

preparations should be made against them. All the circumstances seemed to call on Mr. Buxton to stop, but far from staying his steps he rather pushed forward. He was contemplating a new plan, namely, the emancipation of all children under seven years of age, ample compensation being granted to the masters; the children were to be educated and maintained by the British Government till they were seven years old, and then apprenticed to their former masters; after which they should be free.

The following letters will show fully how the sense of the difficulty of his position, and of the necessity there was for firmly maintaining it, gradually increased in his mind.

To Zachary Macaulay, Esq.

“ Ampton, Jan. 14. 1824.

“ Here I am, and have had the satisfaction of finding Wilberforce in good health. He seems by no means discouraged about our cause. Clarkson appears to have done his work well. At Norwich our friends were somewhat intimidated; but he had a meeting there, which revived all their ardour. * * * I have been hard at work, reading and making extracts from all the parliamentary slave papers. I am forming a dictionary, in which I insert information under different heads; I call it ‘ My Macaulay.’ ”*

On going to London in February he writes to Mrs. Buxton, who remained for a week or two longer at Cromer Hall: —

“ Feb. 9.

“ As yet we have had no debate on Slavery, but our foes are so very furious that I imagine we shall soon begin. I am intensely busy. On Saturday we had a meeting, to which I read

* When any of Mr. Macaulay's anti-slavery friends wanted information, they used to say, “ Let us look it out in Macaulay,” and rarely were they disappointed in their references to him.

my plan. The more I think of it, the more I like it. We meet again on Saturday: in the interim, an attack will probably be made on us, which I am to answer. I shall endeavour to do it with effect. We have a capital case as to the Demerara insurrection. Smith is innocent. They have offered him mercy if he will ask for it, and he has refused, standing on his innocence. I am in excellent spirits, and hold my head very high in the matter, and mean to be rather bold in my defence. I expect to see Canning to-morrow; he seems very cold to me, and the report is he will join the West Indians. If he does, we shall go to war with him in earnest."

" Feb. 10.

" My interview with Canning is for the purpose of ascertaining what Government means to do, and of seeing whether he is disposed to receive any plan from us."

" Feb. 11.

" I am so languid with over thought and over work, that I hardly know how to write, but it is worth while to spend one's strength on that which, if it succeeds, will change the condition, almost the nature, of 700,000 human beings. On Saturday we meet Canning at 12 o'clock, and Brougham, and all the leaders of our party, at the Duke of Gloucester's, at 3 o'clock. Then we shall decide on our course. I am not one bit discouraged, and heartily wish a discussion could be brought about, as I think it would change public opinion. How much, how very much happier I am in my Cromer retreat, than in the midst of all this bustle and turbulence! When you come, I shall be quieter, I hope. I am obliged to attend constantly at the House."

" Canning's Office, 6 o'clock, Feb. 14.

" We have had a very unsatisfactory interview with Canning, * * * The Government mean *to forfeit their pledge*, and to do next to nothing. * * * I have now seen Canning again. He promises to postpone any declaration to Parliament till he sees my plan."

To a Friend.

" Feb. 16.

" The degree of opposition I will not call it, but virulence, against me is quite surprising. I much question whether there

is a more unpopular individual than myself in the House just at this moment. For this I do not care.

“ 17th. — The slavery question looks wretchedly. I begin to think that, opposed as we are by the West Indians, deserted by Government, and deemed enthusiasts by the public, we shall be able to do little or nothing. However, I rejoice that we have tried.”

It was indeed no light unpopularity which Mr. Buxton had incurred. Both within and without the walls of the House, ridicule and abuse were heaped upon the Abolitionists during the first years of their attack on slavery. Their conduct was referred to the basest motives, and they were generally stigmatized as fools or knaves, sometimes as both. When the storm was at its highest, one of Mr. Buxton's friends asked him, “ What shall I say when I hear people abusing you ? ” “ Say ! ” he replied, snapping his fingers, “ say *that*. You good folk think too much of your good name. Do right, and *right will be done you.* ” Yet he was not indifferent to the odium which he incurred. Several years afterwards, when public opinion had changed, he expresses, in one of his papers, his gratitude to God, “ that my privileges and enjoyments in life have not been destroyed ; that my enemies (enemies of mine, because I am the friend of the enslaved) have not triumphed over me ; that I cannot now say, as David did, and as I was once prone to repeat, ‘ Reproach hath broken my heart. ’ ”

To Mrs. Buxton.

“ Feb. 17.

“ I see very clearly that I shall not be able to go down to Cromer ; my absence would further intimidate our few friends, who are sufficiently timid as it is. * * * I keep up my spirits pretty well, but what with the mental fatigue I have undergone, and the disappointment we have experienced, I cannot feel very light-hearted.”

“ Feb 1824.

“ We had a very bustling day on Saturday; a meeting with Canning at 12 o'clock, in which he told us, that Government had determined to *yield to the West Indian clamour, and do nothing, except in Trinidad*, where there is no Colonial Assembly. There they will do everything they promised last year. This timidity is very painful. It frustrates all our hopes, and it will enable the West Indians to say that we are wild enthusiastic people, and that the people of England ought to be guided by the sober discretion of Government—which sober discretion is down-right timidity.”

To Joseph John Gurney, Esq.

“ Feb 24.

“ H—— sent you, I believe, my plan. It has undergone material improvements; when first promulgated, it met with no support. At the first meeting at the Duke of Gloucester's it was received very coldly; at the second it obtained some faint praise; at the third, an unanimous vote, supported by Lord Lansdowne, Brougham, Mackintosh, and twenty others, sends it to Government, with the sanction of the meeting. I have been reading Smith's trial. If ever I speak on that subject, as I surely will, it will be without qualifying circumstances. He is as innocent as you are.”

The ministers refused to adopt Mr. Buxton's scheme; and as the 16th of March approached (the day appointed by Mr. Canning for the discussion of the question), the Anti-slavery party, now reduced to a very small number, became much discouraged and depressed. The Government did not conceal that they meant to relinquish the policy of the preceding year; and it seemed probable that, having thus come to a breach with the Anti-slavery leaders, these latter would be treated as scapegoats on whom public indignation might be poured. Under these circumstances, a difference of opinion arose in the Anti-slavery councils as to the course to be pursued.

Many advised that the anticipated attack from Mr. Canning should be received in silence, and that the Anti-slavery party should not come forward to state their own case till some days afterwards, when the first impression made by his eloquence should have died away. On hearing that the venerable Mr. Stephen concurred in this advice, Mr. Buxton exclaimed —

“’Tis odds, indeed, when valiant Warwick flies.”*

To the course recommended he himself was altogether opposed ; he wished to make a stand at once, and indeed to act on the offensive, by exposing the vacillation of the Government, if it should prove that they did not intend to fulfil the expectations held out in the preceding year. In these views he was supported by Dr. Lushington, Mr. William Smith, Mr. W. Evans, and Mr. S. Hoare.

Mr. J. J. Gurney writes to him : —

“ My dear Brother,

“ Norwich, 3 mo. 10th, 1824.

“ I feel very much for thee and for our cause in the prospect of the approaching discussion in Parliament, and I feel inclined to remind thee (however needlessly) of the apostle’s injunction, ‘ Quit you like men, be strong.’ * * * I look upon Colonial Slavery as a monster who must have a very long succession hard knocks before he will expire. Why should we expect to get his extinction *into full train* in less than ten years? And why should we be discouraged overmuch, if the first knock has no other effect than to render the gentleman more lively and energetic than usual? * * * With regard to thyself, as I am fond of thy popularity, I am prone to dislike the contrary. But I have a strong belief that, in due time, thy history will afford a plain exemplification of the certainty of a divine promise, ‘ Them that honour me, I will honour!’ Till then be content to suffer thy portion of persecution, and let no frowns of adversaries, no want

* Shakespere.

of faith, no private feeling of thine own incompetency, either deprive thee of thy spirits or spoil thy speech."

Thus encouraged, Mr. Buxton resolved to persevere: the other leaders gradually fell into his views, and the plan of operations was arranged. The previous division of opinion had, however, been a source of great anxiety to him; and he was almost worn out by his unremitting exertions, which had of late been chiefly directed to the procuring digested proofs of the cruelty with which the slaves were treated, and of the rapid decrease of the black population. He writes on the 12th February, 1824:— "The weight of business, and, worse still, of thought, which overhangs me at this time, is greater than I ever experienced before;" and on another occasion,— "I am fatigued, I am distressed with fatigue." The prospect before him was full of difficulties. The small Anti-slavery party were attacked on all sides with fury. In the House there were hardly more than half-a-dozen staunch friends to the cause, while two hundred members were considered to be more or less directly inimical to it; and now, if the Government were to be swayed by the tide of public opinion, and abandon its schemes of the previous year, how could the small unaided band of Abolitionists indulge the hope of even ultimate success in their undertaking?

Their fears were but too well founded. Mr. Canning carefully withdrew from his connection with those whose principles and measures he had the year before, in a great degree, adopted as his own, but whom he now discovered to be acting "under the impulses of enthusiasm;" and he informed the House that the Government was determined to compel the ameliorations in Trinidad, but to apply for the present no measure more stringent than "admonition" to the contumacious colonies. One spe-

cimen of the graceful eloquence by which his speech was distinguished, we cannot refrain from inserting. Having shown that the conduct of the people of Jamaica might well have justified severe coercive measures, he adds, "Undoubtedly it would be easy to select passages from the Jamaica gazettes which might put Parliament in a towering passion, but my indignation is restrained by consideration of the powerlessness of the body from which the offence comes, compared to the omnipotence of that to which it is offered. The consciousness of superior strength disarms the spirit of resentment. I could revenge, but I would much rather reclaim. I prefer that moral self-restraint, so beautifully expressed by the poet, when he represents Neptune as allaying the wild waters, instead of rebuking the winds which had put them in a roar,—

‘Quos ego — sed motos præstat componere fluctus.’”

