong liquors,* that they spend whole hours in those places. Nothing proves so much the state of barbarism in which those men are sunk, as the manner in which they received the decree issued about this time. These savages, unwilling to depend upon their own exertions for support, made all the resistance in their power to that decree, the execution of which was at length entrusted to an armed force.” The Livonian peasants, therefore, received their new privileges yet more ungraciously than the Poles, though accompanied with the gift of property and secure means of subsistence, if they chose to exert themselves. By an edict of Maria Theresa, called by the Hungarians the ubarium, personal slavery and attachment to the soil were abolished, and the peasants declared to be “hominus liberæ transmigrationis;” and yet, says Jones, “the

* We believe, in case of an emancipation of our blacks, that drunkenness would be among them like the destroying angel.
authority of the owners of the soil over the persons and property of their tenantry has been very imperfectly abrogated; the necessities of the peasants oblige them frequently to resort to their landlords for loans of food; they become laden with heavy debts, to be discharged by labor.* The proprietors retain the right of employing them at pleasure, paying them, in lieu of subsistence, about one-third of the actual value of their labor; and lastly, the administration of justice is still in the hands of the nobles; and one of the first sights which strikes a foreigner, on approaching their mansions, is a sort of low-frame work of posts, to which a serf is tied when it is thought proper to administer the discipline of the whip, for offences which do not seem grave enough to demand a formal trial."

Let us for a moment revert to the black republic of Hayti, and we shall see that the negroes have gained nothing by their bloody revolution. Mr. Franklin, who derives his information from personal inspection, gives the following account of the present state of the island: "Oppressed with the weight of an overwhelming debt, contracted without an equivalent, with an empty treasury, and destitute of the ways and means for supplying it; the soil almost neglected, or at least very partially tilled; without commerce or credit. Such is the present state of the republic; and it seems almost impossible that, under the system which is now pursued, there should be any amelioration of its condition, or that it can arrive at

* Almost all our free negroes will run in debt to the full amount of their credit. "I never knew a free negro (says an intelligent correspondent in a late letter) who would not contract debts, if allowed, to a greater amount than he could pay; and those whom I have suffered to reside on my land, although good mechanics, have been generally so indolent and impoverished as to be in my debt at the end of the year, for provisions, brandy, &c., when I would allow it."
any very high state of improvement. Hence, there appears every reason to apprehend that it will recede into irrecoverable insignificance, poverty, and disorder.” (p. 265.) And the great mass of the Haytiens are virtually in a state of as abject slavery as when the island was under the French dominion. The government soon found it absolutely necessary to establish a system of compulsion in all respects as bad, and more intolerable than, when slavery existed. The Code Henri prescribed the most mortifying regulations, to be obeyed by the laborers of the island; work was to commence at day-light and continue uninterruptedly till eight o'clock; one hour was then allowed to the laborer to breakfast on the spot; at nine, work commenced again, and continued until twelve, when two hours repose was given to the laborer; at two, he commenced again and worked until night. All these regulations were enforced by severe penal enactments. Even Toussaint l'Ouverture, who is supposed to have had the welfare of the negroes as much at heart as any other ruler in St. Domingo, in one of his proclamations in the ninth year of the French Republic, peremptorily directs—“all free laborers, men and women, now in a state of idleness, and living in towns, villages, and on other plantations than those to which they belong, with the intention to evade work, even those of both sexes who had not been employed in field labor since the revolution, are required to return immediately to their respective plantations.” And in article seven, he directs, that the “oversseers and drivers of every plantation shall make it their business to inform the commanding officer of the district in regard to the conduct of the laborers under their management, as well as those who shall absent themselves from their plantations without a pass, and of those who, residing on the plantations, shall refuse to work; they shall be forced to go to labor in the field, and if they prove obstinate, they shall be
arrested and carried before the military commandant, in order to suffer the punishment above prescribed, according to the exigence of the case, the punishment being fine and imprisonment." And here is the boasted freedom of the negroes of St. Domingo: the appalling vocabulary of "overseer," "driver," "pass," &c., is not even abolished. Slavery to the government and its military officers is substituted for private slavery; the black master has stepped into the shoes of the white; and we all know that he is the most cruel of masters, and more dreaded by the negro than any of the ten plagues of Egypt. We are well convinced that there is not a single negro in the commonwealth of Virginia, who would accept such freedom; and yet the happiest of the human race are constantly invited to sigh for such freedom, and to sacrifice all their happiness in the vain wish. But, it is not necessary farther to multiply examples; enough has already been said, we hope, to convince the most sceptical of the great disadvantage to the slave himself, of freedom, when he is not prepared for it. It is unfortunate, indeed, that prejudiced and misguided philanthropists so often assert as facts, what, on investigation, turns out not only false, but even hostile to the very theories which they are attempting to support by them. We have already given one example of this kind of deception, in relation to Mr. Steele. We will now give another.

"In the year 1760, the Chancellor Zamoyski," says Burnett, "enfranchised six villages in the Palatinate of Masovia. This experiment has been much vaunted by Mr. Coxe, as having been attended with all the good effects desired; and he asserts that the Chancellor had, in consequence, enfranchised the peasants on all his estates. Both of these assertions are false. I inquired particularly of the son of the present Count Zamoyski, respecting these six villages, and was grieved to learn, that the experiment had completely failed. The