

I had pledged myself to prove that the slave trade had existed and flourished in that colony, that the state of slavery there was pre-eminently cruel, and that persons of eminence had tolerated these enormities. It is, I think, but justice to myself to admit that the object was a worthy one; that I had embraced it from a sense of duty; that my mind was embued with deep affliction and indignation at the wrongs to which the negro was exposed. I spared no pains and no sacrifices, in order to do justice to my cause; and the anxiety and labour which I endured preyed upon my health. About the middle of May I went to Upton, in order to improve it by change of air; but I was then under the pressure of disease, and my physician described my state by saying, 'You are on fire, though you are not in a blaze.' I concealed from others, I did not even admit to myself, the extent of my indisposition. I could not doubt that I felt ill, but I was willing to suppose that these were nervous feelings, the effects of fatigue of mind, and that they would vanish, as they had often done before, when the exertion was at an end.

"On Saturday, May 19th, I took a survey of the case of cruelty to the negroes, and for two or three hours I was distressed beyond measure, and as much exasperated as distressed, by that scene of cruelty and horrid oppression. I never in my life was so much moved by anything, and I was so exhausted by the excitement that I could not that day renew my exertions. The next morning I awoke feeling very unwell. My wife and the family went to a place of worship, and my daughter remained with me; I think, but I have not any clear recollections, that I told her about 12 o'clock to send for Dr. Farre. I have a vague idea of my wife's return, but beyond that all is lost to me. The fact was, that I was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and it was not till the following Wednesday that I showed any symptoms of recovery. I am glad that the first object I noticed was my dear wife. I well remember the expression of deep anxiety upon her countenance, and I am sure I had seen it before. To her delight I spoke to her, and the words I used were those that expressed my unbounded affection towards her. Thanks to her care, joined to that of my brothers and sisters and of the medical attendants, I gradually recovered. I remember, however, feeling some surprise, as well as mortifi-

cation, at finding that the day fixed for my motion on the Mauritius had passed. Then came the slow progress of recovery; we went to Cromer; all my pursuits, such at least as required mental exertion, were given up, but hence resulted some leisure for reflection. I was then sensible of the sins which I had committed, and was deeply affected by the love and mercy of God, that He had been pleased to spare my life, that he had not called me suddenly into his presence. I hope and believe that I have not lost the sense of his goodness. I never can advert to this warning without acknowledging from my heart that his goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. O gracious Father, grant that I may always retain a most lively feeling of the indulgence and tender compassion which I have experienced at thy hands. Give me repentance, even bitter repentance, that I have ever offended so gracious a Master, and keep me from future transgression."

So deeply had the subject which caused this alarming illness become rooted in his mind, that almost his first words, on recovering full consciousness, were uttered in a decided tone, to the effect that he must get up and go to the House, to bring forward his motion on the Mauritius. When told that the day was already past, he would not give credit to the statement till it was put beyond doubt by reference to the newspaper in which the proceedings of the House on the evening in question were reported.

Such was the history of this remarkable check in the very midst of his career. It need not be said how strong a sensation his illness occasioned both among his immediate friends and fellow-workers, and in a wider circle also. His brothers and sisters collected around him, his children were sent for from a distance, and the strongest alarm was felt until his almost unlooked-for return to consciousness.

"What a change," writes Mr. Macaulay on the 6th of June, "has the mercy of God to us all produced! We have almost

ceased to inquire from hour to hour, and day to day, with breathless solicitude, about every little symptom that might have occurred. We now hear only of returning strength, of spirits, and of approaching convalescence. Let us not forget the change. May God establish and perfect it!"

CHAPTER XII.

1827, 1828.

MEDITATIONS.—REV. C. SIMEON.—LETTER TO LORD W. BENTINCK.—
SUTTEE ABOLISHED.—MR. BUXTON REMOVES TO NORTHPREPPS.—
DEBATE ON SLAVERY.—MR. BUXTON'S REPLY.—THE FREE PEOPLE
OF COLOUR.—INTERVIEW WITH MR. HUSKISSON.—THOUGHTS ON
HIS ILLNESS.

THE Mauritius case was of course dropped for the year. Mr. Buxton returned to Cromer Hall, and for a long time was obliged to relinquish all sedentary occupation. This interval of unaccustomed leisure was not thrown away; his mind, cut off from its usual employments, turned to reviewing its own state; and while removed from active life, he was in fact strengthening by reflection and prayer those principles from which his actions sprang. Much larger portions of time were given to religious meditation, and to a diligent study of the Holy Scriptures. The marks in his Bible attest his ready application of the Word of God to his own necessities. Dates are placed against many passages and memoranda of circumstances to which they had been particularly appropriate. There also exists a large portfolio full of texts, copied by him and arranged under different heads. He greatly delighted in the Psalms; and on one occasion, when, to use his own words, "some circumstances had arisen which involved him in distress of mind," he thus writes:—

"Finding comfort nowhere else, I resorted to the Bible, and particularly to the Psalms; and truly can I say with David, 'In my distress I called upon the Lord, and he delivered me.' The Psalms are beautiful and instructive to every man who

really studies them ; but anguish of mind is necessary to enable us fully to comprehend and taste the pathos and emphasis of their expressions. In David's descriptions of his own anxieties, I found a most lively picture of my own mind. In his eloquent language I uttered my prayers, and, thanks be to God ! I was also able to use for myself his songs of rejoicing and gratitude. I have spent some hours almost every Sunday over the Psalms, and I have extracted, under separate heads, David's prayers—his assurance that his prayers were heard and answered—his thanksgivings, &c. ; and I meditate, at some future period of leisure, preparing some work for publication on the subject.

“ This I may, I believe, say, that these studies have had a strong, and I trust not a transient, effect upon my mind. I recur to the Bible with a pleasure and sometimes with a delight unknown to me before. When I am out of heart, I follow David's example, and fly for refuge to prayer, and he furnishes me with a store of prayer ; and I hope ‘ I love God ’ better, ‘ because he hath heard the voice of my supplication ; and therefore will I call upon him as long as I live ; ’ and I feel what the text expresses, which I found in my text-book for this day, ‘ The Lord is my defence, and my God is the rock of my refuge.’ And this lesson I have in some degree learnt, that afflictions, as we consider them, are sometimes the chief and the choicest of mercies.”

When in Norfolk the woods were his chosen retreat for the enjoyment of the “ divine silence,” as he called it, of the country. He would take his small well-marked Bible, and wander among the trees, reflecting deeply on what he read, and if his retirement were broken in upon, he would say it was much too soon, he had not gone through half his subjects of thought. Although he never kept a diary, yet after his illness he was in the habit of frequently committing his thoughts to paper, and a very large number of these communings with his own heart still remain. Many of them are preparations for prayer, according to a habit which he thus mentions in one of his papers about this period :—

* * * * *

“There is a practice which I have found highly beneficial, and should any of my children ever see this memorial, I earnestly advise them to adopt it.

“I am in the habit of preparing the substance of my private and family prayers. I believe that we are far too extempore in that duty; not that I recommend any verbal preparation, but a meditation upon the points on which we wish to ask the help of God. The want of this seems to me to lead the mind to wander about, and rather to fill our mouths with a train of words to which we are accustomed than our hearts with a sense of our necessities. I, at least, have found the habit of reflecting on what I shall ask for, before I venture to ask, highly serviceable.

“I am bound to acknowledge that I have always found that my prayers have been heard and answered—not that I have in every instance (though in almost every instance I have) received what I asked for, nor do I expect or wish it. I always qualify my petitions by adding, provided that what I ask for is for my real good and according to the will of my Lord. But with this qualification I feel at liberty to submit my wants and wishes to God in small things as well as in great; and I am inclined to imagine that there are no “little things” with Him. We see that his attention is as much bestowed upon what we call trifles, as upon those things which we consider of mighty importance. His hand is as manifest in the feathers of a butterfly’s wing, in the eye of an insect, in the folding and packing of a blossom*, in the curious aqueducts by which a leaf is nourished, as in the creation of a world and in the laws by which the planets move.

“To our limited powers some things appear great and some inconsiderable; but He, infinite in all things, can lavish His power and His wisdom upon every part of his creation. Hence I feel permitted to offer up my prayers, for everything that concerns me. I understand literally the injunction, ‘be careful for nothing, but in everything—make your requests known unto God;’ and I cannot but notice how amply these prayers have

* He continually pointed out the packing of buds and leaves as beautiful proofs of the Divine wisdom and goodness; so that Mrs. Hoare’s children used to call the early spring buds “Uncle Buxton’s sermons.”

been met. Grant then, O Lord, that I may never fail to pour forth all my burthens, cares, wishes, wants, before thy throne, that I may love to seek thy help."

To Mrs. Buxton.

"Hampstead, July 25. 1827.

"It is now a little past 7 o'clock, and as I am up according to my new fashion, I will tell you that I spent a very pleasant afternoon with Tacy, and much liked his location. He went with me to Dereham the next morning, and I had a nice journey up, reading all the way. * * * And now I must tell you that, reviewing the events of the last few weeks, there are two feelings which rise up in my mind with peculiar force. First, gratitude to Him who has dealt with me with so much true mercy. I think I have some feelings of real thankfulness. I see so plainly the hand of God in what has recently occurred, and so plainly do I discern in them that he is indeed long-suffering and plenteous in mercy, that some degree of warm and lively gratitude springs up in my mind. * * * This is my first feeling, but another has also been my companion. I mean a flow of love and tenderness towards my family. * * * I think my illness has really tended to strengthen the bonds of family affection, and that is no little blessing. And now I must stop to read a few verses in the Bible."