Mr. Buxton replied, and fearlessly attacked the Government for its vacillating conduct. He read over the resolutions of the year before, which he justly denominated “a distinct pledge given by Government, that the condition of the slave population should be ameliorated.” Quoting also Mr. Canning’s words, that “if the colonial legislatures would not consent to these ameliorations,—if any resistance should be manifested to the expressed and declared wish of Parliament, any resistance which should partake, not of reason, but of contumacy,—it would create a case upon which His Majesty’s Government would not hesitate to come down to Parliament for counsel.”

“Now,” said Mr. Buxton, “If this full and comprehensive pledge, this engagement given as to *all* the colonies, is to be frittered down, at present at least, to a single island; if the ad-

vantages promised are to be granted indeed to the 30,000 slaves in Trinidad, but withheld from the 350,000 in Jamaica, and the 70,000 in Barbadoes; if the '*earliest period*' is to be construed to mean some time, so undefined and distant that no man can say in what century it will take place; if our pledge to do this is now to mean no more than that we will suffer it to be done by the slow and gradual course of admonition and example — then I see no reason why ten centuries may not elapse before the negroes are freed from their present state of melancholy and deplorable thralldom. We who have engaged in the cause, we, at least, will be no parties to such a desertion of duty, to such a breach of faith.

“I well know,” he added, “the difficult situation in which I stand. No man is more aware than I am of my inability to follow the brilliant and able speech which has just been delivered. But I have a duty to perform, and I will perform it. I know well what I incur by this. I know how I call down upon myself the violent animosity of an exasperated and most powerful party. I know how reproaches have rung in my ears since that pledge was given, and how they will ring with tenfold fury now that I call for its fulfilment. Let them ring! I will not purchase for myself a base indemnity with such a sting as this on my conscience: ‘You ventured to agitate the question; a pledge was obtained; you were, therefore, to be considered the holder of that pledge to which the hopes of half a million of people were linked. And then, fearful of a little unpopularity, and confounded by the dazzling eloquence of the right honourable gentleman, you sat still, you held your peace, and were satisfied to see his pledge, in favour of a whole archipelago, reduced to a single island.’”*

He concluded his speech, in which he laid bare a series of acts of atrocious cruelty in the treatment of the negroes, by stating distinctly, “What I have now said I have said from a sense of public duty. I have no hostility to the planters. Compensation to the planter, emancipation to the children of the negro—these are my desires, this is the consummation, the just and glorious

* Hansard's Debates. New Series, vol. x p. 1115.

consummation on which my hopes are planted, and to which, as long as I live, my most strenuous efforts shall be directed!" He was well supported by Dr. Lushington, Mr. Evans, and Mr. Wilberforce. The latter, who, as usual, was hopeful amidst discouragements, thus addresses him on the day after the debate:—

" My dear Friend, " Brompton Grove, March 17. 1824.

" It was quite a disappointment to me not to see you at the House to-day. There are points on which I shall be glad to confer with you. Meanwhile I am strongly urged by my feelings to express to you the solid satisfaction with which I take a *sober estimate* of the progress which, through the goodness of Providence, we have already made, and the good hopes which we may justly indulge as to the future. To find the two Houses of Parliament, each full of members to the brim, consulting about the interests and comforts of those who, not long ago, were scarcely rated above the level of ourang-outangs, is almost as sure an indication of our complete success ere long, as the streaks of morning light are of the fulness of meridian day. I hope I may live to congratulate you, even in this world, on the complete success of your generous labours; at all events, I trust humbly, that we may rejoice and triumph together in a better world, for we, my dear friend, may, more truly than the great historian, affirm that we are working for eternity. And our *κτῆμα ἐς ἀεὶ* will be enjoyed, I trust, in common with many, many of our poor black brethren, when all bondage and injustice, all sorrow and pain having ceased, love and truth, and mercy and peace and joy, shall be our everlasting portion. O, my friend, let us strive more and more earnestly for all that is right here, looking forward to these glorious prospects!"*

* The following lines, which, under the title of "A Portrait," have since been published among the poems of the Rev. T. Hankinson, were written in reference to Mr. Buxton's conduct at this period.

" I honour him, who stands in calm reliance,
Amid a senate's frown, and shrug and jeer,
Hurls in the scoffer's face his proud defiance,
And fearing no man, dares his God to fear;
Who spins no smooth harangue for statesman's ear
Of that misnam'd expediency, but he
Deems *that* expedient which is just and fair, —
Pronounces *that* most safe which ought to be
And cries, " Let man have right, for God hath made him free!"

On the 1st of June a motion respecting the missionary Smith was brought forward by Mr. Brougham, in a brilliant speech of four hours' length, which produced a strong effect upon public feeling.

One remarkable circumstance by which the Demerara insurrection was distinguished, namely, the extraordinary forbearance of the rebel negroes, is thus mentioned by him:—

“The slaves,” he said, “inflamed by false hopes of freedom, agitated by rumours, and irritated by the suspense and ignorance in which they were kept; exasperated by ancient as well as more recent wrongs (for a sale of fifty or sixty of them had just been announced, and they were about to be violently separated and dispersed), were satisfied with combining not to work, and thus making their managers repair to the town and ascertain the precise nature of the boon reported to have arrived from England. The calumniated minister had so far humanised his poor flock, his dangerous preaching had so enlightened them, the lessons of himself and his hated brethren had sunk so deep in their minds, that, by the testimony of the clergyman, and even of the overseers, the maxims of the Gospel of peace were upon their lips in the midst of rebellion, and restrained their hands when no other force was present to resist them. ‘We will take no life,’ said they, ‘for our pastors have taught us not to take that which we cannot give,’ a memorable peculiarity which drew from the truly pious minister* of the Established Church there the exclamation, ‘that he shuddered to write that the planters were seeking the life of the man whose teaching had saved theirs.’”†

Sir James Mackintosh followed, and was succeeded by Dr. Lushington, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Williams, and Mr. Denman. The debate was closed by a powerful reply

* The clergyman here referred to was the Rev. Mr. Austin, whose conduct in this transaction caused his exile from Demerara, and drew from Sir James Mackintosh the emphatic declaration, “that he needed nothing but a larger and more elevated theatre, to place him among those who will be, in all ages, regarded by mankind as models for imitation, and objects of reverence.”

† Hansard's Debates. New Series, vol. xi. p. 994.

from Mr. Brougham. This discussion, as had been predicted, changed the current of public opinion. The nation, which before had partaken of the consternation of the Government, began to awaken to the truth, and from henceforth the religious public in England was strongly enlisted on behalf of the oppressed missionaries and their persecuted followers; and this feeling soon increased into a detestation of that system, of which such intolerance was the natural fruit. On the 15th of June the subject was renewed in the House by Mr. Wilberforce, and a promise was wrested from the Government of extending the Order in Council to St. Lucia and Demerara, as well as Trinidad.

Mr. Buxton passed the autumn at Cromer Hall, recruiting his health, and at the same time strenuously exerting himself in procuring information which might assist the future conduct of the cause.

In the beginning of 1825 Mr. Wilberforce retired from Parliament. In a letter which he wrote to Mr. Buxton on the occasion, he says,—

“I should like you to be the person to move for a new writ for Bramber as my PARLIAMENTARY EXECUTOR. I can now only say, may God bless you and yours; bless you in public and private as a senator, and still more as a man. So wishes, so prays for you, and all that are most dear to you,

“Your ever sincere and affectionate friend,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

Mr. Buxton thus mentions this event:—

“London, Feb. 10. 1825.

“I went, on the night of my arrival, to Wilberforce. He insists on my moving the writ of abdicacion. I feel it just about the highest honour I could have; and yet it gives me unaffected pain, from a consciousness of my inability to be his successor. I must, however, labour hard, and try how far labour will supply his talents and reputation. I now begin to repent that I shot

so much and read so little during my long holiday,—and yet I did work pretty hard.

“ Well, only *one* thing is absolutely necessary to do some good, and that is a pure and fervent determination to do my duty in private and in public.

“ I can give you no information about our measures, but I have no other notion than that we shall eventually succeed.”

T. F. Buxton, Esq., to a Friend.

“ London, Feb. 24. 1825.

“ I find I have got the character of being very rash and impetuous. In our Anti-slavery proceedings I have always been for vigorous measures. I thought our cause invincible in itself, and that it was always to be treated by us as if we had no distrust of its soundness; and, therefore, the maxim I quote in our deliberations is that of the navy in the last war, ‘ Always fight.’ This is well known to our adversaries, and makes them bitter against me to the last point. I can well bear this.”

In 1822 Mr. Wilberforce had mentioned in his diary that “ the House was made up of West Indians, Government men, a few partisans, and a few sturdy Abolitionists — William Smith, Buxton, Butterworth, Evans, and myself.” He, the great champion of the oppressed, had now retired, and during the three intervening years the very “ few sturdy Abolitionists ” had received but small accession to their numbers, though, it may be confessed, that the great ability and hearty zeal of Dr. Lushington, the varied talents of Mr. Brougham, Sir James Mackintosh, and Mr. Denman, in great measure compensated for their want of numerical strength.

