

slavery could here terminate; but, alas! the blackest volume yet remains. The perusal of it will undoubtedly be a melancholy employment for my friend; but let us not shrink from the contemplation of human misery; the more attentively it is viewed, the more likely it is to be alleviated; it is too slightly observed, and too superficially considered. The tales of woe of which the history of slavery is composed are not pleasing to the philanthropic ear; but they make impressions on the benevolent heart which are often productive of the happiest effects. Let us then, my friend, resume our historical observations. The contemplation of causes and effects will in some measure amuse us in viewing a picture, on which the eye cannot look without horror.

Europe had, after a succession of almost ten centuries, at length emerged from that state of barbarism and anarchy into which she had been plunged by the subversion of the Roman empire, and the wars and revolutions which took place among the northern conquerors. After that universal wreck of the arts and sciences, and of every species

species of literature, commerce and civilization making a gradual progress, had concurred to effect the revival of learning and the arts, and the governments of Europe had acquired stability and permanency. The world thus began to assume a new aspect, and a new order of things had just taken place, when Christopher Columbus projected the most adventurous and daring enterprise that ever entered into the mind of man, and, by discovering a new continent, introduced upon the theatre of the world a train of events equally novel and interesting, and still operating with undiminished activity upon the political and commercial interests of mankind. Populous cities are now seen in the immeasurable wildernesses of America, and commercial towns on her formerly unknown and uncultivated shores. The discovery of America has effected a most important change in the aspect of the world, and the condition of mankind. This interesting event, by pouring into the old continent a continual supply of gold and silver, has extended the commerce, and caused more than a sixfold advance in the

value of the landed property and produce of Europe; and has unfortunately carried into the inmost recesses of Africa scenes of horror before unknown among her uncivilized inhabitants.

Immediately after the return of Columbus from that important expedition, daring adventurers, followed by bands of unprincipled desperadoes from Spain, daily poured into the new world. Hispaniola, Cuba, and other islands were conquered; settlements were made on the terra firma, and the isthmus of Darien, and finally Peru and Mexico were subdued, the former by Francis Pizarro, and the latter by Ferdinando Cortez, after a series of hardships and adventures, of exploits and successes unexampled in the annals of history. These adventurers, thirsting after the riches which the new world offered to their avarice, soon discovered their own small numbers to be inadequate to the cultivation of the soil, and the working of the mines, even had they been inclined to labor; but that was entirely contrary to their dispositions and turn of mind, for all those who at that time emigrated from Europe
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to the new world, went with a view to obtain riches by conquest and rapine, and not by the slower means of patient and persevering labor. These unprincipled and inhuman invaders, thus circumstanced, reduced the unfortunate natives to the most distressing state of slavery. They parcelled the land among themselves, and with the lands the unfortunate inhabitants also, every one, according to his dignity and office, having a certain portion of lands, with a proportionate number of inhabitants assigned to him. These ill-fated slaves were compelled not only to cultivate the lands for their imperious masters, but also to work in the mines, a species of labor with which they were entirely unacquainted; indeed, the natives of those countries were but little inured to labor, and from their habits of life totally averse to and unfit for it. Accustomed from their infancy to a hot and enervating climate, the strength of their bodies was not adequate to the exertions of long continued and toilsome labor. They scarcely used any clothing, and lived on the simplest food, a small quantity sufficing them; the fertility

of the soil, aided by the continual heat of the climate, produced spontaneously almost as much as was necessary for their support. Men, accustomed to such a mode of living, were absolutely incapable of supporting the hardships imposed upon them by their unfeeling masters. Death, the only consolation, and last refuge of the unhappy slave, gave to multitudes that repose which they could not hope ever to enjoy in this life, and Hispaniola and other islands were almost entirely depopulated before the justice of the court of Spain had the opportunity of exerting itself in favor of this oppressed people. Whoever would desire to know the detail of these barbarities, may, if his feelings will suffer him to peruse the shocking recital, read the relations of the bishop of Burgos, father Bartholomew de las Casas, and other humane Spaniards, both laymen and ecclesiastics, friends of humanity, and advocates for their oppressed fellow-creatures, who spared no pains in exposing these enormities to the eyes of Europe, in order to excite sensations of pity, and rouse the justice of the courts of Spain and Rome in favor