During a visit to Earlham this autumn, in the company of the Rev. Charles Simeon, Mr. Buxton one day persisted in going out shooting, instead of accompanying his friend to a meeting of the Jews' Society in Norwich. Mr. Simeon was a little hurt by this; but receiving not long afterwards a parcel of game, he wrote Mr. Buxton the following characteristic letter.

"King's College, Cambridge,
October 16. 1827.

"My dear Friend,

"A kind present of game demands my grateful acknowledgments, which with much pleasure I send you. But the precise time of its arrival necessarily excites in my mind some reflections. What! is my beloved friend conscious that in withstanding all my extemporaneous oratory he has humbled me — and

does he send me this as a peace-offering? That I have sighed, it is true; that thoughts have arisen in my mind of somewhat a painful nature, is true. And I will tell you what they were:—

“1. I have deeply sympathised with him and his beloved relatives in his affliction.*

“2. My beloved friend has prayed with that dear departed saint, and therefore has doubtless his own soul, perhaps in consequence of his own affliction, in a devout state.

“3. My union with that whole family is near akin to the union of the saints in heaven; and my soul, in consequence of dear Rachel's experience being read to me, had been so in heaven, that I actually felt it a condescension to come down and dine with the party, even though they had all been dukes and duchesses. Peter on Tabor was scarcely more averse to descend than I.

“On these grounds I thought that an act of condescension and self-denial on your part, if self-denial it was, might have been not unseasonable. But I checked and condemned myself, and said, what! shall I wish my beloved friend to serve and honour *God* for my sake? *No!* if he will show kindness to *me* for the *Lord's sake*, I will accept it as the most grateful offering in the world; but to serve *the Lord* for *my sake* would be productive of nothing but grief and shame to my soul.

“Now, my dear friend, you see you have shot me flying, and penetrated my heart, and let out, *not ill blood*, (there is none of that I assure you,) but the stream of love, which was pent up there. And to show that you are pleased with your success, you shall, if convenient to you, send me a little more game to be dressed on Oct. 30., when I shall have a large party of Jews (friends of that despised people) to dine with me; and this will show you in what spirit I write, and with what cordiality and affection I am

“Yours,

“CHARLES SIMEON.”

About this time, Mr. Buxton heard, to his great satisfaction, that Lord William Bentinck was appointed

* This refers to the death of his sister-in-law, Rachel Gurney. See *Memoir of Elizabeth Fry*, vol. II. p. 55.

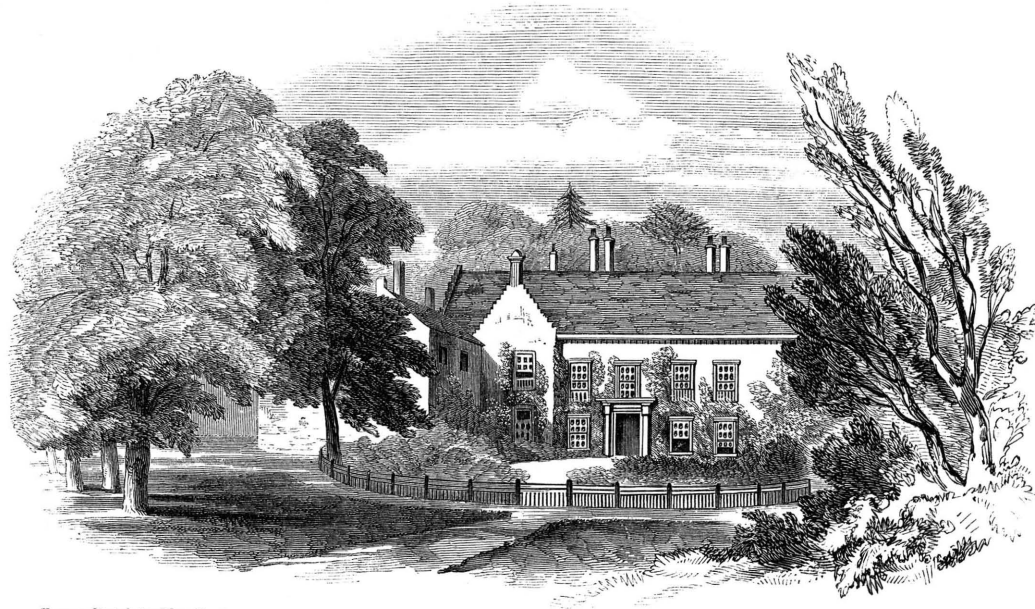
Governor-general of India, and immediately went up to town to discuss with him the subject of Suttee, and to urge him to employ his authority for the abolition of that atrocious practice. A short time afterwards he addressed the following letter to him :—

“ My dear Lord,

“ Cromer Hall, October 22. 1827.

“ The short interview which I had with you lately has been to me a matter of sincere gratification. I now feel that I can leave in your hand the question, whether the British Government ought, or ought not, to tolerate the annual sacrifice of several hundred females ; and I have the satisfaction of knowing that you will do everything which *ought* to be done. When Mr. Canning was going to India, I ventured to trouble him on the business : his answer was the same as I received from you. He assured me, that the subject should engage his most serious attention, and that what he could do should be done. I have always lamented that he did not go to India, from a conviction that his great mind would have been ill at ease, while such horrid customs as Suttee and infanticide prevailed. Forgive me for saying, that I feel the same confidence in your Lordship as I did in Mr. Canning. I enclose you a copy of a letter I received from Lord Hastings. I applied to him, in consequence of hearing from a friend of mine (the Rev. Mr. Glover of this county), that he said ‘ he should have abolished the practice of Suttee, if he had remained in India another year.’ In the letter he says, ‘ he would have suppressed it if he had been sure of support at home.’ Happily there is not the same doubt now as to support at home. In March last, Mr. Poynder moved a resolution at the Court of Proprietors, declaring that it is the duty of the paternal government to interfere to prevent the destruction of human life. Some opposition was made ; but the general feeling was too strong to be resisted, and it was carried by a great majority, the minority being only five or six. I venture to send you the report of that debate, and also a publication called the ‘ Friend of India,’ in which there are some valuable papers on the subject, written, I believe, by Dr. Marshman of Serampore. With every wish that you and Lady William may return in safety from India, and that millions may have reason to rejoice that you went there, I have the honour,” &c.

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From a Sketch by Mrs. Buxton.

NORTHREPPS HALL.

It is well known that, soon after Lord William Bentinck reached India, he abolished the practice of Suttee at a single blow. Mr. Buxton hailed the news with delight and thankfulness. The evil had indeed been extirpated by the hand of another ; but he had the satisfaction of feeling that no opportunity had been wasted by him of forwarding that happy event.

In the course of this winter, Mr. Buxton was obliged, with much regret, to leave Cromer Hall ; the proprietor, Mr. Windham, having determined to replace it by a new mansion for his own residence. There was no house equally suitable near Cromer ; but being much attached to the neighbourhood, and very unwilling to leave it, he gladly accepted Mr. R. H. Gurney's offer of Northrepps Hall, which, although smaller than his last place of abode, yet possessed many points of attraction ; especially, that within a quarter of a mile lived his sister Miss S. M. Buxton, and his cousin Miss Gurney.

Northrepps Cottage, the residence of these ladies, stands in a deep secluded dell, opening on the fishing village of Overstrand and the German Ocean. The path to it from the Hall lies through the woods ; and thither he always turned his steps when his spirits needed to be enlivened, or his anxieties shared ; well knowing that his presence would ever be hailed with eager delight.

He was scarcely settled at Northrepps, when he was called to London to resume his parliamentary labours, which had been so unfortunately cut short in the preceding year. His still very uncertain health made the prospect of recommencing work an anxious one ; and he appeared quite unable to resume his attack on the Mauritius slave trade. "It is a problem to me," he said, "what I shall do this session, and what will happen ;" adding, "however, perhaps I shall outlive

you all. I should not wonder, if I do not overwork myself."

His exertions were first called for on behalf of the West Indies. The year of probation granted by Mr. Canning to the colonial assemblies had now more than expired; and they had done nothing towards the mitigation of slavery. Of the eight bills recommended for their adoption by Mr. Canning, *not one* had been accepted by any colony, except Nevis. But the Government were not yet discouraged; they were still anxious to persuade, rather than to compel. Nor could they be blamed for trying every method of suasion, before resorting to force. The right of the mother country to legislate directly for her colonies had, in one great instance, been successfully defied. It might, therefore, have been no wise policy to attempt coercion, till all gentler methods had been tried in vain. Accordingly, in 1828, Sir George Murray, as a last experiment, despatched circular letters to all the colonial assemblies, once more urging them, in strong terms, to effect for themselves the required improvement in the condition of their slaves. Most truly did Mr. Stanley state in his speech on the 14th of May, 1833, that it was not "till all means had been exhausted; till every suggestion had been made; till every warning had been given; and had not only been given in vain, but had been met by the colonial legislatures with the most determined opposition; that England took the work of reconstructing West Indian society into her own hands." These circular letters were "entirely disregarded."

Had Mr. Buxton been in vigorous health, he would certainly have done what he could to obtain bolder measures from the Government, but his bodily powers failed him.

On the 6th of March Mr. Wilmot Horton brought forward a motion for the publication of some minutes relative "to the Demerara and Berbice Manumission Order in Council," to prove the desirableness of its not being enforced.*

Mr. Buxton had brought together some documents from which to answer Mr. Wilmot Horton; but he became so unwell that he was obliged to give up the attempt to peruse them, and went down to the House of Commons without any intention of speaking. To his dismay he found, on reaching the House, that Mr. William Smith was the only abolitionist present beside himself. Mr. Wilmot Horton's opening speech was extremely able, and was listened to by Mr. Buxton with feelings of real distress, while he looked in vain towards the door of the House, in the hope that Mr. Brougham or Dr. Lushington might come to the rescue.