With Dr. Lushington Mr. Buxton maintained, from the beginning to the end of the Anti-slavery struggle, a peculiarly close connection. “ He has ever been,” said Mr. Buxton, “ as disinterested, as honest, as generous a supporter of our great cause as could be; and in private life a most kind and faithful friend, with no

other fault than too much zeal, and too much liberality." They had a perfect community of interest, of anxiety, and of counsel. Indeed, if any credit whatever is due to Mr. Buxton for his conduct of the Anti-Slavery campaign, an equal share must be awarded to Dr. Lushington; for every idea, and every plan, was originated and arranged between them. Important as was Dr. Lushington's parliamentary assistance, not one tenth part of his exertions for the cause ever met the public eye. It was in the long and anxious deliberations in which, day after day, he used to be engaged with Mr. Buxton, that the cause reaped the chief benefit of his great talents and far-sighted policy.

Another essential member of the Anti-slavery cabinet was Mr. Zachary Macaulay. The parliamentary leaders derived the utmost assistance from his matured judgment, and from those vast stores of information which were treasured up in his memory. He also was the editor of that important vehicle of information, the "Anti-slavery Reporter."

There are many who still remember Mr. Macaulay's stooping figure, his entangled utterance, and neglected dress; but within there dwelt the spirit of a hero and a heart glowing with love to God and man. From the moment of his embracing the Abolition cause till the day of his death, he flinched neither from toil nor privations, neither from obloquy nor persecution, but sacrificed himself, with the whole of his personal hopes, to advancing the cause of humanity. The privacy of his course was only chequered by occasional bursts of animosity from those who felt their defeat to be in a great measure owing to his silent but steady exertions. To labour and suffer without prospect of gain or applause, in the simple hope of alleviating the miseries of others, was the lot in

life that he cheerfully fulfilled. There may be a more graceful and more attractive career — can there be one of more solemn grandeur? Still, however, we may hope that posterity will grant him that just meed of honour, which, during his life, was denied him.

During the first four years of the Anti-slavery struggle, the leaders were chiefly employed in clearing the ground for future operations. Emancipation seemed far distant. They were therefore more occupied in investigating and bringing to light the evils of the present state of things, than in framing plans for that which they trusted would eventually succeed it.

In this endeavour great assistance was derived from the publication, in 1824, of the first part of Mr. James Stephen's 'Delineation of Slavery,' described in one of Mr. Macaulay's letters as "Stephen's mighty book which marks the hand of a giant." Mr. Stephen had been, as is well known, one of the leading opponents of the Slave-trade, and his success in enforcing the registration of slaves was of great importance, both in that struggle and in the one which succeeded it. His endeavour now was, to open the eyes of Parliament and the public to the real character of the system.

Early in 1825 Dr. Lushington exposed the unworthy treatment of the free people of colour in the West Indies, selecting, as a prominent instance, the cruel usage of Messrs. Lecesne and Escoffery.

In June of the same year Mr. Buxton brought before the House the case of Mr. Shrewsbury. This gentleman was a Wesleyan missionary in Barbadoes, "in whose conduct," as Mr. Canning expressly stated in the House, "there did not appear the slightest ground of blame or suspicion." But the planters were exasperated against him for his exertions in the instruction of the Negroes

and free people of colour: and it was also charged against him, that he had actually corresponded with Mr. Buxton! "Though," said the latter in the House, "I never received from or wrote to him a single letter; *nor did I know that such a man existed* till I happened to take up a newspaper, and there read with some astonishment, that he was going to be hanged for corresponding with me!"

On two successive Sundays in October, 1823, the doors of Mr. Shrewsbury's chapel were stormed during the hours of divine worship by a furious mob, who did not, however, at that time proceed to actual outrage; but a day or two afterwards a "Proclamation" was published, calling on all the "true lovers of religion" to assemble in arms on the following Sunday, and pull down the chapel and mission-house. This they accordingly did: but Mr. Shrewsbury had concealed himself in the house of a clergyman, "whose kindness," said Mr. Buxton, "then displayed to a poor friendless missionary, hunted for his life by an infuriated mob, I will now return—by concealing his name, knowing that if I were to mention it with approbation, the fate of Mr. Austin, of Demerara, would await him."

"There is," he continued, "in this transaction at Barbadoes, as there was also in that of Demerara, that which of all things I hate the most—a rank, fierce, furious spirit of religious bigotry, dominant throughout the island, and pursuing its victims, the one to death and the other to exile. But there is that also which does honour to human nature, and casts a glory round the Church to which I belong, and which I prefer to all others—namely, that these poor victims, Dissenters, Missionaries, Methodists, though they were, found their best friends and their most faithful advisers in the ranks of our clergy. Mr. Austin, for one of the most noble acts which have been done in our days, is a ruined and banished man; and I conceal the name of

the other, in order to spare him—the honours, indeed, but—the sufferings of martyrdom.”*

He concluded, not by demanding any punishment on the guilty parties, but simply by moving that they should be compelled to rebuild the chapel. The House, however, would only join him in a vote of censure upon those concerned in the crime.

In his reply at the end of the debate he said,—

“I wish it to be distinctly understood that it is my firm and unalterable resolution to devote all my life and my efforts to advocating the cause of the slaves; and that I will persist in that course, in spite of opposition, unpopularity, obloquy, or falsehood.”

To a Friend.

“June 24. 1825.

“I have now to tell you the events of yesterday. At first the usual fate of West India questions attended me—a great indisposition to hear anything; but I gradually won their attention, and gave my narrative fully. No very lively interest betrayed itself, but they listened like persons who wished to learn. * * * I am prepared for a poor report in the newspapers, for even the reporters sympathise with the House in detestation of slavery questions; and though Lushington made a most capital speech last week on the Jamaica business, it was only reported in a very superficial manner.”

In the recess of this year we find him attending Anti-slavery meetings at Norwich and elsewhere; and employed in arranging and settling the division of labour with his coadjutors.

He tells Mr. Brougham:—

“Cromer Hall, Sept. 8.

“Lushington, Macaulay, and I, have now for several days met directly after breakfast, and employed ourselves in discussing various questions relative to slavery. I now send you the results.”

* Hansard. New Series, vol. xiii. p. 1285.

After detailing the projects for the ensuing session, he adds,—

“Macaulay leaves me to-morrow; Lushington stays for several weeks; he and I mean to continue our morning meetings.”

Sir James Mackintosh to T. Fowell Buxton, Esq.

“Dear Buxton,

“Harrowgate, Sept. 25. 1825.

“I received your plan of campaign, but, as I am going to Brougham’s house in Westmoreland, I reserve my observations on it till I have a conference with him. My health is now so much better than ever I expected it would be, that I can with more than usual confidence undertake to perform any task allotted me to the best of my abilities. * * * The two great measures are, the Bill to enforce and generalise the Order in Council, and the particular plan of Emancipation. I almost think that both are too much for one session. * * * I hope to be in London in four weeks, where I shall wish to hear from you.

“Ever yours faithfully,

“J. MACKINTOSH.”

In the beginning of the session of 1826, Mr. Buxton mentions that two meetings about slavery had been already held; and he adds,—

“We are determined to bring forward, without delay, two or three enormities, as a prelude to the Bill for coercing the Colonial Assemblies. The Berbice Papers * and the insurrection in Jamaica have been selected.”

“February 23.

“I saw Canning yesterday: he was very friendly; intimated that the Government meant to do something; but as he had refused to tell the West Indians what that something was, he

* The Berbice Papers were the official statement by the Fiscal of the complaints made to him by the Negroes against their masters, and his judgments thereon. The cruelties thus brought to light were of the most revolting character. Abundant extracts from these papers will be found in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* for October 31. 1825, vol. 1.

also refused to tell us. On Tuesday next I bring forward the London Petition, and we shall have a warm discussion. On Thursday we have Denman's motion on the Jamaica Trials — another fierce discussion; and these will probably be followed by a host of other questions."

Mr. Buxton presented the London petition against slavery on the 1st of March: it was signed by 72,000 persons. In his speech he praised the Order in Council enforced in Trinidad, and again pointed out how ineffectual had been the recommendations of the Government to the legislatures of the other islands. "I am anxious," he declared, "to say nothing that can give offence to any party; but it is my duty broadly to declare my confirmed and deliberate conviction, that this House must do the work themselves, or suffer it to be altogether abandoned." *

He thus states the result of this debate: —

" March 2.

"Last night we had our debate. Canning was not satisfactory: he preferred to *give the West Indians another year*, and then to legislate. We are going to have another debate to-night. I am as tired as a person well can be."

The next evening came on Mr. Denman's motion. He took the case of eight of the Negroes executed after the Jamaica insurrection of 1823; and demanded a vote of censure on those concerned in condemning them. How forced and illegal some of the proceedings had been, will be seen from the following brief extract from Mr. Buxton's speech: —

"Next came the evidence of the constable. He was asked, whether he had not found guns amongst the insurgents? His answer was, that he had not; but he was *shown a place where he was told guns had been*. Then he was asked, if he had not

* Hansard's Debates. New Series, vol. xiv. p. 968.

found large quantities of ammunition? And he answered that he had not. Had he not found a number of bayonets? 'No,' said the constable, 'but I was shown *a basket, in which I was told a great number of bayonets had been!*' Such was the evidence on which these men were hanged."

The House resolved, that it would be inexpedient to impeach the sentences which had been passed; but "that further proof had been afforded by them of the evils inseparably attendant upon a state of slavery."

After the close of this session, there was a pause in the operations of the Abolitionists. As Mr. Canning had positively declared that the Government would give the colonial legislature another year's trial, before it would take the task of amelioration into its own hands, nothing remained for the Anti-slavery party but to await the expiration of that period.

CHAPTER X.

1822—1826.