favor of the oppressed natives of America. In process of time their benevolent efforts produced a good part of their desired effects, although every species of opposition was exerted against them by the colonists. During the whole reign of Charles V., those contentions between the friends of humanity in Spain, and the interested proprietors of the colonies, (of which I shall speak more fully in my next,) continued to agitate the court of Spain and the council of the Indies. The public voice of humanity had generally the ascendancy; divers regulations were successively adopted, and all of them in some degree favorable to the natives of America. At this time the Americans in the Spanish settlements are far from being in a distressed condition. They cannot but now enjoy a greater share of political and social happiness than when the Spaniards found them. The Americans, or as they are frequently called the Indians, in Mexico, Peru, and the other colonies, lead at present a civilized life, profess the Christian religion, possess lands, and live in villages governed by their own caciques; and

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are only as tributary people, obliged to pay certain taxes to the Spanish government, and to submit to certain regulations imposed upon them by their conquerors, of which the most menial is that of being obliged to work in the mines. All the Indians in Mexico and Peru, and the other countries where the mining business is carried on, are obliged to work in the mines by rotation six months in the year, if they live within thirty miles of any mine that is opened, and this service they perform by levies in rotation eighteen days at a time, for which they receive wages to the amount of *2s. 3d.* sterling per day. In a general view, we must grant that the natives of America enjoy a greater share of happiness under the Spanish government than they ever did under their own despotic and tyrannical rulers, which no one can doubt of, who for a moment reflects on the superstitious and sanguinary system of the Mexican religion, and the multitude of human sacrifices annually offered to their deities in Mexico.

It is now time to suffer my friend to withdraw himself from the contemplation of a
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picture which has already filled his mind with melancholy reflections on the depravity of the human heart; and if I cannot promise any thing of a more exhilarating nature in my next epistle, a little repose may, however, enable him the better to sustain the shock which a view of those horrid scenes is apt to give. I shall therefore, at present, bid an affectionate farewell.

LETTER XVI.

The cruelties exercised upon the hapless natives of America, reported to the court of Spain by Bartholomew de las Casas—Contentions between the colonists, and the friends of humanity—The courts of Spain and Rome take them under their protection—Report of the colonists respecting their aversion to labor, which is accounted for—Negro slavery unfortunately suggested by de las Casas, through motives of humanity—The manner the negroes were seduced—Zeal for religion concurred to promote this measure—The minister Ximenes reluctantly consents to the plan of negro slavery, proposed for the emancipation of the Americans—A trade to Africa for slaves consequently commenced by the Spaniards, and soon adopted by all those nations which had established colonies in America.

I AGAIN resume my pen, in order to present once more to my friend's contemplation, scenes of horror and human depravity. You will, I know, accompany me (not cheerfully, indeed, but feelingly)
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in those melancholy walks, and enjoy, at least, the benevolent emotions of your own philanthropic mind. Our ability to relieve misfortune, and lend a supporting hand to indigence and distress, may be circumscribed by various causes, but to wish well to all mankind is a pleasure of which no earthly power or circumstances can deprive the benevolent heart, and this pleasure, I know, my friend enjoys in its fullest extent. It will, therefore, be no small source of satisfaction to reflect, that, in the midst of those horrid scenes, some illustrious characters were found who excited all their powers to alleviate the sufferings of their fellow mortals.

Among the friends of humanity who exerted themselves to procure the emancipation of the hapless natives of America from the tyranny of their merciless oppressors, the name of Bartholomew de las Casas stands in the most eminent place. He had been an eye-witness of the cruelties exercised by the colonists upon the unhappy victims of their insatiable avarice, and these cruelties he had constantly condemned and resolutely

resolutely opposed. He carried an exact account of those proceedings to the court of Spain, and endeavoured to excite the public voice of compassion throughout the whole kingdom.