At length a bitter tirade against the Abolitionists from one of their opponents stung him to the quick; and he rose to reply, beginning with somewhat severe comment "on the acrimonious speech of the hon. member for C——, who, after a long lecture on command of temper and control of tongue, has ended," he said, "by charging us with exaggeration, misrepresentation, quackery, and nonsense."

"I must confess, however, that he has sneered at us in very good company: the rights of man and the laws of God were equally visited by his sarcasm. Now, I defy him to prove any one instance of misrepresentation. I challenge him to abstain from general condemnation, and to put his finger upon that particular in which we have deceived the country. I will do so with regard to him—I will mark out those particulars in which he himself has been guilty of misrepresentation."

* Hansard for that date.

He then went through the common assertions of the West Indians—they had denied the existence of flogging; of Sunday markets; of obstacles to manumission; he proved, and from the evidence of the West Indians themselves, that these did exist. His opponents were for ever dwelling on the happiness and comfort of their slaves, —

“But how comes it,” he asked, “that these happiest of the happy decrease at a rate entirely unequalled in the history of man? * * * The hon. member has indignantly censured my hon. friend (Mr. W. Smith) for introducing the phrases ‘rights of men and laws of God;’ and I do not wonder that he is somewhat provoked at these obnoxious expressions; for one cannot think of slavery without perceiving that it is an usurpation of the one and a violation of the other. The right hon. gentleman, the mover of this motion, tells us that no one can reconcile the promise we have given for the extinction of slavery with the promise which we have also given for a due consideration of the rights of the parties interested. We are reduced to the alternative, he tells us, of sacrificing the planter to the interests of the slave, or the slave to the interests of the planter. If we are in that predicament, and must decide for the one or the other, my judgment is unequivocally in favour of the slave. And it is a consideration of the ‘rights of man, and the laws of God’ which leads me to that unequivocal decision.”

He concludes in these words:—

“I would give the negro all that I could give him with security; I would do every possible thing to mitigate and sweeten his lot; and to his children I would give unqualified emancipation. Having done this, I would settle with the planters. I am a friend to compensation, but it is compensation on the broadest scale. * * * Do you ask compensation for him who has wielded the whip? Then I ask compensation for him who has smarted under its lash!—Do you ask compensation for loss of property, contingent and future? Then I ask compensation for unnumbered wrongs, the very least of which is the incapacity of possessing any property whatever.

If compensation be demanded, we re-echo the demand. It is that which we most fervently desire ; only let it be just compensation, dealt out for the many who have suffered, and not confined to the few who may suffer in one particular."

One of his friends writes to Mr. J. J. Gurney :—

"The whole House was carried along by his earnestness, cheered him vehemently, and listened attentively. He was much congratulated on the success of his reply."

Little more could be done towards advancing the Anti-slavery question during this session. Mr. Brougham, who had intended to bring it forward, was prevented from doing so by ill health : and Dr. Lushington's duties were too onerous to permit of his carrying on the struggle single-handed ; but during the last year he and Mr. Brougham had been engaged in their arduous contest on behalf of the free people of colour in the West Indies, endeavouring to rescue them from their painful and humiliating position. Dr. Lushington wrote in November, 1827,—

"I send you sundry letters and documents from Wilmot Horton, and by his desire. We have had warm work since you left London, and it seems likely to continue ; however I am in high spirits. We have Brougham in full energy, strength, and determination, and we have a case in all points impregnable. Would I had more leisure ! for my appetite is whetted by all the follies and iniquities of the planters."

At length, in the session of 1828, Dr. Lushington's exertions in behalf of the free people of colour were crowned with complete success. An Order in Council was issued, by which they were at once placed on the same footing, in every respect, as their white fellow citizens : a measure fraught with momentous consequences to the welfare of the West Indies.

On the 20th of March, Mr. Buxton had an interview

with Mr. Huskisson. He offered to put Government into possession of all his documents and evidence respecting the slave trade at the Mauritius if they would go on with the inquiry, as he was unable to do so, and he strongly urged them to take it up. Mr. Huskisson replied that they would consider about it, and desired that documents relating to the cruel usage of the slaves should be sent to him. He also assured Mr. Buxton that the trade was now stopped, that the registry was enforced, and that some Orders in Council would be sent out and put into operation.

No other steps were at present taken by the Government; they had previously sent out a commission of inquiry, and further measures were deferred till its report should have been received.

Mr. Buxton writes in a paper dated Sunday, the 25th May, 1828:—

“I keep this as the anniversary of my illness, which began on Sunday, May 20th, 1827; and I must not let the day pass without returning my solemn and fervent thanks to thee, my God, for that most gracious visitation, coupled with solemn and fervent prayers that I may never lose the benefit which this visitation was sent to confer. I thank thee, O Lord, that thou wast pleased to administer that sharp antidote. None other perhaps would have been effectual. I was within the jaws of death, and was I fit to die? Was I prepared to encounter the presence of my Maker? How do my sins marshal themselves in order under such a question? Again I thank thee, O Lord, that thou didst deliver me, and I can use the words of the Psalmist (Psalm ciii. four first verses), with some emphasis and some application to myself. There is not a clause in these verses which is not my own. My disease was healed, my iniquity was pardoned, my life, natural and spiritual, had a Redeemer, and loving kindness and tender mercy was that which I, a sinner, received at the hands of God; and therefore my cry unto thee is that thou wouldst give me such a deep sense of

thy mercy, such a sense or rather vision of thy goodness, that I may love thee with all my heart, and all my mind, and all my strength: and therefore I pray that I may remember my latter end, the approaching day of judgment, and prepare to meet it."

CHAPTER XIII.

1828, 1829.

THE HOTTENTOTS.—DR. PHILIP.—VAN RIEBECH'S REGRETS —MISERIES OF THE HOTTENTOTS.—DR. PHILIP'S RESEARCHES.—MR. BUXTON'S MOTION.—THE GOVERNMENT ACQUIESCES.—LETTER FROM DR. PHILIP.—THE ORDER IN COUNCIL SENT OUT.—LETTER TO MR. J. J. GURNEY.—THE HOTTENTOTS SET FREE.—ALARMS DIE AWAY.—HAPPY RESULT.—THE KAT RIVER SETTLEMENT.

ALTHOUGH unable to take much part in public affairs during this session, yet, at the instance of the Rev. Dr. Philip of the Cape of Good Hope, Mr. Buxton made an effort in behalf of the Hottentots, which was crowned with easy and complete success.

Eight years before, Dr. Philip had been sent out by the London Missionary Society, on a deputation appointed to inquire into the state of their missions in South Africa. In the course of these investigations he had become acquainted with the grievous state of degradation in which the Hottentots were held by the inhabitants of the colony, and especially by the Dutch boors. One hundred and seventy years before, they had been the undisturbed possessors of that fertile tract of country which is now comprehended under the name of the "Cape Colony." In 1652 the first Dutch settlement was formed, and the curse of Christian neighbours fell upon the hapless owners of the land.

The first germ of the treatment they met with may be seen in the following extracts from the journal of Van Riebeck, the Dutch governor.

“ December 13. 1652.

“ To-day the Hottentots came with thousands of cattle and sheep close to our fort, so that their cattle nearly mixed with ours. We feel vexed to see so many fine head of cattle, and not to be able to buy to any considerable extent. If it had been indeed allowed, we had opportunity to-day to deprive them of 10,000 head, which, however, if we obtain orders to that effect, can be done at any time, and even more conveniently, because they will have greater confidence in us. With 150 men, 10,000 or 11,000 head of black cattle might be obtained without danger of losing one man ; and many savages might be taken without resistance, in order to be sent as slaves to India, as they still always come to us unarmed.”

A day or two later we find him “ wondering at the ways of Providence, which permitted such noble animals to remain in the possession of heathens.” It was not long before he thought it best to thwart the ways of Providence instead of wondering at them ; and the system which he began was carried out by the Dutch, and afterwards by the English, until the Hottentots had sunk to the lowest depths of misery. Nothing can be more painful than the accounts given of them at the time of Dr. Philip’s first visit to the Cape. They were not like the negro slaves, the legal property of certain individuals ; they were at the mercy of all who chose to oppress them and compel their services : not even possessing that degree of protection which the hateful system of slave ownership affords. Their tribes were public property, and any one might seize as many of them as he pleased for his private use. Their rich lands and vast herds of cattle had long since become the spoiler’s prey. At the caprice of the Dutch boors they were subjected to the heaviest labours, to every species of harassing annoyance, to every kind of revolting punishment. Beneath this grinding misery their numbers had dwindled, their persons had become dwarfed, and

their minds brutalised, till the very negro slaves looked down on them as lower and baser drudges, far below the level of mankind.

In 1822 Dr. Philip returned for a short time to England, and communicated this information to Mr. Wilberforce, Dr. Lushington, and Mr. Buxton, who agreed that the former should move in the House for a commission of inquiry to proceed to the Cape; as also to the Mauritius, and to Ceylon: this was accordingly done, and in 1824 we find Mr. Buxton moving for the reports received from these commissioners; which afforded some information of value. In 1826 Dr. Philip again came back to England, and after a time published his "Researches in South Africa," which excited much attention, and he urged Mr. Buxton to bring the case of the Hottentots before Parliament. Although feeling great interest in the subject, Mr. Buxton was too deeply engrossed by the Mauritius question to turn aside at that time. In 1828, however, he was able to make himself master of the subject, and gave notice of a motion for an address to the king on behalf of the natives of South Africa.