CROMER HALL.—SHOOTING.—A COURTEOUS POACHER.—THE SPORTING PROFESSOR.—MR. BUXTON'S DELIGHT IN HORSES.—HIS INFLUENCE OVER THE YOUNG.—MAXIMS.—LETTER TO A NEPHEW.—HIS LOVE OF A MANLY CHARACTER.—HIS GENTLENESS.—SHIPWRECK AT CROMER.—PERILOUS EXPLOIT.—HIS RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE.—KINDNESS TO THE POOR.—LETTER ON STYLE.—CORRESPONDENCE.—MARTIN'S ACT.—CORRESPONDENCE.—LETTER TO A CLERGYMAN ON HIS NEW HOUSE.

FOR the last few years Mr. Buxton had generally resided with his family in the spring and summer near the House of Commons, spending, however, much of his time at Ham House, Mr. S. Gurney's seat in Essex, and with Mr. S. Hoare, at Hampstead. Amid the turmoil of his parliamentary life, these country visits were of great advantage to him; as affording him quiet hours for study, and the opportunity of taking those solitary rambles which were the times of his deepest reflection.

In 1825 he took a house in Devonshire Street, Portland Place; but as long as he remained in Parliament, a day of leisure generally found him and Mrs. Buxton either at Hampstead or at Ham House. Mr. and Mrs. S. Hoare also regularly passed the months of September and October at Cromer, and for the first year or two Cromer Hall was held in common by the two families.

After the busy summer in London, Mr. Buxton highly relished the retirement and recreation which this place afforded. He never lost his taste for shooting, and had the reputation of being a first-rate shot.

Great pains were taken by him in the management of his game, especially in rearing his pheasants, which used to feed in very large numbers on the lawn, immediately under the drawing-room windows; yet he was scarcely ever annoyed by poachers. On one occasion, however, while riding along the road, he saw a young man, in an adjoining field, fire at a partridge and kill it. He opened the gate, and, riding up to the youth, who seemed not a little startled at the apparition, said to him in a somewhat abrupt tone, "Now, Sir, allow me to ask you three questions: First, what is your name and residence; secondly, where is your licence; and, thirdly, who gave you leave to shoot over my ground?" The young man made a low bow, and answered in the blandest manner: "My name, Sir, is ——. As to your two other questions, with your leave, I'll waive them. Sir, I wish you a very good morning;" and so saying, to Mr. Buxton's no small amusement, he slipped out of the field.

Once, when he was staying with Mr. Coke at Holkham, a well-known Professor was also one of the visitors. The venerable historian had never had a gun in his hand, but on this occasion Mr. Coke persuaded him to accompany the shooting-party; care, however, was taken to place him at a corner of the covert, where it was thought the other sportsmen would be out of his reach. When the rest of the party came up to the spot where he was standing, Mr. Coke said to him, "Well, what sport? You have been firing pretty often!" "Hush!" said the Professor, "there it goes again;" and he was just raising his gun to his shoulder, when a man walked very quietly from the bushes about seventy yards in front of him. It was one of the beaters who had been set to stop the pheasants, and his leather gaiters, dimly seen

through the bushes, had been mistaken for a hare by the Professor, who, much surprised by its tenacity of life, had been firing at it whenever he saw it move. "But," said Mr. Buxton, "the man had never discovered that the Professor was shooting at him!"

No Arab ever took a greater delight in horses than Mr. Buxton; and several of his favourites, especially John Bull, Abraham, and Jeremie, were renowned for their strength and beauty. He was considered a very good judge, and never hesitated to give any price, in order to render his stud more complete. Of dogs, too, he was very fond; one of his pets came into his possession in a singular manner. He was standing at the door of the House of Commons, talking to a friend, when a beautiful black and tan terrier rushed between them, and immediately began barking furiously at Mr. Joseph Pease, who was speaking. All the members jumped up, shouting and laughing, while the officers of the House chased the dog round and round, till at last he took refuge with Mr. Buxton; who, as he could find no traces of an owner, carried him home. He proved to be quite an original. One of his whims was, that he would never go into the kitchen, nor yet into a poor man's cottage; but he formed a habit of visiting by himself at the country-houses in the neighbourhood of Cromer, and his refined manners and intelligence made 'Speaker' a welcome guest, wherever he pleased to go.

Once at rest in the retirement of Cromer Hall, Mr. Buxton began to lose the grave and care-worn expression which usually marked his countenance while under the heavy pressure of business in town: not that the autumn was wholly spent in recreation; on the contrary, his studies, chiefly bearing on public objects, were steadily pursued. He generally passed the latter part of his

evenings alone in his study, frequently remaining there to a very late hour.

Cromer Hall was often filled with an easy social party, but he had no wish to extend his circle much beyond his own relatives, a select few of his parliamentary friends, and the families in the immediate neighbourhood. He had no taste for society of a more formal, and, as he thought, insipid character; nor did he find much pleasure in conversation, though at table he would usually enliven the party by his playfulness of manner, and by his store of anecdotes, which he could tell with much force and spirit. He took great pains in providing amusements for the younger members of the circle. There is much picturesque scenery around Cromer, and large parties were often collected for excursions, to Sheringham, one of the most beautiful spots in all the eastern counties, to the wooded dells of Felbrigg and Runton, or to the rough heath-ground by the Black Beacon. At home, also, he was energetic in setting on foot amusements for his young friends, such as acting charades, Christmas games, or amusing reading. At one time a family newspaper was started, which appeared once a-week; and great was the interest excited in reading the various contributions, grave and gay, which every one sent in. Sometimes he would give a list of poets, from whose works the juvenile part of the circle were invited to learn by heart: and examinations were held, with valuable books as prizes. Other schemes of the same kind were frequently set on foot, all intended to draw out the mind, and spur it to exertion. His thoughtfulness for others, combined with an unswerving strictness, gave him a remarkable influence over those around him; it has been thus referred to by one who was a frequent guest at Cromer Hall.

“ I wish I could describe the impression made upon me by the extraordinary power of interesting and stimulating others, which was possessed by Sir Fowell Buxton some thirty years ago. In my own case it was like having powers of thinking, powers of feeling, and, above all, the love of true poetry, suddenly aroused within me, which, though I may have possessed them before, had been till then unused. From Locke on the Human Understanding to ‘ William of Deloraine, good at need,’ *he* woke up in me the sleeping principle of taste; and in giving me such objects of pursuit, has added immeasurably to the happiness of my life.”

He more than once recommended Locke on the Understanding to the perusal of young people, as a useful work in establishing the habit of receiving truth with impartiality. “ That,” he said, “ is one of the most important things to impress on the minds of children, habitually to seek for *the truth*, whether for or against our previous opinions and interests.” He certainly illustrated his own maxim, for he was from his youth up remarkably free from prejudices, and ready to give ear to whatever could be adduced against his own views.

He seems to have had some idea of publishing a little work, to be called “ Maxims for the Young.” The following extracts from the rough memoranda for this work, throw light, not only upon his views as to education, but also on his own character:—

HINTS FOR MAXIMS FOR THE YOUNG.

“ Mankind in general mistake difficulties for impossibilities. That is the difference between those who effect, and those who do not.

“ People of weak judgment are the most timid, as horses half blind are most apt to start.

“ Burke, in a letter to Miss Shackleton, says :—

“ ‘ Thus much in favour of activity and occupation, that the more one has to do, the more one is capable of doing, even beyond our direct task.’

“ Plato, ‘ better to err in acts, than principles.’

“ Idleness the greatest prodigality.

“ Two kinds of idleness,—a listless and an active.

“ If industrious, we should direct our efforts to right ends.

“ Possibly it may require as much (industry) to be best billiard-player as to be senior wrangler.

“ The endowments of nature we cannot command, but we can cultivate those given.

“ My experience, that men of great talents are apt to do nothing for want of vigour.

“ Vigour, — energy, — resolution, — firmness of purpose, — these carry the day.

“ Is there one whom difficulties dishearten, — who bends to the storm?—He will do little. Is there one who *will* conquer? — That kind of man never fails.

“ Let it be your first study to teach the world that you are not wood and straw—*some iron in you*.

“ Let men know that what you say you will do; that your decision made is final, — no wavering; that, once resolved, you are not to be allured or intimidated.

“ Acquire and maintain that character.”

* * * * *

“ *Eloquence* — the most useful talent; one to be acquired, or improved; all the great speakers bad at first.—Huskisson.—How to be acquired.

“ Write your speeches,—no inspiration.

“ Labour to put your thoughts in the clearest view.

“ A bold, decided outline.

“ Read ‘ multum, non multa,—homo unius libri.’

“ ‘ Learn by heart everything that strikes you.’—Fox.

“ Thus ends my lecture; nineteen out of twenty become good or bad as they choose to make themselves.

“ The most important part of your education is that which you now give yourselves.”

The same value for strength of character is displayed in the following mention in his papers of a young member of his circle about to enter on life.

“ He is now at a very critical period of life. In a few months he will leave home, and his fate and fortunes will mainly depend on the degree of *vigour of character* which he will then display. Deliver him, O Lord, from fading resolutions, from feeble and unstable purposes, from an idle wavering mind, and from habits of self-indulgence. Give him firmness of purpose, enable him to take hold on his object with a vigorous and manly grasp. Give him industry and perseverance; a clear judgment to resolve, and, once resolved, an inflexible determination. But let this strength of character be based on better than human foundations; let it be given by thee; limited, corrected, kept within bounds by thee. Oh, that he may be able in after life to ascribe his success to the Lord, and to say, with David, ‘ It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect.’ ”

He writes to his nephew, Mr. Hoare’s eldest son, who had been disappointed in the scholarship examination at Trinity:—

“ Hampstead, April 21. 1827.