From Spain he applied to Rome: he laid the affair before the sovereign pontiff in order to rouse the thunders of the church against the colonists. The colonists, on their side, by their agents both in Spain and at Rome, were always ready to counteract his benevolent efforts. They represented the natives of America as creatures of an inferior nature, absolutely incapable of being instructed in the Christian religion, and those who had embraced it, were excluded from the sacraments, and other privileges of Christianity. The friends of humanity applied to Rome in behalf of these ill-treated people. At length the courts of Rome and Spain took them under their protection, and rendered them more tranquil, as I observed in my former letter.

The colonists then represented the Indians to the court of Spain, as a people so totally averse to labour, that no rewards—no

wages could induce them to work, and that nothing but absolute compulsion could oblige them to put their hands to any sort of useful employment. In this they certainly said no more than the real truth: unaccustomed to the conveniences and luxuries of a civilized life, they were also unacquainted with its wants. They contented themselves with little food, and that of the simplest kind, and the constant heat of the climate precluded the necessity of clothing. As for gold and silver, they had no use for those metals. In such a state of society, indolent leisure, and the liberty of roving about at pleasure, constituted the supreme felicity of the natives of the greatest part of Spanish America, consequently the expectation of wages and reward had no influence over them. They esteemed it madness to confine themselves to daily labour, for what they could do so well without, and could not imagine what motive could induce the Spaniards either to labour themselves, or desire others to labour for the acquisition of things not necessary for their subsistence. This indolent disposition of the natives, if
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complied with, was represented by the colonists as totally subversive of every prospect of national advantage, which might have been expected from the discovery of the new world. They represented to the court of Spain, that as no rewards whatever could induce the natives to leave off their indolent mode of living, and apply to useful labour, the settlements could not be cultivated, nor the mines wrought, without making use of compulsory means.

This argument involving considerations of national advantage, proved an insurmountable obstacle to the success of those who pleaded the cause of the Indians. But Las Casas, determined to carry his point, cast his eyes on every side in order to discover the means of accomplishing his darling object—the exemption of the Americans from slavery; and most certainly, without foreseeing the consequences, unfortunately hit upon a plan which has been productive of an aggregate of evils—a series of calamities to which the history of the world scarcely affords any parallel.

This humane and benevolent man, with

the most philanthropic intentions, by a fatal mistake, and without being able to foresee the extent to which such a measure would be carried, and the miseries it would produce, conceived the plan of negro slavery.

The Portuguese, under the conduct of Vasco di Gama, had sailed round the Cape of Good Hope to India, A. D. 1494, only two years after the discovery of America; and in coasting round Africa in this and some preceding voyages of discovery, had become acquainted with the negroes.

Happy had it been for that unfortunate people, had they to this day remained as ignorant of the Europeans as they had ever been before that period. Like the simple natives of America they gazed with admiration on the ships as well as on the complexion of the strangers thus come to visit them, little apprehending what a load of calamities they were about to heap upon them and their posterity. Las Casas, revolving in his mind the means of emancipating the natives of America imposed upon them by the colonists, and finding this impossible to be accomplished, unless other

hands could be procured to work the mines, and cultivate the plantations, turned his eyes towards Africa. He considered the negroes were a strong-bodied race of men, whose muscular and firmly-compacted frames, rendered them much more capable of enduring fatigue, than the natives of America. He observed, also, that the negroes were not so averse to labour as the Americans. On these considerations he imagined, that if slaves could be procured from Africa, they would be far more useful, and would be able to support those fatigues which threatened no less than the total extirpation of the whole race of the Americans, whose bodies were utterly inadequate to such exertions.

Zeal for religion, also, concurred to promote the measure. He made no doubt of the conversion of the Americans when once exempted from slavery and oppression, in which case they would leave a numerous posterity of sincere Christians, who, adopting the habits of civilized life, would become good subjects, and useful members of society; whereas, the labors imposed upon them

them could ultimately have no other effect than the total extermination of their race, and the consequent depopulation of the colonies. He supposed, likewise, and with reason, that the introduction of negroes into the colonies, would prove a great accession to their population, and to the increase of their produce, by such an additional number of useful hands.