He writes, July, 1828, —

"I have not yet determined what I shall say about the Hottentots. I shall take as the foundation of my argument their legal freedom, prove that they are practically slaves, and demand that we act up to our engagement and make them free; but it is doubtful if I shall speak. Government will probably give way to my motion, on condition that I abstain from speaking. Terms not to be rejected I think."

To this compromise the Government agreed. Mr. Buxton brought forward his motion without a single comment; and Sir George Murray (Secretary for the Colonies) then rose, and briefly expressed the concur-

rence of the Government. The address was unanimously agreed to, and the Hottentots were free! Mr. Buxton walked up to Dr. Philip, after the motion had been carried, and said, "Ah, these men do not know the good they have done!"

In a hasty note to Mrs. Upcher, he thus announced the triumph:—

"July 17. 1828.

"I have only time to say, that we have recorded a resolution of the House of Commons, with regard to the Hottentots, which is their Magna Charta; and which will spread liberty, and, with liberty, a thousand other blessings, over that great and growing territory."

The Rev. Dr. Philip to T. F. Buxton, Esq.

"My dear Sir,

"July 16. 1828.

"The more I reflect upon the decision of Parliament on Tuesday evening, the more I am struck with its importance. It is intimately connected with all the great questions now before the public, which have for their object, to ameliorate the condition of the coloured population in every region of the globe; it is one of the principal stones in the foundation of that temple which Mr. Wilberforce has been so long labouring to rear, for the protection of the oppressed; and it has given a strength and an elevation to the building, which will render the whole more secure, and its future progress more easy. I wish you could be present at our missionary stations when the glad tidings shall be announced; you would see many a sparkling eye, many a cheek furrowed with tears of joy, and hear your name associated with many a thanksgiving to God for this unexpected deliverance."

It was a singular coincidence that, only two days after this motion had passed in Parliament, Major General Bourke, the just and humane Governor of the Cape, promulgated an ordinance (well known afterwards as the Fiftieth Ordinance), by which the Hottentots were placed on the same footing as the other inhabitants of

the colony. As soon as Sir George Murray heard of this step, an Order in Council was issued (January 15. 1829), ratifying the ordinance, and, moreover, prohibiting any future alteration of it by any colonial authority. When Mr. Buxton, who had spent the autumn and winter at Northrepps, came back to London for the session of 1829, he found the business thus happily concluded.

He sent this intelligence to Mr. J. J. Gurney; but begins his letter by alluding to the excitement which prevailed on account of the Duke of Wellington's expressed intention to take into consideration the removal of the Catholic disabilities.

“ February 9. 1829.

“ We had a slave meeting at Brougham's yesterday; and S. Gurney would go with me, to prevent them from putting too much upon me. Brougham, Mackintosh, Denman, Spring Rice, Wm. Smith, Macaulay, were the party. They were all in the highest glee about the Catholics; Brougham particularly. They seemed exquisitely delighted with the vexation of the Tories, who are, and have reason to be, they say, bitterly affronted; and the great ones among them vow they will have an apology, in the shape of some good place, or they will never forgive the Duke for letting them go down to the House as strong Protestants, and insisting upon their returning that very day, stout Catholics! They say they do not mind changing their opinions, — that is a duty which they must sometimes pay to their chiefs, — but they think it hard to be obliged to turn right-about-face at the word of command, without a moment being given to change their convictions.

“ The Duke is very peremptory. The story goes, that he said to Mr. —, who has a place under Government, ‘ We have settled the matter, and hope you like it.’ Mr. — said he would take time to consider it. ‘ Oh yes! you shall have plenty of time; I don't want your answer before four o'clock to-day. I shall thank you for it then; for if you don't like our measures, we must have your office and seat for somebody else.’

“ To-morrow we are to have a fierce debate. The high church party are very furious, and talk of calling upon the country, and I expect we shall have a good deal of bitterness.

“ As to slavery, we determined not to fix our plans for a week, in order to see the turn this Catholic business is likely to take, for the House will hear nothing else now, but we are to have a day fixed for Brougham’s motion before Easter. He wanted me to begin on the Mauritius; but I said, ‘ No! if they are not in a temper to hear you, I am sure they will not hear me.’

“ Spring Rice said that he had seen General Bourke, late governor of the Cape of Good Hope, who tells him that Government have sent out an Order in Council, giving entire emancipation to the Hottentots. If this proves true I shall be excessively delighted, and shall never say again that I am sorry I went into Parliament; not that I did much in the business, but I flatter myself I did a little. Do get M. to read Dr. Philip’s book on South Africa. I think you would not repent if you did the same. I am very well, and in good spirits, though somewhat worried about the tiresome mines, which want attention.”

His delight was well-founded. From the day that the Fiftieth Ordinance became law the Hottentots were raised to the level of their white oppressors; they were protected by the same laws, they could own property, they could demand wages in return for their labour, they could no longer be seized, “like stray cattle,” if they left their village bounds; in short, they were become a free people; and since that day civilization and Christianity, with all their retinue of blessings, have flourished among them. For a while dismal forebodings and fierce complaints rang among the colonists at this sudden inroad upon their oppressive privileges; but after a few slight commotions both their anger and their fears died away: and the experience of eighteen years has abundantly approved the wisdom, as well as the justice, of this important measure.

To the N. E. of the colony lies the rich pasture land of the Kat River; from which, in 1827, the Caffres had been expelled, after a long guerilla warfare with the colonists. On this tract of country the colonial Government, at the suggestion of Captain (now Sir Andries) Stockenstrom, determined to form a Hottentot settlement, as a sort of outwork against the Caffres, and also to afford an opportunity for drawing forth the latent energies of the Hottentots themselves. The latter quickly poured into the settlement from all parts of the colony, but for a long time they had to struggle with every species of privation and danger. Captain Stockenstrom had no tools to give them; when they asked him what means they would have to cultivate the ground, he could only answer, "If you cannot do it with your fingers you had better not go there." However, they set to work, lending each other such tools as they possessed, and soon began water-courses to irrigate the land for the seed-corn allowed by Government.

When Dr. Philip returned from England to Africa he found them still in want of even the necessaries of life; but they had commenced the cultivation of the soil; and many of them, having been trained under missionaries while in the colony, were thirsting for education, though, as yet, no regular teachers were allowed by the Colonial Government to visit them. At one of the new hamlets, named after Mr. Wilberforce, a school had been established, which was attended by sixty or seventy children. The teacher was a young Hottentot, who could himself read but very imperfectly. To an observation of Dr. Philip he replied, that he could teach but little, but that as soon as a qualified master should come, he would resign his charge and take his seat among the children.

At another hamlet, named after Mr. Buxton *, a school had already been brought into excellent order, under the direction of a daughter of Andrew Stoffles, a converted Hottentot.

Further on, they observed a well-dressed female Hottentot standing on a stone, tinkling a small bell. They followed her unperceived, and soon found her in a hut with fifty children closely wedged in around her. She was the village school-mistress; her only apparatus being the separated leaves of a New Testament, one of which was held by each of the children, and they were quickly learning to spell the words. A few days after Dr. Philip's arrival, the Hottentots assembled to petition him to provide them with a teacher. "At an early hour," says he, "we sat down under the shade of some spreading trees, near the banks of the Kat River, and surrounded by some of the noblest scenery I ever saw. After prayer and singing a hymn several of the head men addressed the assembly, and then Andrew Stoffles delivered a speech which produced an effect I had never before seen equalled. The main topic of his address was the former oppression of the Hottentots, and he described what he had seen and felt, rapidly pointing out the parallel between their own position (former and present) with the bondage of the Children of Israel in Egypt, and their entrance into the promised land. The

* Sixteen years later, the Rev. James Read thus refers to the village of Buxton: —

"Kat River, May 29 1843.

"Buxton is one of our largest locations; we have a good school there. The school-room, which is so large that it serves also for a chapel, has been built chiefly at the expense of Sir Fowell Buxton. The people are very proud of the name of their place: the situation is delightful; the soil very fertile, being watered by a small stream, which is tributary to the Kat River. It is furnished with forests of the finest timber." (Report of the London Missionary Society, 1844, p. 125.)

analogy was finely brought out; and, as he went on from point to point of the resemblance, it was wonderful to see the effect produced upon the feelings of his audience; they became at length convulsed with emotion: numbers, unable to support their feelings, hastened away to weep apart. When they were a little composed they assembled round us again, and closed the business of the meeting by an urgent and unanimous request that the Rev. J. Read might come among them as their missionary. The request was granted, and with the happiest effects."

The following extracts, from authentic documents, will show the remarkable success of this experiment. But it must be premised that the Hottentots who did not emigrate to the Kat River amounted at that time to about 25,000. They continued in the colony, working industriously, like any other labourers, for wages, and protected by the laws. A gentleman of great respectability, writing in 1832, says, "The number of crimes charged against the Hottentots in the colony, at the circuits, has of late greatly diminished, * * * a great improvement is clearly manifest in their moral condition."

The Kat River settlement originally contained about 5000 Hottentots. It has continued to flourish in the most satisfactory manner, and has proved a strong defence to the colony, in the late Caffre war.

So early as 1832, we find it stated that —

"The success of the Hottentots has been equal to their industry and good conduct. By patient labour, with manly moderation and Christian temperance, they have converted the desert into a fruitful field."*

* Letter in Anti-Slavery Record, vol. i. p. 124.

It is worthy of remark, that, although while in a state of servitude the Hottentots had been very much given to drinking, they acquired at the Kat River remarkable habits of temperance; and of their own accord petitioned, and successfully, against the establishment of brandy canteens.