“ I need not, I suppose, say that I have my full share of this disappointment; but that is not the subject on which I am going to write. All my advice is crowded into this single sentence, ‘ Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito.’ ”

“ This mortification is a test which will try your character. If that character be feeble, the disappointment will weigh upon your spirits; you will relax your exertions, and begin to despond and to be idle. That is the general character of men; they can do very well when the breeze is in their favour, but they are cowed by the storm. If your character is vigorous and masculine, you will gather strength from this defeat, and encouragement from this disappointment. If fortune will not give you her favours, you will tear them from her by force; and if you were my own son, as you very nearly are, I would rather you should have failed, and then exhibited this determination, than that everything should have gone smoothly. I like your letter much; it breathes a portion of this unconquerable spirit, which

is worth all the Latin, Greek, and Logarithms in the world, and all the prizes which ever were given. Now, then, is the time; be a man and avenge yourself at the next examination. If you are sick at heart, and can't sleep, and laugh, and defy malicious fortune, then you may make a very decent banker, but there is an end of you. If you can summon up courage for the occasion, and pluck from this failure the materials for future success, then the loss of the scholarship may be a gain for life.*

He could not bear the stream of life to run shallow: he liked its tide to be full and strong, longing to make others share in his own impetus and force of character. This delight in manliness of mind led him to set his face firmly against all listlessness in amusement as well as in study. He was much averse to confining boys too closely to the school-room, and was always ready to propose holidays; but then he took care to provide shooting, cricketing, or some other active diversion for them. At the same time he was very strict in enforcing his orders. The tendency of his mind was to assume command in a decisive and even somewhat stern manner; but this was corrected by the extreme tenderness of his heart, which led him in all things to weigh carefully the feelings and pleasures of those under his authority. "I know," he says in a letter from Cromer Hall, "that I am often harsh, and violent, and very disagreeable, but I sincerely think that I do not know a person less inclined than I am to *curb the deep desires* of others, or to force my views down their throats. I believe I am a true friend to liberty of feeling, and I think it high arrogance in one human being to pretend to dictate to another what is for that other's happiness." His forbearance

* This advice was not neglected by his nephew. He gained his scholarship the next time; was a high wrangler, and in the first class of the Tripos.

was continually shown in the turmoil of public life. In transacting business, on committees, and in the conduct of difficult affairs with those of widely diverging opinions, his subjugation of temper and his gentle persuasive manner were remarkable. One of his most faithful supporters at Weymouth thus writes of him: —

“It must be well known to every one conversant with contested elections, that nothing can try the temper more, from the unwarrantable liberty of the press, and the unfair means, both in word and deed, used on such occasions; yet though I have followed the late Sir Fowell through all his hard, long, and severe contests in this borough, I never knew him *once* lose his temper, *once* give a harsh reply, or use an unkind word to any one; nothing ever disturbed the ‘even tenor of his way.’”

Before the establishment of the floating light off Hap-pisburgh, wrecks were very frequent on the Cromer coast. On any rumour of a vessel in danger, Mr. Buxton and Mr. Hoare used to be among the first on the shore, not merely to urge and direct the efforts of others, but to give their personal aid. On one of these occasions Mr. Buxton himself ran considerable risk in the terrible storm of the 31st of October, 1823, which was long remembered on the Norfolk coast. About twelve o'clock a collier brig, “The Duchess of Cumberland,” ran upon the rocks off the Cromer light-house. The life-boat was immediately brought out, but so tremendous was the sea that no persuasion could induce the fishermen to put off. Once when a wave ran up the beach and floated her, Mr. Buxton, hoping to spur them on by his example, sprang in, shouting to them to follow him, but without effect. Captain Manby's gun was repeatedly fired, but the line fell short of the vessel, in which nine sailors were seen lashed to the shrouds. At length a huge sea burst over her, and she went to pieces,

blackening the waters with her cargo of coal. For an instant the spectators looked on in silent awe. — “Poor dear hearts, they’re all gone now!” exclaimed an old fisherman; but at that moment Mr. Buxton thought he saw one of them borne upon the top of a wave. Without waiting for a rope, he at once dashed into the surf — caught the man — flung himself upon him, and struggled against the strong drawback of the retiring billow, until others could reach him, and he was dragged to land with his rescued mariner, and carried up the cliff in a state of utter exhaustion. The deed was considered by those on shore to have been one of extreme peril and daring.* He said himself that he felt the waves play with him as he could play with an orange.

A prominent feature of his character was the careful employment of his influence in promoting the spread of religion around him. On the Sunday evenings his large dining-room was usually filled with a miscellaneous audience, many of the fishermen and other neighbours collecting round him as well as his own household; and very impressive were his brief but well digested comments on the passage of Scripture he had read. His rule was to say nothing unless he had something really weighty to say. His manner of speaking showed that he was not only a teacher, but a learner; he appeared to drink in the truth, and to appropriate it with an earnestness which could not but excite a corresponding feeling in those who heard him. His sentiments, with regard to the study of the Scriptures, are thus expressed: —

“Undoubtedly it is good to read the Bible; it is well to read it occasionally; and if we do no more than take a super-

* See the Fisherman’s Friendly Visitor, March, 1845.

ficial view of it, and just snatch a few fragments of truth from it, even this is better than its utter neglect.

“But this is not the way to gather from the Sacred Word those treasures of knowledge which it will yield. We must not read it, but study it; we must not cast a hasty glance upon it, but meditate upon it deeply with fixed attention, with full purpose of heart, with all the energy of our minds, if we desire to become masters of the treasures of revelation; and I am sure that Scripture thus diligently studied, read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested, and read, too, with prayer for the influence of the Holy Spirit, will furnish us with new light, open to us new views, and will appear to us in itself of a new character, adorned with a variety of beauties, with an emphasis of expression, with a power and a vigour and an appropriateness to our own needs, with a harvest of divine instruction and cogent truth never yielded to its careless cultivation. I have known men, and men of good understanding, who have been induced to read the Bible, and who have protested that they could make nothing of it, that they could not comprehend it;—no wonder; it is a sealed book to those who neither ask nor receive the Holy Spirit.

“An astronomer looks at the face of the heavens through a telescope, spangled with stars and planets, and sees an harmony, an order, a profuse display of power and wisdom. An ordinary man surveys the same sky with the naked eye, and observes nothing of all this; he has not the instrument; he wants the telescope which would reveal the wonders of the heavens to him. And so it is in reading the Bible; if a man looks at it with naked unassisted reason, he sees little and learns nothing; he wants the instrument, the Holy Spirit, to guide his inquiries, to enlighten his understanding, to touch his heart.

“But if some read it and learn nothing, others read it and learn but little. They begin without prayer, and they end without meditation. They read, but they do not inwardly digest; while others embrace its truths, seize and secure its treasures, and, to use the figure of Scripture, receive the engrafted word which is able to save their souls.”

Mr. Buxton and Mr. Hoare had taken much pains in establishing branches of the Bible and Missionary Socie-

ties at Cromer, and from that time they made a point of attending and taking a part in the annual meetings. Only on one occasion was Mr. Hoare absent from them up to the time of his death — a period of twenty-five years; and Mr. Buxton was scarcely less regular. In every way he strove to promote the well-being of his poorer neighbours: their sufferings touched him to the quick, and great was his anxiety to relieve them. He would take pains also to gratify them in small things as well as to benefit them in greater matters. “It is a cruel thing,” he once said, “for the poor labourer to be obliged to part with all his pig, after nourishing it as a daughter and letting it lie in his bosom. When they ask me to buy a bit, I buy two — one for myself, the other for them: they are so grateful and so pleased.” Proofs that he was popular among them were often given. Having gone one day to speak to a friend at the Magistrates’ meeting, in coming out he was surrounded by a crowd of people, one of whom said to him, “I hope, sir, you will attend the meeting to-day.” “No, I do not understand magistrates’ business.” “Yes, sir,” answered a man, “*you* are the poor man’s magistrate.”

The following letters, written between 1822 and 1826, may find a place here.

To Mrs. Buxton.

“March 30. 1822.

“I have the satisfaction to find that Government have finally consented to grant pensions to the wives of insane officers; and really if I do nothing but this in Parliament I shall not think my time or labour or money misspent; for the effect will be to render many a poor family comfortable and easy. On the other hand, I have the great dissatisfaction of finding great impediments with regard to the Prison Bill. However, I feel comfortable,

and am going to dine with the Duke of Gloucester to-day. John Ribbons is much to blame in not going to church, and must do it. He must not kill a rook on any consideration. I trust they will enjoy their matrimonial life; and I feel quite vexed at the idea of their being molested; in short, he must kill nothing but vermin."

To a Friend.

"London, April 16. 1823.