In these circumstances of the infant colonies, the measure, though harsh, might be necessary, and if provision had been made for the emancipation and establishment of the negroes after a limited time of servitude, might have been very advantageous to the newly-discovered countries, without being prejudicial to the cause of humanity; although, even in this case, how strongly soever necessity, or the prospect of national advantage might have apologized for the adoption of the project of negro slavery, and however beneficial the measure might ultimately have proved, the effects could not have justified the means used to produce them. No man can have a right, in any case, to use compulsion towards another, but by

legal means, and upon legal principles. It would be unjust to rob one man in order to enable us to relieve the wants of another; and it could not be just to force the Africans into slavery, for the purpose of relieving the Americans. Perhaps Las Casas, seeing no other alternative but the introduction of African or the continuation of American slavery, thought the toleration of a less evil, in order to eradicate this greater, a necessary and excusable expedient. This active ecclesiastic submitted his plan to the consideration of Cardinal Ximenes, who was then at the head of affairs in Spain, and was himself a zealous advocate for the emancipation of the Americans from the tyranny of their oppressors. This minister at first rejected, but at length very reluctantly gave his approbation to the measure.

The Spaniards opened a trade to Africa for slaves, and the slave-trade thus commenced by Spain was soon adopted by all those nations which had established colonies in America and its dependent islands, and has been since carried on to such an extent,
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and accompanied with circumstances so shocking to humanity, that it may justly be considered as one of the greatest evils that ever existed in the world—an aggregate of the greatest calamities ever inflicted upon any part of the human species!

I must now for a while leave my friend to the melancholy contemplation of those scenes of horror which the avarice of Europe has produced in the unoffending regions of Africa and America. In these disquisitions my friend will readily perceive, that I am supported by the authority of M. L'Abbé Raynal, and that celebrated historian, Dr. Robertson, besides many others of distinguished reputation.

I shall now proceed to the reflections which have been the result of those enquiries, and lay them before my friend, little doubting of his entire approbation, and as little of his firm persuasion that with unfeigned respect and esteem,

I am, &c.

LETTER XVI.

Reflections on the negro slavery—Comparison between a slave among Christians, and a slave among the pagans of ancient Rome—The case of the former proved more unjust and severe—Roman slaves were esteemed in proportion to their talents—Instructed in Greek, Latin, &c.—They were not ill treated, nor employed in drudgery—Rome proved to have been particularly favorable to slaves.

I NOW proceed, according to my intention and promise, to lay before my friend a series of reflections, the result of my historical enquiries relative to a system that has been in all ages so conspicuous a blemish in the picture of the moral world.

Having, as concisely as possible, displayed the origin of slavery, and the barbarous principles upon which that unnatural tyranny of one part of the human species
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over another was founded, with its different modes of existence, at different periods and in different countries, from its first establishment among the ancients, to the present iniquitous and inhuman system of African slavery among the moderns, let us, in the next place, proceed to examine, by the principles of sound reason, without passion or prejudice, the condition of the enslaved African, to make an estimate of his calamity, and compare his afflictions and the evils he suffers among Christians, (the professed disciples of the meek and merciful Jesus) with the condition of a slave among the pagans of ancient Rome.

If we compare the condition of the enslaved negro, with that of the captive taken in war, the cases are in no respect parallel. The calamity of the latter, and the hardships of his fate, bear no proportion to the misery and the injuries suffered by the former. According to the barbarous mode of making war in ancient times, the life of an enemy taken in arms was forfeited by martial law, consequently, when made a prisoner, his person was entirely at the dis-

posal of the conqueror, who, according to the sanguinary maxims of ancient warfare, might, if he pleased, immediately take away his life, which was forfeited by the law of arms. If the enemy spared his life, it was purely an act of clemency, and he had an undoubted right to impose upon him what conditions soever he pleased. Therefore, according to the ancient martial law, if he made him his slave, there was no injustice in the case. This the slave very well knew, and if he was used with any degree of lenity, he had no reason to complain of his destiny, conscious that his treatment was no worse, but perhaps much better than that which his master would have met with, if the fortune of war had put him into his hands. According to the established maxims of the times, he had no right to expect better treatment. Whoever lifts his hand against another, ought not to murmur when he feels the blow returned. Whoever makes war his profession, ought to be contented to abide by the chance of war, and to be prepared to meet defeat and captivity, as well as victory and triumphs.