They had already “two missionaries, whose chapels were regularly filled, and several schools crowded with orderly and intelligent children.”*

In 1832, they paid taxes to the Government to the amount of 2300 rix dollars. In 1833, Colonel Bell (the Government Secretary of the colony) stated that,—

“As to that large proportion of the Hottentots who remained in the service of the colonists as free labourers, their character and condition are every day improving. Those settled at the Kat River, as small farmers, have made a very surprising progress. A large portion of them, from being an indolent, intemperate, and improvident class, have, since a field was opened for virtuous ambition, become industrious, sober, and prudent in their conduct.”

In the same year Captain Stockenstrom (Chief Civil Commissioner of the Eastern Province) writes †,—

“The Hottentots at the Kat River have cultivated an extent of country which has surprised every body who has visited the location. * * * Instead of apathy or indifference about property, they have become (now that they have property to contend for) as covetous and litigious about land and water as any other set of colonists. They have displayed the utmost anxiety to have schools established among them. * * * They travel considerable distances to attend divine service regularly. Their spiritual guides speak with delight of the fruit of their labours. Nowhere have Temperance Societies succeeded half so well as among this people. They have repulsed all the attacks of the Caffres. They pay every tax like the rest of the colonists.

* Letter in Anti-Slavery Record, vol. 1. p. 124.

† To T. Pringle, Esq.

They have rendered the Kat River by far the safest part of the frontier. * * * As far as the land is arable they have made a garden of it from one end to the other."

According to Colonel Wade *,

"They had, in 1833, completed 55 canals for irrigation, 44 of which measured 24 miles! Their works," said he, "give the best evidence that the Hottentots can be as industrious, and are as capable of contending with ordinary difficulties, as their fellow-men."

Dr. Philip had described the Hottentots in bondage, as —

"In a more degraded and imbruted state than they were in a state of nature; trampled upon by their masters; held as a perquisite of office by the Colonial Governor; regarded by the negro slaves as only fit to be their drudges; despised by the Caffres, and by all the natives in a state of freedom; and represented by travellers as scarcely possessing the human form, as the most filthy, stupid beings in the world; as scarcely to be considered belonging to the human race."

He thus describes them after their settlement at the Kat River: —

"The Kat River now presents a scene of industry, sobriety, and decency, not surpassed by the peasantry of any country in Europe. They are building themselves good houses; they are very decently clothed; their industry is admitted even by their enemies."

In 1839, Mr. Backhouse mentions his having visited the Hottentots, and found them "dressed like decent plain people of the labouring class in England. In the sixteen schools of the Kat River district, they had about 1200 scholars, and an attendance of about 1000."†

* Evidence before Aborigines Committee

† Backhouse's Narrative of a Visit to South Africa, p. 186.

CHAPTER XIV.

1829.

CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.—REFLECTIONS.—THE MAURITIUS SLAVE TRADE.—AGREEABLE NEWS.—THE MAURITIUS CASE REVIVED.—LETTER TO MR. TWISS.—THE GOVERNMENT ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF THE SLAVE TRADE.—ITS COMPLETE EXTINCTION.—MR. GEORGE STEPHEN. — MR. JEREMIE.

DURING the session of 1829, Parliament was chiefly occupied by the discussions on the question of Catholic Emancipation. Mr. Buxton's constituents at Weymouth were opposed to the measure; and the knowledge of this opposition, combined with his own doubts, made him for a considerable time unwilling to vote at all on the question. With this neutrality, however, he could not long remain satisfied. After serious deliberation he became thoroughly convinced of the justice and expediency of the measure, and thenceforward gave it his support; a step which much offended many of his friends, and seriously endangered his seat for Weymouth.

To a Friend.

“House of Commons, March 5.

“Here I am waiting for the Catholic debate, and you will be sorry to hear,—no, you will not, you are too valiant,—that I am going to secure my non-election next Parliament by voting for the Roman Catholics to-night. I really must vote: the peace and safety of Ireland depend on our vote. I spent yesterday with Macaulay and Wilberforce very pleasantly. I am full of business, but not overworked; this is just what I like.”

After expressing a hope that he might not be un-

spiritualised by the cares and engagements of the world, he writes, Feb. 15th :—

“ Substance of private prayer :—To return thanks that I can trust that my sins, many and grievous, have been forgiven, and that there is to me an offer of reconciliation ; that prayer and the Scriptures are become more sweet to me ; that I have a wife to my heart’s content, a daughter who has the ability to be my companion and friend, that Edward and Harry are doing so well, and that the three little ones are a source of pleasure, not anxiety ; that peace reigns among us ; that I have so many and such dear friends ; that I more clearly see, by study of the Scriptures, particularly the Psalms, that prayer is commanded, and that it is sure to be answered.

* * * * *

“ Last Sunday, I prayed that the week might bring relief from anxiety : it has come. Again I repeat my prayer. Satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Give thy help to-morrow in the work of that day,—thy help at the missionary meeting, that wisdom may be granted us in the correction of the errors and evils which may have crept into that glorious cause. Every needful help at every hour, and thy spirit with us ; the spirit of prayer, fervent and acceptable ; the spirit of patience and submission ; the spirit of hope and confidence.”

On the 29th of March, he gives a kind of summary of the preceding twelve months.

“ Wednesday next is my birthday ; I shall then be forty-three. That day I have engaged to spend with my admirable friend Wilberforce, who, having devoted his life to the purpose of conferring upon Africa the greatest blessing which man can bestow on man, is now passing the remnant of his days in retirement and repose. I wish, according to my usual practice, to review the proceedings of the past year. In public life I have taken but little part ; Brougham’s illness prevented, during last session, the proposed discussion on slavery ; and during this session nothing has been thought of but the Catholic question. I assisted, however, in one great work, which, although it passed almost in silence, is likely to be attended with the most

important and happy consequences,—the liberation of the Hottentots.

“It is recorded of Paul that he thanked God and took courage; and with thankfulness to God that I was entrusted with this easy and honourable task, I hope to gather from it confidence and encouragement in those other works of humanity in which I am engaged. Another work of a public nature which has engaged me, is the state of the Church Missionary Society. I attended in February a meeting of the Society, and felt it my duty to say, that I thought it desirable a close and sifting inquiry should be instituted into its circumstances; in that I am now engaged.

“Last autumn my mother ended a life which had been shaded by a variety of misfortunes: her death was peaceful, and I doubt not that, through the merits of her blessed Redeemer, she was admitted to everlasting happiness. * * * I last saw her at Weymouth, in August; her image is clear to my mind, and long will it be before I forget the sweetness and humility which then adorned her. Of her once high spirit, nothing remained which did not become a Christian. She was still clear and strong in judgment; still, as always, entirely devoid of every selfish feeling; but there was a meekness and subjection about her which evidently descended from above. * * * I saw her buried in a little burying ground at Bridport: and very thankful indeed was I, that, after the troubles and conflicts she had encountered, we could lay her there, in a sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection.”

After mentioning other events of the year, he continues:—

“Within the bounds of my own immediate family I have been peculiarly prosperous. * * * ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.’

“And peculiarly happy am I also in the next circle,—that of my chosen friends. I have often thought that there is no one so rich in friends as I; but this is a large topic, so I waive it.

“In my public capacity it has pleased God, in depriving me of strong health, to deprive me of the power of much exertion.

My public reputation has, I think, considerably fallen. If I could be sure that I have done as much as my reduced strength would admit, this would give me no concern; and, to speak the truth, it does give me no concern.

“In my outward affairs I have had, as I have said, many trials in some particulars; in others, I have been equally successful. But I do believe, I recognise both misfortune and success, as coming from the same Divine and fatherly hand.”

After other prayers and thanksgivings, he thus concludes:—

“I pray also that I may evermore be helped of thee in my public pursuits: that in the cause of the oppressed negro I may not be a negligent or a useless advocate. Be thy blessing there, O Lord!

“That particularly with regard to the oppressed negro at the Mauritius I may have thy help. ‘For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy; now will I arise, saith the Lord.’ O may this be verified, and that speedily!

“That thy help may attend me in my present labours on the missionary question.

“I do thank thee, O Lord, that I have not now, as heretofore, to address prayer to thee with regard to the Hottentot question, but praises and thanksgivings.”

* * * * *

“And now for those dear to me, for my friends, I pray that every blessing I have asked for myself may attend them. I feel especially prompted to pray for some of them; especially for poor dear Macaulay, who I know is in much sorrow. Let me plead, O Lord, his sacrifices in the slave question, his many trials, his unparalleled labours; the services he has rendered, and the reward he receives at the hand of man,—reproach, calumny, and insult. Be pleased, O Lord, thyself to reward him; smooth away every difficulty; grant him prosperity; and grant him to grow in grace: enrich him with the comfort of thy Holy Spirit; make him prosperous here, and happy hereafter. * * * For some other of my friends, I pray that their hearts may cleave to thee, that their affections may be set on things above, not on things on the earth; and that finding

mortification and disappointment here, they may seek comfort with thee, at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.

“For all my relatives, and for all my friends, I pray that the blessing of God, through Jesus Christ, may rest upon them.”

He had hoped this session to have again brought forward the Mauritius case.

To Zachary Macaulay, Esq.

“London, April, 1829.