"I will take an early opportunity of moving for the account of the stations, and for the number of lives saved by the use of Captain Manby's apparatus; but the purpose of my writing at present is of a different nature. You say 'Pathos is not, in any sense, in my composition,' and you intimated in our conversation last Sunday, that you felt fit for the drudgery of stating facts, but not possessed of the art of giving to your statements entertainment and interest. Now, this is utterly and without reserve untrue. The fact is, that all persons, if they set about it aright, have the capacity of conveying their feelings to others. * * * Honestly speaking, however, I do think there is a certain degree of languor and want of vivacity in your studied productions; and I am sure I know the cause. You imagine, when you appear before the public, that you must appear in full dress, correct to a nicety—precise to a hair; and that artless, native naïveté, and undressed good humour, are unbecoming so solemn an occasion as an address to the public: in all which you are eminently deceived. You are of opinion that the public is so sagacious a creature as to require only bare facts; that he wants no more ornament or entertainment than a mathematician. Now, believe me, the public neither can or will receive into his obtuse understanding anything which is not conveyed through the medium of his imagination or his feelings; and if you want to move him you must address yourself to those only openings through which he is assailable. All the observations I have made in life—all the persons who have succeeded, and all those who have failed, furnish proofs of this. I will, however, only give you one. Dr. Lawrence, a man of great learning and talents, used to make speeches in the House, admirable for their facts, but to which no man ever attended except Fox: he was always seen sitting in the attitude of deep attention; and when asked the

reason, he said, 'Because I mean to speak this speech over again.' He actually did so; and those facts, which from Dr. Lawrence were unbearably heavy, moved and delighted the House from Fox, and insured certain and silent attention from all. Why? Because Dr. L. thought with you, and Fox had the good fortune to agree with me!

"Now, then, the application of all this. You ought to study the art of composition—the means of conveying to the world your own views and feelings. I am sure, from your habits of research, and your literary powers and opportunities, *you may do a great deal of good*; but you are bound to do your best to effect that object, in the way by which alone it can be accomplished—by *tackling the fancy* of the public.

* * * * *

"First, I should advise you in writing to put down the native, gay effusions of your own mind; and to avoid destroying their effect by a cold, correct emendation.

"Secondly, I would advise you to study composition;—'but where?' In Cicero, in Quinctilian, in Chesterfield's Letters (you will smile at the assembly), in the three papers on the Speech of Demosthenes in the Edinburgh Review, in South's Sermons, Junius's Letters, and the Spectator. Imbibe the spirit of these, and I will venture to assert that the public will feel as you feel, and respond to any appeal you make to them."

John Henry North, Esq., to T. Fowell Buxton, Esq.

"My dear Buxton,

"Barmouth, Sept. 1 1823.

"I have at length sat down to perform a lawyer's duty, to explain things inexplicable; *to wit*, why I have not written to you before, or why I am writing to you now, or why I am writing to you from this place. When the circuit ended, and left me at liberty to think of recreation, I embarked myself, my wife, a gig and horse, and, without other incumbrance or accommodation, have been moving about in broken weather and on mountain roads, till I found a sheltering-place here. Here, too, I have had the good fortune to meet with your venerable friend Mr. Wilberforce. To-day I had the pleasure of walking with him for half an hour, when he spoke of you with all the warmth

and affection that I anticipated. It quite delights me to receive the unvarying testimony which comes to me from all quarters of your well-earned reputation; and I enjoyed in a peculiar manner the high tribute which he paid you, because I know you are considered as his natural successor in the House of Commons. You have a boldness, spirit, and intrepidity that fit you for rougher warfare than he ever ventured to engage in; and public opinion, more powerful and enlightened now than in his time, will support you in attempting the great objects you have in view by more direct and expeditious methods than it would have been wise in him to adopt. Yes, Buxton, I do hope that we shall labour together yet in rooting out the Slave Trade in every quarter of the globe; in improving or perfecting the Criminal Law of England, and in emancipating, educating, and civilising my unfortunate countrymen.

“ I suppose you have heard that I am an Orangeman, and that my health is drunk next after the Protestant ascendancy; but my opinions on the state of Ireland, and the policy it requires, remain unchanged. Lord Wellesley and Plunket have made sad work of it.

“ When I tell you that twenty miles a day is the utmost that I can impel my horse, you will admit the impracticability of my crossing the island to Norfolk. I wish you had some of my roving disposition, or that there was good shooting on the marshes of Wales, and we might yet spend three or four days pleasantly together. Of our old friends I have no news. Strong you see from time to time in London. Stock is Stock; everything else alters, but he remains immoveable. He is unchanged too in his friendships, and feels the same warm regard for you and me that he ever felt. Wray is a Senior Fellow, and surprised the college by the excellence of his fellowship examinations. Robinson has married and accepted a living.

“ I do not know with what face I can ask you to write to me, but one can be very impudent upon paper. * * * We have a friend here, the most amiable of men — a Mr. M'Ghee, a young clergyman. He is quite devoted to religion; and his views coincide entirely with what I believe to be yours. In the pulpit he is nearly the most eloquent preacher I ever heard. He is a friend of Mr. Wilberforce, who came here at his suggestion. If he should ever have an opportunity of seeing you, let this letter

be an introduction to him. My dear Buxton, may God bless you and your dear family, and my dear friend Mrs. Buxton, and long preserve you to the cause of humanity, patriotism, and religion !

“ Your ever affectionate friend,
“ JOHN HENRY NORTH.”

Mr. Wilberforce writes at the same period : —

“ My dear Buxton, “ Barmouth, Sept. 3. 1823.

“ Oh, how much I wish you and yours were all at this place ! If you have any passion for rocks and mountains, here it might be gratified to the utmost of your desires. And there is another, and, to your friendly heart, I know a still more powerful attraction, in the person of Mr. North, the Irish barrister, who is staying here with his lady (the sister of Leslie Forster) for a short time. I own I had formed a very different idea of his exterior and manners. Your Irish man of genius commonly has somewhat volcanic about him ; flash and fertility, and now and then a puff of smoke too, though often also with fine coruscations and aspirations of flame and starry scintillations ; but North’s manner is so quiet, and soft, and insinuating, that I should never have guessed him to be an Irishman ; you cannot hear him converse, even for a few minutes, without conceiving both respect and regard for him.

* * * * *

“ My dear friend, I don’t like to conclude without one serious word. Indeed, were I to do so, my letter would be a very unfaithful picture of my mind, and a letter to a friend ought to be quite a copy of it ; for my most affectionate thoughts and feelings about you and yours are serious, far above the region of levities and frivolities. May it please God, my dear friend, to bless you with a long course of usefulness, and honour, and comfort ; and may you and I, and all that are most dear to us respectively, after having filled up our appointed course, according to the will of God, in his faith, and fear, and love, as redeemed and grateful purchases of the blood of Christ, be received into that world of peace, and love, and joy, where all will be holiness and happiness for evermore ! So wishes, so prays,

“ Your sincere and affectionate friend,
“ W. WILBERFORCE.”

T. F. Buxton, Esq., to a Friend.

“ Feb. 24. 1825.

“ We have had a most noble debate on Ireland. Burdett's and Canning's speeches were superlative. As an object of ambition, there is nothing to compare with such exertions; and there was a time when my bosom burned to achieve them; but that folly is defunct. After all they are but an object of ambition; they convey no reality of honour or of happiness. Falstaff and I are exactly of the same opinion on the subject of reputation. I shall speak as well as I can for usefulness, but not for fame; my serious opinion being, that good woodcock shooting is a preferable thing to glory.”

“ Feb. 25. 1825.

“ Martin brought forward last night a new cruelty bill. Sir M. Ridley and another member opposed it, and I evidently saw that there was so much disposition to sneer at and make game of Martin, that the bears and dogs would suffer. Up I got, and when I found myself on my legs I asked myself this cutting question:— Have you any thing to say? ‘ Not a syllable,’ was the answer from within; but necessity has no law; speak I must, and so I did. I began with challenging my share of the sneers and obloquy which had been cast on Martin. * * * We saved the bill, and all the dogs in England and bears in Christendom ought to howl us a congratulation.”

To a gentleman who had asked for the secretaryship of a mining company for a friend, saying, “ He had been a brave officer: ” —

“ April 17. 1825.

“ You say he is brave; what has that to do with the mines? We don't want to fight the silver. Is he a vigorous, energetic dog, who will conquer difficulties? Is he a sharp, clear-headed man, who will not let us be cheated? Is he a man who will do business? Is he a good-tempered man, who will quarrel with nobody? You naval gentlemen think of nothing but courage, and think you have given the most special recommendation when you assure us that your friend is most perfectly ready to knock out his neighbour's brains; whereas we cowardly landmen are not so fond of fighting, or fighting men.”

To a friend who had remonstrated with him on speaking too strongly to a person in power on the subject of slavery—

“1826.

“I cannot leave London without acknowledging the receipt of your letter, though I am not very well.

“Our conversation has left a kind of double impression on my mind. I am glad I spoke out. I have made it a sacred rule to myself never to change my opinion of a man for whom I felt a friendship, without telling him to his face what I had to object against him. I have sometimes found myself altogether mistaken; and often, if not always, there has been something to be said on the other side which I had not anticipated. I am not aware that I ever had a quarrel with any one who had been my friend, and to this good rule I owe my preservation. I am glad, therefore, that I did not disguise what had been long and much on my mind. It is to me matter of amazement that any man of principle can materially differ with me on the subject of slavery. I wonder when I see an honest man who does not hate it as I do, who does not long for the opportunity of giving it a death-blow; and as I cannot believe that any change of circumstances could make me any thing but a favourer, and well-wisher, and encourager to those who were devoted to that duty, I am quite perplexed by finding that there are persons who look upon me, because thus engaged, with an unfriendly eye. — is a man for whom I have ever entertained both respect and liking; I am therefore glad I hazarded the truth; but I am not glad that I did it in so strong a manner. I did not tell my whole mind. I wished to have said that I was very sorry I could not acknowledge many services he had rendered to our cause; but I wished to have said this in sorrow, not in anger: and if I left the impression that I had any feeling of enmity towards him I did myself great injustice.”

To a Clergyman.

“My dear Friend,

“Cromer Hall, Aug. 22. 1826.