This right of the victor over the vanquished,

quished, extended also to their posterity ; for he who permitted his vanquished enemy to live and beget children, possessed the same right of property in the children, as in the parent ; and thus slavery was perpetuated, being entailed and transmitted from generation to generation. Neither had the descendants any right to complain, if treated with humanity ; for they owed their all, their very existence to the clemency of the enemy, who had spared the life of the parent, without which act of mercy his descendants had never existed.

All this is strictly just according to the principles of pagan morality, and a necessary consequence of the sanguinary maxims of ancient warfare. The case of the unhappy African is, in every point of view, entirely different. The unoffending negro, in the forests and morasses of Africa, never so much as meditated hostility against Europe. He never gave any offence—never offered any injury to those who came from a distant quarter of the globe to make a prey of his person, as the wolf makes his prey of the lamb. From the peaceful retreats of his native country—from his paternal fields, he

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is, by barbarous tyrants and inhuman men-stealers, dragged to the sea coast, and delivered up to irremediable and hopeless slavery. His condition is also different from that of the Roman slave in many other respects: he is purchased for the sole purpose of being employed in the most laborious drudgery—the case was not so with the Roman slave. The slaves of Rome, in the first ages of the Republic, it is true, were hardly treated; but after Rome had acquired the sovereignty of all the countries around, annihilated the rival state of Carthage, and conquered the western parts of Asia, luxury rushed in like a torrent, and the citizens of Rome lived in all the pomp and splendor of Asiatic magnificence. Those who are conversant in the history of the Romans, and acquainted with their manners, are not ignorant that luxury, parade, and every kind of expensive magnificence, were never carried to such a height in any city, ancient or modern, as in Rome. That city, which had employed more than seven hundred years in plundering the world, had concentrated within her walls the spoils of
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the vanquished nations, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic ocean, and from the Danube to Mount Atlas in Africa, and many of the Roman citizens exceeded sovereign princes in opulence and grandeur.

Ammianus Marcellinus, a native, and during a great part of his life an inhabitant of Rome, gives a striking description of the luxury and splendid mode of living which prevailed in that immense city, forty years after Constantine had removed the imperial residence from Rome to Constantinople, a period in which Rome, by losing the presence of the court, and being no longer the seat of government, may reasonably be supposed to have somewhat declined from its former grandeur.

All these circumstances were exceedingly favorable to the condition of slavery, for, as I have already stated in a former letter, an almost incredible number of slaves were employed in the houses of the wealthy citizens in the capacity of household domestics.

Many of the physicians of Rome were slaves, as were, also, many of the teachers
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of grammar and rhetoric, of the languages and mathematics, so that the condition of the slaves at that time at Rome, was less unhappy than it has, perhaps, ever been in any other part of the world. The person of an useful slave was considered of great importance, and he was esteemed in proportion to his talents. T. Pomponius Atticus, was a great dealer in slaves, as, also, was M. Crassus, and many others. Atticus took care to bestow a good education on those who shewed marks of genius. He instructed them himself in the Greek and Latin languages, as well as in logic and rhetoric, and carefully superintended every part of their education. A learned slave was often sold for several hundred pounds sterling. This plainly shews the esteem and consideration in which valuable slaves were held by the opulent Romans, and at the same time affords a convincing proof that slaves so highly estimated, would not be ill-treated, nor employed in mean drudgery. These circumstances are not to be wondered at, if we take a view of the manners and customs of the Romans, and of their mode
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of living both at Rome and in other parts of the empire, in the latter times of the republic, and afterwards under the imperial government.