“When I was last in town I had been for some time extremely unwell ; and I then thought, as I believe you thought also, that it would not be prudent for me to undertake any heavy business this session. Since that time I have been much better ; and, reflecting much upon the Mauritius horrors, I cannot feel comfortable to let those questions rest. I really wish to ask your advice ; I well know the deep interest which you take in my welfare, as well as in that of our cause ; and now tell me, whether in your opinion I ought to hazard the ‘inevitable death’ with which Dr. Farre last year threatened me, or to desert a cause which now more than ever wants the aid of all its friends. I confess the bias of my mind is strongly in favour of bringing forward the Mauritius cruelty case ; and if you agree with me, so I believe it must be. If you fix a meeting of our friends at Brougham’s, I shall make a point of being there.

* * * * *

“With respect to our proceedings in Parliament, I am still inclined to believe that the best thing which could be done would be for Brougham to make his motion.

“It is clear that a very powerful statement is wanting in order to renew the interest of the public ; and having him, and Mackintosh, and our other friends ready for a great effort upon the admission of slave evidence, we are so safe, and so certain of making a great impression, that I cannot bring myself to think any thing else is so good.”

The attention of Parliament was so entirely engrossed by the Catholic question, that his intention respecting

the Mauritius could not be carried into effect, nor was his health equal to any exertion in public. In private, he continually pressed the Government to further measures; one of which is alluded to in the following memorandum, which also refers to the success of Mr. Brougham's endeavours to procure the recognition of negro evidence in the colonies:—

“ May 17. 1829.

“ 1. On Tuesday last, Sir George Murray told me that Government would next session introduce a bill for admitting negro evidence; and likewise a bill for improving courts of justice. 2. That they would grant a commission for investigating the slave trade at the Mauritius, and the condition of the slaves. 3. Twiss told me on Thursday that Government had resolved to send out orders to emancipate the Indians at Honduras, in whose cause, at the instigation of Colonel Arthur, we moved about three years ago.* 4. Dr. Philip, on Thursday, told me that the Order in Council with respect to the Hottentots was all that he wished. So far, then, God has been pleased to answer our prayers. My text and my comfort to-day has been, ‘ Delight thyself in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.’ ”

Towards the close of the session, Sir Robert Farquhar recurred to the statement formerly made, that slave-trading had existed in the Mauritius during his government, and required that the charge should be investigated, or retracted. Mr. Buxton explained the reason why it had been dropped, and read the opinion of his physician, that he could not attend to public business in Parliament without danger to his life. But he pledged

* Mr. Wilberforce had requested Mr. Buxton to undertake this matter, in a letter dated February 18 1825, adding, “ I know I need not apologise to you for the trouble I impose on you, in the residuary legatee capacity. You are likely to have a very unprofitable inheritance, if it be estimated according to the ordinary principles of valuing articles. But their *sterling value* will be recognised by and by.”

himself, if alive in the next session, to accept the challenge of the honourable Baronet.* However, in the course of the summer, the commissioners returned, and their report rendered any further exertion unnecessary. In spite of the great difficulties by which they had been surrounded (for the inhabitants had banded themselves together in a sort of conspiracy, to prevent any evidence from being laid before them), they had established the fact of the Mauritius slave trade, and to a great degree ascertained its extent; and they clearly proved that this trade had continued in full vigour, except during the administration of General Hall.

On August 23. 1829, Mr. Spring Rice, whose co-operation in this question had been in the highest degree valuable, writes to Mr. Buxton:—

“ My principal object in writing respects the Mauritius case. In the first place, let me congratulate you on the complete vindication of yourself contained in the Report. But what course is next year to be taken? If a committee, you may depend on my best help, night and day, if necessary; but only on the condition of being authorised by Mrs. Buxton to watch you as attentively as the Inquiry, and to send you packing, if I see the matter press on your health or spirits. Pray tell Mrs. Buxton to furnish me with full powers over you, or otherwise I shall never go down. Also let me know what are your plans, and what I ought to say at during the recess. All this assumes a committee to be the fitting course; but I have my doubts, now that the case is launched, whether a commission † in the islands is not a better mode of procedure. Turn this in your mind, and consult Lushington and Brougham; I think Murray is deserving of every confidence.”

The following letter was Mr. Buxton's reply to a suggestion from Mr. Horace Twiss (Under-Secretary for the

* See *Mirror of Parliament*, June 3. 1829.

† i. e. an *executive* commission.

Colonies), that he should leave the matter in the hands of Government.

“ Northrepps Hall, Cromer,
October 21. 1829.

“ My dear Twiss,

“ Upon the most deliberate consideration I am afraid it is impossible for me to adopt your suggestion. I originally stated that the slave trade prevailed during Sir Robert Farquhar’s government. Ill health prevented me from bringing forward, in the session of 1827, the proofs I possessed. In 1828, I took no steps, except that I offered to Mr. Huskisson to put the Government in possession of my case, as I was unable to go on with it. He declined my offer, but told me that it was Sir R. Farquhar’s intention to require me either to retract my statements, or to proceed with the investigation. My reply was that I would retract nothing, and that if I were thus called on, I would, at any personal inconvenience, move for a committee.

“ I heard no more of the question in 1828. At the latter end of last session, Sir Robert thought proper to make precisely the same demand as that of which Mr. Huskisson had warned me. I could do no less than accept the challenge, and declare that I would bring forward the question in the next session. If I were now to decline doing so, Sir R. Farquhar would stand in the best possible situation; charges were made against him—he had in Parliament defied his accuser to produce the proof—that accuser had pledged himself to do so, and had not performed his pledge: in short he would obtain a triumph, and that at my expense.

“ Now, considering that the commissioners have proved beyond a doubt that slave trading *did* exist during his government, and considering that I have irresistible proof of all I have asserted, and of much more than I ever did state, this would not be to me a very eligible termination of the controversy.

“ I have entered into this long explanation, in order to satisfy you that I am placed in a situation by Sir R. Farquhar’s challenge, which leaves me no alternative but to proceed.

“ I confess to you that, as far as he is concerned, I do so with the greatest reluctance. I have no enmity against him; and I should be very glad to be spared the task of being his accuser. Of this the best proof I can give is, that I should be ready, at this moment, to abandon the inquiry, with a full sense that I

expose myself to severe reflections, provided I could do so without sacrificing the interests of others. The slave trade did prevail; that is not disputed: every negro thus illegally brought into the colony, is by law free. Consequently, before I shall be justified in abandoning the inquiry, I ought to know that Government will take efficient measures for restoring freedom to these persons. Secondly, I can prove that the slaves at the Mauritius have been treated with unparalleled cruelty. I cannot abandon their case till I have security that Government will take decided measures for improving their condition. Thirdly, my motive for taking up the question, was a desire to suppress the slave trade. Before I can quit the subject, it must be proved to me that the slave trade is extinct, and that it cannot, in all human probability, be revived.

“Surely there is nothing in these requests to which the Government can make any objection. They must be as anxious as I am that no persons shall be held in illegal bondage in a British Colony,—that extreme cruelty should be prevented,—and that the slave trade should be suppressed. I say again, if these public objects can be accomplished, I shall take leave of the question, caring little whether my contest with Sir Robert Farquhar ends with credit to me or without it.”

To Mrs. Buxton.

“February 5. 1830.

“I have had another interview with Sir George Murray this morning; and I am heartily grieved and heartily angry that he is not prepared to act as I wish about the Mauritius. It is not, however, settled; he is to give me a final answer in a few days. Is not this horrible? I am, however, well, and in good spirits, believing that, though there be the arm of flesh on one side, there is a stronger arm on the other.”

Mr. Buxton was, however, spared any lengthened exertions on this subject. The unexpected death of Sir Robert Farquhar put an end to that part of the Mauritian controversy that related to him, and in the spring of 1830, the Government, convinced by the report of the commission, declared their willingness to take up the main question with vigour.

To Edward Byam, Esq.

“ My dear Byam,

“ London, April 30. 1830.

“ After repeated disappointments, Lushington, Spring Rice, and I saw Sir George Murray to-day. *He admitted, in the most unequivocal terms, that slave trading to a vast extent had prevailed at the Mauritius, and that all our statements had been well founded.*

“ I urged a committee for the purpose of putting our evidence on record. He maintained that it was unnecessary, *as the Government admitted, and no one denied, all I wished.*

“ He is to take measures to liberate all slaves illegally imported, and Lushington approves the plan by which this is to be done.

“ When he had made all these admissions, I then said that the time was come in which those who had been injured and ruined * for no other crime than that they had not connived at the slave trade, ought to be indemnified. I gave him your letter, and bore the same testimony, or even stronger, to your character than I did in my letter to you. He promised to read your letter. I then turned the conversation to General Hall, and expressed the opinion I have always entertained of his noble conduct, and intimated that some public notice should be taken of it, or, at the very least, that it should be admitted that he was right in all he did. I do not despair of seeing this done by Murray.”

The labour bestowed by Mr. Buxton and his friends on this subject, was thus crowned with complete success. Long unnoticed and unchecked by the Government at home, the evil had grown up and flourished; but it withered in a day. Those who had readily joined in it, while veiled from sight, now shrunk from the light which

* Mr. Byam had been deprived of his situation as Commissary-General of Police, in consequence of his activity in suppressing the slave trade. General Hall, who, when Governor, had distinguished himself by his exertions for the same end, had also suffered severely from the misrepresentations of the colonists.

fell upon their doings. At the same time new vigour was thrown into every department of the executive ; and thus the remnants of the trade in slaves were soon extinguished. It only remained to make reparation to those who had been its victims. Sir George Murray had agreed to the proposition, that every slave in the Mauritius should be set free whose master could not prove a title to his possession ; but Lord Goderich, who at this time succeeded Sir G. Murray in office, insisted on laying the *onus probandi*, not upon the master, but on the slave ; a difference and a hardship of no small magnitude.