“I very much wish you would come into Norfolk, for I really want to have a conversation with you; and it is odd enough that it is upon a business entirely yours, with which I

have no kind of concern. I remember two observations of yours, which, little as I might appear to heed them at the time, made a deep impression on me. The one was, 'I should very much like to be a country gentleman. I would not have the best horses, or dogs, or farms, in the county; but I would exert myself to improve the people who were under my influence. A country gentleman, thus employed, *tots viribus*, might accomplish a vast range of good.' The other was, when you said to one of your parishioners who was fond of music, 'I, too, love music; I hope to enjoy a great deal of it, but I will wait till I get to heaven.' Now, having had the use of these observations for some years, I feel bound to return them to you for your use and benefit, for it strikes me you want them just at this time. I hear you are going to build a house; no doubt you will do it with excellent taste; then it will require to be suitably furnished; then the grounds must be improved about it, and by that time your heart will be in it. I am sure that house will lead to your secularisation. It will melt you down towards an ordinary country parson; not the parson who loves his dinner and his claret, but rather towards that refined class of triflers, who exquisitely embellish houses and gardens, and who leave the minds and souls of their flocks to take care of themselves. You see I have scratched out 'into' and inserted 'towards,' because I am bound in truth to confess, that I am sure you will, under any circumstances, and in spite of all seductions, be an exemplary clergyman. You will have your schools, and your weekday services, and your sound, lively, evangelical doctrine in the pulpit; but what I mean to say is, that just so much of your affections as you give to your house, exactly so much will you withdraw from your parish.

"After all, the discharge of a man's duty, and, *à fortiori*, of a clergyman's duty, requires all the strength we can give it. The world, and the spirit of the world, are very insidious, and the older we grow the more inclined are we to think as others think, and act as others act; and more than once I have seen a person, who, as a youth, was single-eyed and single-hearted, and who, to any one who supposed he might glide into laxity of zeal, would have said 'Am I a dog?' in maturer age become, if not a lover of the vices of the world, at least a tolerator of its vanities. I speak here feelingly, for the world has worn away

much of the little zeal I ever had. 'What is the harm,' you will say, 'of a convenient house: what is the harm of a convenient house being elegant; of an elegant house being suitably furnished?' The same personage who insinuates this to you, said to me, 'Where is the harm of having a few dogs—those few very good? you preserve game—do it well—do it better than other people:' and so he stole away my heart from better things. I have more game and better horses and dogs than other people, but the same energy, disposed of in a different way, might have spread Bible and Missionary Societies over the Hundred of North Erpingham.

"All this applies to you, more than to any person I know. You have, by a singular dispensation of Providence, obtained a station of influence; you have a vigour and alacrity of mind with which few are gifted; upon no man's heart is 'the vanity of this life' more strongly stamped. You have a great, as far as my experience goes, an unequalled influence over those around you. These together constitute great power of doing good. The question is, shall you give it wholly to God, walking through life as one who really despises the indulgences on which others set their hearts, — acting fully up to your own creed, and the convictions of your better moments, — or will you give two-thirds of that power to God, and one-third of it to the world? Will you have your music here, or will you wait a few years for it? Old Wesley said, when called upon, according to the Act of Parliament, to give an account of his service of plate, in order to be taxed, 'I have five silver spoons; these are all I have, and all I mean to have, while my poor neighbours want bread.' That is the spirit which becomes a minister. Will you say, twenty years hence, to Death, when he pays you a visit, 'I built this house—by the confession of all men a parsonage in the purest taste; I selected these pictures: observe the luxuriance of the trees I planted; just do me the favour to notice the convenience of this library, and the beauty of the prospect from that window?' or will you say, 'I have spent my days in this homely habitation, where there is nothing for luxury to enjoy or taste to admire; but there is my parish, not a child there but can read the Bible, and loves it too: in every house there is prayer, in every heart there is an acknowledgment of Christ, and that he came into the world to

save sinners?’ I do not mean to say, even if you build your house, that when that epoch arrives you will not be able to show a very good parish, as well as a very good parsonage; I only mean to say, that the house and the parish will be the inverse of each other, the better the house, the worse the parish. The less you surround yourself with accommodations, the less you conform yourself to the taste of the multitude, the more exclusively, and the more powerfully, you will do your own work.

“No man has a surplus of power: meaning by power—time, talents, money, influence. There is room for the exercise of all, and more than all, which the most affluent possesses. Perhaps one parish is enough for the full employment of this power; if not, the neighbourhood will take off the redundance; if not, there are three quarters of the world, which are heathen, and want his aid. There, at least, is full occupation for the wealth of his mind, and his purse. It is therefore, arithmetically true, that so much as he devotes to the secular object he withdraws from the spiritual. It is not more clear, that a man having a large hungry farm for his livelihood, and a garden for his recreation, that as much manure as he spreads on his garden, of so much he deprives his fields. He grows more flowers and less bread. But this is not all; it is not merely the quantum of his force which he thus wastes, that is the least part of his loss. He touches the world at one point, and the infection reaches him by the contact. If he resembles others in his house, why not in his table? why not in his society? why not in anything which is not positively wrong?

“Now every word of this sermon is inconsistent with my own practice; but never mind that; truth is truth, whoever speaks it.

“It may be a way—

‘Out of this wreck to rise in,
A sure and safe one, though thy master missed it.’

“But why do I write all this to you? solely because I have the highest opinion of you and your powers. I have watched your course now for many years with interest; and I am very desirous that the Rector of A—— should equal the Curate of B——. The objects of vulgar care, and the pursuits of vulgar ambition, are not for you. I hope to see in your parish an

example of what may be done by a clergyman having talents, income, influence, out of the common order. It just occurs to me that all this may be misapplied, that your house has not, and is not likely to have, a tittle of your affections. Be it so— then give this letter to your housemaid to light your fire with. But if you suspect that you want the friendly freedom of this hint, in the midst of your present prosperity, keep this as a memorial of the attachment of

“ Yours, very truly,

“ T. F. BUXTON.”

CHAPTER XI.

1826, 1827.

THE MAURITIUS SLAVE TRADE. — MR. BYAM AND GENERAL HALL. — MR. BUXTON STUDIES AND UNDERTAKES THE QUESTION. — TOUCHING INCIDENT. — DEBATE. — COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY. — STORMY ELECTION AT WEYMOUTH. — LETTERS. — LABORIOUS INVESTIGATIONS. — FRIGHTFUL ATTACK OF ILLNESS. — UNEXPECTED RECOVERY.

THE year of trial, granted by the Government to the colonial legislatures, suspended during that time all anti-slavery proceedings. This interval was not thrown away — Mr. Buxton at once turned his whole mind to a new, though kindred question.

A few months previously he had received a visit from a gentleman of the name of Byam, who had been commissary-general of the police at the Mauritius, and had come home full of indignation at the abuses he had there witnessed. He asserted that the slave-trade was still prevailing in that island to a frightful extent; that the inhabitants and the authorities were alike implicated, and that the labouring slaves were treated with atrocious cruelty; the greater, because their loss could be so easily supplied.

The Mauritius* had not been ceded to England by France till 1810, which was three years after the abolition of the British slave-trade. It appeared that, partly owing to this circumstance, and partly to the

* The Mauritius was discovered in 1505, by Mascaregnas, a Portuguese. It received its name from that of the ship of Van Neck, a Dutchman, who first settled on it in 1595. The story of Paul and Virginia throws a romantic interest over this rich and beautiful island.

facilities afforded by the proximity of the African coast, the traffic had never been put down in those quarters, except during one or two brief intervals.

To these startling assertions Mr. Buxton could not yield immediate belief; still less could he refuse to investigate them. From Mr. Byam, and other individuals, especially General Hall (who had been a governor of the Mauritius), he obtained a large mass of documents, and after a long and minute study of their contents he came to the certain conviction that the charge was true. He was appalled by the greatness of the evil thus unveiled to him. It was no light matter, however, to begin a struggle with a foe so distant and inaccessible, and at first he shrank from the undertaking. But how could he know of such iniquities without standing up against them? At that time he little thought that in six years British slavery would be done away. He expected a far more lengthened contest; and, meanwhile, should these horrors be permitted to continue? — No! A year's leisure lay before him, and in conjunction with Dr. Lushington and others, he took the task in hand.

A plan of operation was soon laid, in accordance with which Mr. (now Sir) George Stephen, a stanch and hereditary abolitionist, took upon himself the labour, demanding no less skill than perseverance, of discovering and examining witnesses.* The first of these was Mrs. Byam's English maid-servant, who, while in the

* Mr. Buxton used to relate a conversation as having occurred at his own table in connection with this question, which much amused him. A gentleman who had been resident in the Mauritius, one day dining with him, laboured to set him right as to the condition of the slaves, assuring him that the blacks there were in fact the happiest people in the whole world. He finished by appealing to his wife. "Now, my dear, you saw Mr. T——'s slaves, do tell Mr. Buxton how happy they looked." "Well, yes," innocently replied the lady, "they were very happy, I'm sure — only I used to think it so odd to see the black cooks chained to the fireplace!"

Mauritius, had done various little acts of kindness to the slaves.

One incident related by her powerfully affected Mr. Buxton. In the middle of the night preceding the departure of Mr. Byam's family from the island, she was awakened by a low voice calling to her from without; she rose, and was terrified at finding the whole courtyard filled with negroes. They beseechingly beckoned her to be still, and then, falling upon their knees, they implored her, as she was going to the country of Almighty God, to tell Him of their sufferings, and to entreat Him to send them relief.