The state of society among the Romans, was widely different from that which prevails among the nations of modern Europe. The Romans, even under their emperors, although they had lost their fierce republican spirit, still retained a veneration for the forms and modes of the commonwealth. The emperors themselves, at least such of them as knew and consulted their true interests, affected the same veneration for those ancient forms and nominal distinctions.

The most tyrannical and most daring of them never durst assume the title of king, contenting themselves with that of imperator, which we translate emperor, a word which, in the modern languages, is used to express the greatest extent of regal power; but the word imperator, among the Romans, was entirely a military title, and signified no more than generalissimo, or commander-in-chief of the armed force of the
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the republic, and had been given to several generals in the purest ages of the republic; the republican dignities of consul, tribune, censor, pontiff, &c. still continued, which Augustus had the address to unite in his own person, an artifice very commonly made use of by the succeeding emperors, so that the Roman empire might, with propriety, be defined an absolute monarchy under the form of a republic—a proof how much mankind are influenced by forms, and governed by names!

The Romans, who almost a man would have revolted against the best regulated and best administered regal government, could tamely submit to one more despotic than any monarchy in Europe, contenting themselves with retaining some empty and useless republican names and forms; and they, who would have massacred the best of their rulers if he had dared to assume the title of king, could patiently suffer every species of oppression under the most sanguinary tyrants, invested with the title of emperor, or emperor. These republican ideas had a very great influence

ence on the state of society, and modes of life among the Romans. Scarcely any Roman citizen would, for the sake of gain, so far debase himself as to become a menial servant in the family of another of his fellow-citizens; nor were there many citizens, how poor soever they might be, who were necessitated to embrace such a situation for the sake of procuring a livelihood.

The conquered countries were obliged to pay an annual tribute to Rome, part in money and part in their respective produce. The Roman citizens were thus supplied with all the necessaries, and most of the conveniences of life. Egypt and Sicily were the granaries of the republic, and supplied Rome with grain; some countries furnished wine, some oil, some cattle, &c., and a daily distribution of these things was made to such of the Roman citizens as had a legal claim to it. At first those distributions were made monthly, weekly, or at other stated periods. Afterwards, in order to indulge, and retain in a state of tranquillity a proud, lazy, improvident and restless people, public ovens were built, and the Roman citizens

being furnished each one with a ticket, came and received daily donations of money and bread, as also of wine, oil, bacon, and other articles, so that the poorer class of Roman citizens being by such privileges almost entirely exempted from the necessity of working, few of them would submit to a state of servitude for wages, like the lower class of subjects in modern Europe. No state of society could have been more favorable to the Roman slaves.

In the palaces of the *grandees* of Rome, all the domestics, the agents and ministers of luxury and parade, as before remarked, were of that description. The household even of the emperor himself was mostly composed of slaves. In modern Europe the various offices of the sovereign's household are esteemed the highest honours, and are usually conferred on the higher class of subjects; but among the Romans, those offices were generally filled by slaves: so different are the modes of society and national manners in different countries and at different periods of time. The same system of society prevailed in all the other cities

cities of the empire, each of which was an epitome of the metropolis.

Another custom extremely favorable to slaves became also very prevalent in the Roman empire, especially in the capital. The opulent and powerful citizens sometimes from motives of gratitude, often of vanity, enfranchised their slaves in reward of their fidelity, and zeal in their service; and as a slave had no country of his own, by the laws of Rome he became, when enfranchised, a citizen of that country to which his master belonged. Thus the powerful citizens of Rome attached to themselves a numerous body of freemen, who still continued, from motives of gratitude and interest, to look up to their former masters as their patrons and protectors. This practice became so common in the latter times of the republic, that the state thought it necessary to enact laws to restrain it, and to exclude those enfranchised slaves and their descendants for three or four generations from the public offices of the commonwealth. These laws and regulations, however, in process of time, became obsolete. Slaves and their
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descendants, by enrolling themselves in the armies in times of public danger, and by various other means, often arose to high promotion.