Notwithstanding, a considerable number of slaves were able to prove that they had been illegally imported, and accordingly obtained their freedom. The business was wound up in 1830 ; but when those that had undertaken it came to settle their affairs, a circumstance occurred to which Mr. Buxton often referred with strong expressions of admiration. Mr. George Stephen had taken a deep interest in the case when it was first mooted. He was afterwards retained as the professional assistant of its parliamentary advocates ; and in this capacity had incurred a very heavy expense of money, labour, and time. Of the remuneration justly due to him, amounting to 2000*l.*, he refused to receive any part.

We cannot conclude this brief outline of the "Mauritius Case" without some allusion to another of the gentlemen who acted a prominent part in the drama. Mr. Jeremie, who had been Chief Justice of St. Lucia, had there ruined his prospects by the boldness with which he struggled against the ill treatment of the slaves. Ardent in his abhorrence of wrong and cruelty, singularly wanting in selfish prudence, he never cared what might befall him, while pushing forward what he

felt to be right ; but in planning he was too hasty, in action too impetuous, for complete success.

This gentleman returned from St. Lucia at the very time when the Government had determined to appoint protectors of slaves in the four Crown Colonies. It struck Mr. Buxton, that he had just the resolute boldness and principle which a public officer in the Mauritius would most especially need. Upon his making the suggestion, however, Mr. Jeremie replied that he had already suffered enough. "Nothing," said he, "shall induce me to go to a slave colony again." "Why," said Mr. Buxton ; "it signifies very little whether you are killed or not ; but it signifies very much whether the right man goes to the Mauritius or not, at this juncture." Mr. Jeremie smiled and went away ; but he came back the next day, and said, "I have been carefully thinking over what you said yesterday ; and I have fully made up my mind that it is better I should be sacrificed than not have the thing done as it ought to be. Therefore, I am ready to go ;" and he accordingly applied for and obtained the appointment of Procureur Général.

The undertaking was no light one. So hateful to the planters was the character in which he came, that he could not even land without encountering resistance ; and during the short time he remained ashore, he was harassed and withstood at every turn ; abuse and insult were lavished upon him ; his life was repeatedly threatened, and even attempted. He was at last obliged to take refuge on board a man-of-war in the harbour ; but he still continued to perform the functions of his office ; till at length the Governor, Sir Charles Colville, considered himself under the necessity of appeasing the people by commanding him to leave the island. No sooner, however, did he reach England, than, to his

great delight, he received orders to return at once, with an increased military force, and to resume his office. He returned, and, assisted by Mr. Reddie, the President of one of the Courts, recommenced his plans for the defence of the negro. Again, however, the popular clamour rose, and threatened the peace, if not the safety, of the island; and he was finally recalled, and reached England at the beginning of the year 1835.

CHAPTER XV.

1829, 1830.

LETTERS.—PAPERS.—MITIGATION OF THE PENAL CODE.—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF HIS SECOND SON.

MR. BUXTON'S own health was much restored during the winter of 1829 ; but illness in his family caused him severe anxiety. On leaving home, when this was in a great measure relieved, he writes : —

“ Spitalfields, Nine o'clock at Night,
November 25. 1829.

“ I was very sorry that I was only able to write that short, shabby letter, which I sent this morning. I never before felt my heart so entirely riveted to home ; everything else seems flat, except that centre of my affections.

“ But now for a history of my travels. Nurse and I were very good friends, and had some instructive conversation upon the pleasing subjects of wounds, operations, &c. ; and I presume I won her heart, as she began and concluded every sentence with, ‘ My dear Sir.’ I lapsed, however, at last, into my books. It was a wretched night ; but I was none the worse for that, as my great coat and snow shoes kept me from cold. I soon set myself to a review of late events, and that led me to go over my list of the mercies which have been granted to me ; and a grand list it appears. When I go over it item by item, the account seems surprisingly large. Mercies of all sorts. * * * Then, children to my heart's content ; brothers and sisters the same ; friends the same ; station in life and circumstances the same ; the public objects to which I have been directed the same ; and there are fifty other dittos of the same order. Then my own life, so often preserved, and my children, given to me, as it were, a second time. I read some lines lately in one of those wicked newspapers (as — called them), the Weekly Dis-

patch, which I must get hold of again. I forget the lines; but their substance was, that ere long Death shall open his casket; and they end thus:—

‘ Then shall I see my jewels to my joy, my jewels me.’

“ Then come personal mercies of the same sort. I have clear, undoubting views of the efficacy of prayer. I know the Holy Spirit will be granted to those who ask for it, and I see wonderful mercy, love, and grandeur developed throughout all creation; and I know that I have a Redeemer. Upon these grounds, and such as these, I am thoroughly thankful, or rather I perceive that I ought to be so.

“ These thoughts, and hearty prayers for us all, with a fond recollection of the dear invalids I had left, carried me to Ipswich; and after that I cannot give a very clear account of anything, having fallen sound asleep. The snow became so deep that we were obliged to part with the guard and the bags, who rattled away in a postchaise and four, while we crawled into the fog of this great town. I dressed at the brewery; went to Lombard Street, to Macaulay’s, and to the Anti-slavery meeting (we are to meet again at Brougham’s on Friday evening, I believe; so forgive me for not giving you the history of our proceedings); then to Dr. Lushington, then to the Real del Monte, then to dinner at the London Tavern, by myself, then to the meeting about the Indian widows, from which I have just returned.

“ I am really eager to know whether the storm produced any wrecks: I trust it did not; or if it did, that Anna Gurney saved the crew, and is now subjecting them to a second and a greater peril, from repletion at the Cottage. Then the whale, then Cromer Hall*, then Mrs. Fry. Why, what a wonderful place Cromer is! This big city cannot supply half as much real important news as little Cromer can furnish.

“ Your affectionate husband, father, brother, and friend,
“ T. FOWELL BUXTON.”

Again, during a second visit to London:—

“ I had a pleasant journey, going outside as far as Bury, for the purpose of satisfying myself with surveying the stars. I

* This refers to incidents which had recently occurred: the capture of a large whale, and a fire at Cromer Hall.

never was out on a finer night, or was more sensible of the majesty of the spectacle. A man must preach very well indeed before he conveys such a lesson of the greatness of God, and the unworthiness of man, as a view of the heavens discloses. It always strikes me that such a sight turns into downright ridicule and laughter our (in our own eyes) important pursuits."

The same subject is referred to in the following entry, made about this time in his commonplace book:—

"O God, whether we look to the mighty operations of thy hands, the millions of sums which thou hast made, or to the swarms of living things which fill every space, whose curious and delicate organisation is the work of thy hands, or remember that it is thou who satisfiest the desire of every living thing, still the same truth bursts upon us — thou art almighty and all good. Thou art goodness, and majesty, and infinity. Then, what madness is it in us to rebel against thy laws! what madness to commit offences under the eye of such a master! what madness not to centre our hopes, our joys, our affections, in one so good and so great; Let me say, O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee. Let me not be as those who have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, hearts and understand not; but let me have the wisdom, the heaven-sent wisdom, to trace thee in all things; and because I trace thee, to love thee, fear thee, obey thee, and worship thee with my whole heart."

"January 1. 1830.

"I feel gratitude to God, that, with all our imperfections and sins, we have in some degree been constant in prayer, and have tasted its sweetness; that we have more diligently than formerly read His book, and in some degree found that His words they are spirit and they are life,

"And now what do I desire to pray for? Thy promise, O Lord, stands clear and plain — there is no ambiguity; it is certain that, desiring and praying for thy Holy Spirit, we shall obtain it. Surely I do desire and do pray for it. 'Shall not our heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to those who ask it?' It is certain that He will. I know not but that death may arrest my hand while I write this sentence. I know not that

the world and all who inhabit it shall survive this day ; but I do know that God, who cannot lie, has promised and will give His Holy Spirit to me, who now earnestly and humbly pray for it. That is one secure possession which accident cannot destroy, nor time wear away, nor the malice of Satan snatch from me.

“(2 Peter, iii. 10.) The heavens may pass away, the elements melt, the earth be burned up, but the immutable promise of my God has granted and secured to me His Holy Spirit ; what consolation to know one irrevocable truth, and that truth essential to our happiness ! Then let that Holy Spirit come, come to my heart, and with great power.

“(Eph. iii. 16.) Let it strengthen me with might in the inner man ; let it feed me with the bread of life ; let it erase that which is ungodly, that which is earthly, that which has a perishable foundation ; let it lift my soul to God ; let it open to me the love, the goodness, the majesty of God ; let it teach salvation through a Saviour, and let it welcome the glad tidings to my heart.

“(John, xvi. 13.) Let it guide me into all truth ; let it sow the good seed ; let it prepare the soul for the reception of that good seed, water it, and nourish it, and bless it with large increase. O God, for the sake of Christ Jesus, hear this prayer. Give me, O Lord, unreserved confidence in thee.

“(Rom. iv. 20.) As Abraham staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, so may I be thus strong, and confident, and fully persuaded that what thou hast promised thou art able to perform.

“(Eph. iii. 17.) And now my chief desire and prayer is, that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith.

“(John, vi. 56.) We in Christ, and Christ in us.

“(Eph. iv. 15.) That I may grow up into him in all things.

“(Col. ii. 7.) Rooted and built up in him.

“(John, xv. 5.) That I may be the branch and He the vine ; and that that branch of that vine may bring forth much fruit. That I may be among that flock, of which He is the Shepherd ; among that people, of whom He is the King ; and among those blessed, whose verdict shall be, ‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’

“(John, iv. 14. and vi. 33.) That I may drink of that well of water which springeth up unto everlasting life, and eat of that

bread which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

“(2 Sam. xxii. 2.) Be thou my rock, and my fortress, and my Deliverer; the God of my rock, my shield, my high tower, my refuge, my Saviour; and knowing that my Redeemer liveth, and from what deep perdition He hath rescued me and to what heights of glory He hath called me.