On the 9th of May, 1826, Mr. Buxton brought the Mauritius question before Parliament. In the commencement of his speech he reminded the House that the traffic in slaves was by law a felony. "And yet," he continued —

"I stand here to assert, that in a British colony, for the last fourteen years, except during General Hall's brief administration, the slave trade in all its horrors has existed: that it has been carried on to the extent of thousands, and tens of thousands; that, except upon one or two occasions, which I will advert to, there has been a regular, systematic, and increasing importation of slaves."

He then proceeded to prove this statement, adducing the evidence of one admiral and four naval captains, one general and three military officers, five high civil officers, and two out of the three governors of the island; and then, from calculations which he had very fully and accurately made, he proved every one of the eight distinct heads of accusation which he had brought forward. By a return of the number of the black population in the Seychelles, he showed that there was only

one alternative, either the slave-trade had been carried on, or every female in that group of islands must have been the mother of one hundred and eighty children.* He concluded his speech by sketching with a powerful hand the features of the trade which he was attacking (and let the reader, while perusing the following extract, remember that the same barbarities are going on at this very day, between the west coast of Africa and the Brazils).

After describing the system of capture, &c. he said,—

“The fourth step is the voyage, the horrors of which are beyond description. For example, the mode of packing. The hold of a slave-vessel is from two to four feet high. It is filled with as many human beings as it will contain. They are made to sit down with their heads between their knees; first, a line is placed close to the side of the vessel; then another line, and then the packer, armed with a heavy club, strikes at the feet of this last line, in order to make them press as closely as possible against those behind. And so the packing goes on, until, to use the expression of an eye-witness, ‘they are wedged together in one mass of living corruption.’ Then the stench is so dreadful that I am assured by an officer, that holding his head for a few moments over the air-hole was almost fatal to his life. Thus it is that—suffocating for want of air,—starving for want of food,—parched with thirst for want of water,—these poor creatures are compelled to perform a voyage of fourteen hundred miles. No wonder the mortality is dreadful!”

He obtained a select committee to inquire whether the slave-trade had or had not existed in the Mauritius. But its investigations were soon arrested by the dissolution of Parliament; and, in the beginning of June, Mr. Buxton found himself involved in a stormy election at Weymouth, which at that time, with the united borough of Melcombe Regis, returned four members. The non-

* Hansard, P. D. xv. p. 1030.

electors and the mob were in favour of the Tory candidates, and resorted to main force to prevent the polling of the Whig votes. Their plan was, with the aid of a large body of stout Portlanders, to obtain possession of the Town Hall, at the further extremity of which the booth was placed. No Whig voter reached the table without a violent struggle and very rough treatment. Some were delayed for hours, first by this means, and then by the objections urged by the lawyers; and so great was the success of all this, that on one day but six votes were polled. To remedy in some degree this evil, the mayor extended the hours of polling from 4 to 6 o'clock. This measure was extremely unpopular with the mobility of the place, who, of course, wished the election to last as many days as possible. It was rumoured that an attack on the Town Hall was in contemplation, and a strong body of cavalry was called into the town. The mob, however, were not dismayed. At 4 o'clock they assembled in great force, and suddenly rushed with a loud yell upon the door of the Town Hall. Some passed under the horses of the soldiers, others pressed between them; the ranks of the cavalry were broken, and the crowd poured in. At the same moment a great number of them ran over the leads of the houses adjoining the Town Hall, lowered themselves from the roof into its upper windows, and came tumbling into the Hall in crowds, rushing towards the polling-booth with loud shouts, and pressing back the gentlemen to the further end. Most of these scrambled out of the windows at once; a few kept their seats till they were almost suffocated by the mob, but were forced at last to jump from the windows into the arms of their friends below. Subsequently a large number of special con-

stables were sworn in and placed in the Hall. On two successive days the mob broke all their staves to pieces, and drove them out with great violence.

Mr. Buxton kept himself as clear as possible from these tumults : his own election was throughout secure, and he was personally highly popular. He is described as being received, even by the Tories, "with loud shouts of approbation ; crowds came about him to shake hands ; indeed," adds the letter, "he does not appear to have a person against him in the town."

The election lasted fifteen days, at the end of which he was at the head of the poll by a majority of sixty-nine ; but the other Whig candidate was defeated, and three Tories came in.

To Samuel Hoare, Esq.

"Weymouth, June 16. 1826.

"This is the sixth day of polling, and there is every probability of six days more. The election is carried on with the utmost violence, and at *monstrous* expense. It is said that— spends 1500*l.* a day ; his party confess to 1000*l.* He has nine public houses open, where anybody, male or female, from town or country, is very welcome to eat and get drunk ; and, the truth is, the whole town is drunk. I send you a copy of a letter which I wrote to the chairman of our committee yesterday, protesting against any such proceedings on our side."

The letter referred to is as follows :—

"My dear Sir,

"Weymouth, June 15. 1826.

"I wish to repeat to you in writing, what I stated to you several times, and what I declared yesterday on the hustings ; I will be no party to any expenses which are contrary to law. I will pay no part of the expense of opening houses. If any individual on his own responsibility does so, pray let him clearly understand that he will hereafter have no claim upon me. It is contrary to my principles to obtain any accession of strength by illegal means. I will not do it, and will not sanction it. I

request you will make this communication known to the candidates, the agents, and the committee.”

To Joseph John Gurney, Esq.

(Who had offered to share in the expenses of the election.)

“Spitalfields, July 18. 1826.

“I was very much pleased with your letter. That kind of community of feeling and interest which subsists between us all is a rare, a good, and a most pleasant thing; and, under certain circumstances, I should have no kind of indisposition to be aided by you and the rest. My clear opinion, however, is, that there is no necessity for it at this time. I feel warranted in depriving my family of the sum my election will cost, considering the very peculiar situation in which the slave question, the Mauritius question, and the Suttee (Indian Widows) question stand. Without extravagantly overrating my own usefulness, I think it would be inconvenient for me to be out of Parliament just now. There are plenty of people with more talents, but a great lack of those who truly love a good cause for its own sake, and whom no price would detach from it; and so for this time I feel warranted in robbing my family. I therefore decline your most generous offer to assist in my election expenses; and I do so with many thanks, and with great pleasure that the offer was made.*

“I am very, very sorry I cannot join Wilberforce at Earham; nothing prevents me except the Mauritius question, and that to him will be a pretty good reason.

“I shall not be at Cromer Hall till early in August, so despatch the Aylsham Bible Society without me; I am sick of public duties, and run away from them without scruple.”

The rest of the year 1826 was chiefly employed in the laborious task of preparing Mauritian evidence for the ensuing session. For this purpose Mr. G. Stephen visited every part of England where soldiers were

* Mr. Samuel Gurney and Mr. Joseph J. Gurney several times bore a large part of his election expenses. They insisted on doing this, being determined to promote in every way, direct and indirect, the objects he had at heart.

quartered who had at any time served in the Mauritius. The depositions of both officers and men at Hull, Norwich, Liverpool, Chelsea, and other places were taken; thus the testimony was produced of 320 witnesses of good character, who all spoke to the fact of a trade in slaves. Early in 1827, Mr. Buxton moved for a renewal of the committee; but, at the request of the Government, his motion was deferred till the 26th of May, and, meantime, he strenuously exerted himself in the further investigation of the case.

In his speech on the 9th of May, 1826, he had accused the authorities of the island of culpable neglect. This was highly resented by the late governor, Sir Robert Farquhar, who, in the beginning of May, 1827, complained in the House of Commons of the charge, and dared Mr. Buxton to the proof. This entailed upon him what he had hoped to avoid, the painful necessity of individual crimination. But he was already almost sinking under the weight of business, and the anxiety with which the whole case was fraught proved at length more than he could bear. His health showed decided symptoms of giving way, and his physician, Dr. Farre, strongly urged him to have recourse to rest and quiet; but he was far too deeply impressed by the sufferings of his unhappy clients to desert their cause while a particle of strength remained. In spite of the feelings of illness which rapidly gained ground upon him, he spent the week previous to that on which his motion was to come on in severe and harassing labour. One of his friends writes on Tuesday, May 15th, 1827:—

“ I went to breakfast with Mr. Buxton, but he was too ill to come down stairs, and Dr. Farre was sent for. Presently, however, General Hall, Mr. George Stephen, and Mr. Byam

arriving, he joined the party. A large sheet of paper, full of notes, was produced, and they were soon immersed in business. He appeared much oppressed with headache, and very languid.
 * * * When Dr. Farre arrived he ordered leeches, quiet, and total abstinence from business. I then was about to go, but Mr. Buxton said I must stay and read to him, which I did for many hours. The book was 'Thompson's Journey in South Africa.' At night he seemed very ill."

As he continued seriously unwell, and business necessarily pressed upon him in London, he removed on the Thursday afternoon to Ham House, whence he wrote the following note to Mrs. Upcher:—

"My dear Friend,

"I am far better, but rather feeble and incapable of exertion, and somewhat perplexed by the question,—Ought I to overwork myself, or underwork my slave cause? My judgment is for the second, but my inclination for the first; and the result will be that I shall do both. I am now going to take a ride."

His prediction was but too true. He spent the Saturday in taking a general view of the evidence which had been collected of the atrocious cruelties practised upon the negroes both in their importation and afterwards, when they were reduced to slavery. In the course of that unhappy morning he was so completely overwhelmed with anguish and indignation at the horrors on which he had been dwelling, that he several times left his papers and paced rapidly up and down the lawn entirely overcome by his feelings, and exclaiming aloud, "Oh, it's too bad, it's too bad! I can't bear it."

The frightful result which ensued is thus forcibly described by himself, some months afterwards:—

* * * "Last spring the whole force of my mind and all my faculties were engaged in preparing for the Mauritius question.