All these circumstances held out promising expectations to the slaves of ancient Rome. Every one who possessed any considerable talents, had the greatest reason to form the most sanguine hopes not only of freedom, which, under the imperial government he could always obtain by enrolment, but also of high advancement. This was the most powerful antidote against the evils of slavery that could possibly enter into that condition. Hope is in every situation of difficulty and danger, the firmest support of the mind—it softens every toil, and sweetens all the ills that are incident to life. It is the pleasing expectation of once again seeing my country and my friend, that cheers my spirits at the southernmost promontory of the old continent,—that gives animation to my mind and pen,—causes me cheerfully to communicate my reflections, and bid my friend, for the present,

Adieu.

LETTER XVII.

The hopeless situation of the enslaved African—His condition more deplorable than the Roman slave—That of the slaves among the Turks, Persians, &c. far preferable—Of the slaves, male and female, in Turkey—Their condition different from that of the negro slaves—The erroneous opinion of their being naturally devoid of sensibility—Their feelings are lively, and their attachments strong—The Hottentots and Laplanders afford incontrovertible proof—Mr. Park's observations alluded to—Our knowledge of the interior of Africa very imperfect—The difficulties which travellers have encountered—Further allusions to Mr. Park—The lower class of people not so unhappy under the feudal system of government as generally supposed—This confirmed by the observations of M. de Reisbeck and Mr. Cox.

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I ENDED my last epistle with pleasing reflections on the animating nature of hope, that greatest of cordials, and I commence the present with the same subject in view. I had observed the delightful, and not im-

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probable expectations of freedom and promotion which might sweeten the bitter cup of slavery in the latter ages of Rome. Such favorable circumstances, such flattering prospects, such opportunities of acquiring ease, comfort, and promotion, do not present themselves to the enslaved African. In such a situation, pleasing hopes, although never realized, might at least console the hours of adversity, and cheer his mind with agreeable ideas; but such is not his case. To him even the faint solace of illusive hope is in a great measure wanting. Condemned to toil and labor in order to enrich others, slender are his hopes, and few and hardly earned his opportunities of procuring freedom and comfort.

Thus, after an impartial examination of the circumstances of the prisoner taken in war, and carried into Roman slavery, and those of the peaceable and unoffending African forcibly torn from his native home, the cases appear in no respect parrallel; let us consider the situation of the slaves purchased in foreign countries. Among the Romans, the number of these was small, but,
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among the Turks, and other nations where slavery still continues, that is now the common method of procuring them. If we compare the condition of the slaves thus procured among the Turks, the Persians, &c. with that of the African slaves in the colonies, we shall find the former in general far preferable. The slaves thus purchased by those Mahometan nations are disposed of among the great men; and a very considerable part of them are purchased by the government, and rise to great promotion, many of them being advanced to the highest offices and honors. The Mamalukes, a military corps composed of those slaves, seized on Egypt about A. D. 1250, and the Mameluke kingdom of Egypt continued until A. D. 1517, when it was conquered by Sultan Selim II. In Turkey, at this day, the celebrated corps of Janissaries and Spahis consists of slaves thus purchased from foreign countries, chiefly Circassia, Mingrelia, Georgia, and the neighbouring parts; for they cannot procure slaves from Mahometan countries, it being expressly prohibited by the Koran to enslave or retain in

slavery any person professing the Mahometan religion; so that as soon as these slaves thus purchased are initiated in the faith of the Koran, which all those purchased by the government immediately are, they are esteemed freemen, although there is no real freedom in those countries. The seraglios and harems consist of female slaves thus procured; and the great officers of state are chosen from among the males. Both the political and military administration of the Turkish empire is, for the most part, exercised by persons originally slaves, purchased from Christian parents of the lowest class. This may be esteemed a phenomenon in the history of government. Such men, under no other control than that of the Grand Seignor, have the whole legislative and executive power entrusted to their hands: but, not to enter farther into these details, we may observe one very important circumstance which interestingly discriminates the condition of the negro slaves from those purchased by the Turks and other Mahometans.