“(Eph. iv. 1.) Let me, enable me to walk worthy of my vocation.

“(Phil. i. 2.) May grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be granted. No resolutions of mine, no strength of the flesh can guard me from the power of sin. But may He in whom there is all strength protect me; He in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, teach me and lead me through all the dangerous paths of my life.”

To Mrs. Buxton.

“London, February 9. 1830.

“I am in good spirits and health, and not without a sense that mercy and truth and love are about me in my solitude before you come. * * * What a comfort it is to me that you are all going on well! It seems to make all other things easy and light. I have my worries, but I do not regard them. As for the affairs of the mines, which just now are a bit of a torment, I depend upon it that it will come right; and as to public matters, they are not at my disposal: I can only do my best, and leave the result to Him, to whom those good causes belong.”

The mining companies alluded to above, to which he belonged, involved him in considerable loss of property, and their affairs were often a subject of anxiety to him. The details would be of course unsuitable and uninteresting to the general reader; but those who had the opportunity of observing his conduct in these transactions, attest that it eminently displayed his clear judgment, his firmness of purpose, his ability to resist the infection of panic, and his diligent and generous regard to the interests of others.

Another matter of business that occupied him during this spring was the Bill for throwing open the beer trade, to which he thus alludes:—

To Joseph John Gurney, Esq.

“ House of Commons, March 19. 1830.

“ I am far from being dissatisfied with the beer revolution. In the first place, I do not know how to be so; I have always voted for free trade when the interests of others were concerned, and it would be awkward to change when my own are in jeopardy. Secondly, I believe in the principles of free trade, and expect that they will do us good in the long run, though the immediate loss may be large. Thirdly, I have long expected the change. And, lastly, I am pleased to have an opportunity of proving that our real monopoly is one of skill and capital!*

“ I have a letter from Calcutta, saying that Suttee has been suppressed by Lord William Bentinck. Is not this comforting. I am also not without hopes that Sir G. Murray will do right about my Mauritius slaves. * * * Peel tells me he is with us about Capital Punishments, but says, ‘ you must give me time.’ On slavery nothing new. Colonists will do nothing. I am strongly in favour of bolder measures on the part of the Abolitionists, and think they will be taken.

“ I am now attending, and (as you may observe) listening to a debate on the distress of the nation, meaning to vote against the conspiracy of high Tories and Radical Whigs, and in favour of Government.”

Our readers will recollect the efforts made in 1821 and the following years for the reform of the Penal Code. Sir James Mackintosh had continually kept the subject in view, and had made various attempts, but apparently without success, till Mr. Peel, after taking office in 1826, commenced his revisal of the Code. He cleared the

* Referring some years afterwards to the enormous sum which the twelve largest breweries in London had lost by this Beer Bill, he remarked “ But it was right; it broke in upon a rotten part of our system — I am glad they amputated us! ”

statute-book of many obsolete and barbarous acts, and arranged and consolidated the whole body of Criminal Laws. In the progress of this great work, Mr. Peel introduced in the year 1830 a Bill for the consolidation of the laws relating to forgery. He, however, retained the punishment of death in several cases, and on this point a strong opposition was raised in Parliament, whilst, out of the House, Mr. Sidney Taylor effected a change in public opinion, through the columns of the 'Morning Herald.' It had long been Mr. Buxton's opinion that death for injury to property was adverse to the interests as well as to the feelings of the commercial world in England. It happened that one Sunday morning during this period he was visited at breakfast by Mr. John Barry, who suggested the extreme importance of getting this feeling formally expressed ; Mr. Buxton, while continuing his breakfast, dictated the following petition :—

“ That your Petitioners, as bankers, are deeply interested in the protection of property from forgery, and in the conviction and punishment of persons guilty of that crime.

“ That your petitioners find, by experience, that the infliction of death, or even the possibility of the infliction of death, prevents the prosecution, conviction, and punishment of the criminal, and thus endangers the property which it is intended to protect.

“ That your petitioners, therefore, earnestly pray that your Honourable House will not withhold from them that protection to their property which they could derive from a more lenient law.”

This form of petition was sent to all the principal towns in the kingdom, and quickly obtained the signatures of firms representing above 1000 bankers.

It was presented on the 24th May, by Mr. Brougham. Sir James Mackintosh's amendment to abolish capital

punishment for forgery was, however, lost; but immediately after this defeat Mr. Buxton returned into the House, and gave notice (in the name of Sir James Mackintosh) of another motion to the same effect on a further stage of the Bill. On this debate a majority was obtained against the punishment of death for forgery; and, though this decision was reversed by the House of Lords, the question was virtually settled. No execution has since taken place for forgery in Great Britain.

In succeeding years the infliction of capital penalties was more and more reduced by the efforts of Mr. Ewart, Mr. Lennard, and others, to whose exertions Mr. Buxton always gave, while he remained in Parliament, his strenuous assistance; and it is satisfactory to know that the number of crimes now legally punishable with death is reduced from 230 to eight or nine; and that, practically, no executions now take place in England or Wales except for murder or attempts to murder.

At the close of this summer, Mr. Buxton was called away from his public duties by the illness of his second son, a youth of great promise, who showed a tendency to consumption.* When the disease suddenly assumed a very alarming character, Mr. Buxton writes, after detailing the circumstances:—

“I felt in the night a deep sense of the goodness of God, and unbounded confidence in Him, and was ready to place my child and everything in His hands.

“I awoke in the morning under an overwhelming load of distress; the wretchedness of our present situation burst upon me before I had time to collect my consolations. * * * My

* Mrs. Fry thus mentions him in her diary: “He was a child who in no common degree appeared to live in the fear and love of the Lord: he was cheerful, industrious, clever, very agreeable, and of a sweet person.”—(Memoirs, vol. II. p. 118.)

prayer was, first, heartfelt thanks to God for His goodness and mercy; an acknowledgment that He had dealt most lovingly with us in every, every event; an assurance that this stroke, terrible as it seemed, was mercy and love; and I thanked him for it. Next did I cordially thank him for Harry's state of mind, so sweet and lovely: thanked him that he was evidently a lamb of Christ's fold, and prayed that he might be strengthened with might in the inner man. * * * The text, 'these light afflictions, which are but for a moment,' was deeply comforting. Positively, they are heavy, and grievous, and lasting; but compared with the joys of heaven, light, and but for a moment. The apostle must indeed have been inspired when he formed so sublime a conception of God's presence.

"My prayer is, that I may never forget this day's lesson. How have I felt the vanity of all earthly things! How have I panted to become meet for an eternal inheritance! How have I desired for myself, my wife, my children, my friends, that we might here be the servants of God, desiring nothing but to do His will: and that hereafter we might form one band of happy ones redeemed by Christ, and enjoying that blessed country, the least of whose privileges is, that 'there they are no more sick!'

"I pray thee, most merciful Father, that the lesson of to-day may not be forgotten; that we may ever retain to-day's sense of the difference between temporal and eternal. I pray thee only make us thy children, and deal with us as thou wilt. I give my son unto thy merciful arms; if thou wilt, dear Saviour, thou canst make him whole; but thou knowest best, thy will be done. If it be possible, reserve him for us: oh, how does the flesh desire it! but far, far more do I desire that thou wouldst keep him and us within thy fold. Thou didst hear parents, prayers on earth, oh, hear us now; but again I feel, thy will be done. I bow with entire confidence to thy decrees; I am sure that thou wilt do for the best, for never so much as to-day did I know thee to be merciful and gracious, and very loving to all thy creatures."

The most lively solicitude and the most sedulous attention proved to be alike in vain. Though the progress of the disease was extremely slow, it was unremit-

ting, and the nursing of this beloved child became the engrossing occupation of the autumn. The following paper shows that hope had faded away.

“ September 19. 1830.

“ I beseech thee, O God, the Creator of the universe, that thou wouldst grant me a much more lively spirit of godliness, as the one thing which sweetens life, soothes its cares and its bitter disappointments, and which cheers me in a path which needs something to cheer it. Blessed Lord, hear my prayers on behalf of my beloved child. Oh, how do I desire, how earnestly do I crave that thy choicest mercies and the treasures of thy love may be showered upon him ! Give him, as he walks through the valley of the shadow of death, the light of thy countenance, the support of thy strength, and the comfort of his heavenly Father's presence. May it please thee to impart to him, flying fast to heaven, a foretaste of the joys which thou hast prepared. The time of tribulation and the hour of death are approaching. Oh, be near him and us in those dark seasons; tell him that thou art beside him, whisper full consolation in his ear. Let thy spirit remind him that he is safe in thy arms, that nothing can really harm him because thou art his defender. Unto God's gracious mercy and protection I commit my darling child; the Lord bless him and keep him, lift up his countenance upon him, and give him peace; and, O blessed Lord, make us partakers of the same peace. If, as we believe, in passing from death unto life he shall experience a blessed change; if he is about to enter into the joy of his Lord; if bright scenes of glory, which the dull eye of man hath not seen, are to be his; if he is to spring from languor, and pain, and weariness of the flesh, to perfect peace and joy; if this be the change that awaits him, and surely it is, then let us patiently, nay joyfully, transfer him from the arms of earthly parents into the arms of his Father which is in heaven.”

Being obliged to go up to London on the day succeeding that on which this prayer is dated, Mr. Buxton writes in a more cheerful strain to the young invalid :—