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The slaves purchased by the Turks and Persians are generally children. Their habits of life are not formed; social connections have not fixed their attachment to their native country. After the first tears shed at leaving their parents and their native land, they retain but little remembrance of, or affection for either; to their unnatural parents surely no affection is due. They look up to their master as their only parent and protector. The case is far different with the enslaved negro.

The unhappy African is torn from his native country after his habits are formed, and a thousand ties fix his attachment to the country where he first saw the light. Some have persuaded themselves, and endeavoured to persuade others, that the negroes are a stupid race, and that their natural insensibility, together with the uncivilized state of society in which they have lived, prevents them from having the nice feelings of the civilized nations of Europe, or even of Asia. This opinion, although adopted by many persons, is very erroneous, equally contrary to reason and experience,

rience, and which nothing but an absolute ignorance of human nature could either produce or excuse. The affections of the mind are natural, not acquired. Learning, civilization, philosophy, and the various improvements of the human mind, regulate, but do not strengthen those feelings; they have, on the contrary, rather a tendency to diminish their force. The unlettered milk-maid will be as deeply affected at parting from a favorite lover as the daughter of a nobleman; and the mud-walled cottage exhibits as striking instances of parental, filial, and conjugal affection, as the palaces of the rich and great. History affords numberless examples of persons in exalted stations and refined manners, who have set at nought those tender feelings, which scarcely any consideration could tempt the lower classes of mankind to violate. Polished life, or an extensive and varied conversation with the world, quickens and improves the intellectual powers, but deadens the feelings. The affections of the mind are observed to operate the most powerfully in those countries, where the state of society approaches the
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nearest to a state of nature. This has been sufficiently observed among the savage tribes of North America, and other uncivilized countries. The feelings of savages are exceedingly strong, their attachments are unalterable, and their enmities implacable. They are firmly attached to their parents, their friends, and their country. Of this the Hottentots and the Laplanders afford an incontrovertible and striking proof. The Dutch at the Cape settlement have not, until lately, been able by any enticement, indulgences, or rewards, to prevail on any of the Hottentots to domiciliate themselves in that place, and conform to the European manner of living; although many attempts had often been made, and all possible means tried for that purpose. It is likewise a fact well known, that Laplanders have been brought to Copenhagen, and although accommodated with every thing that could gratify desire, and supplied with every luxury the metropolis of Denmark could furnish, yet they could never reconcile themselves to polished life, but continually sighed after their former endearments among the
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snowy mountains and dreary morasses of their dear native country.

It is clearly proved from a number of instances, that a Hottentot, or a Laplander, is as strongly attached to his country as ever was a Greek or Roman patriot; and there is no reason to doubt, but the uncivilized African in his reed-thatched hut on the banks of the Niger, has as lively feelings, and as strong an attachment to his family, his friends, and his native soil, as the polished European in his elegant villa on the banks of the Thames, the Tagus, or the Seine.

Perhaps some who have perused the most authentic information we have been able to procure concerning the interior of Africa, may imagine that they see reason to treat what is here said as empty declamation, and an exaggerated statement of the case. Alas! it is easy to treat as trifles those calamities we do not feel, but the unhappy objects on whom they are inflicted ought to determine the point; let those who feel them say, whether they be trifling or serious evils. It may, indeed, be alleged that the greatest part of the slaves brought from Africa, far
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from being injuriously deprived of freedom, were never in possession of that inestimable blessing, but were slaves from their birth, and never knew any other state than that of servitude. This must be granted; it is certainly too true. That intrepid and intelligent traveller, Mr. Park, informs us, that three-fourths, at least, of the inhabitants of Africa are in a state of slavery, and that in their wars, the far greatest part of the prisoners who are sold to the slave-traders are always of that class, a circumstance for which he assigns very substantial reasons. Of those who take the field, he says, the greatest number are always slaves, who are compelled to attend their masters, consequently the greatest number of the prisoners, if it be for that sole reason, must generally consist of persons of that description. These slaves also being obliged to fight on foot, or, if sometimes on horseback, being much worse mounted than those of free condition, are consequently less capable of making their escape in case of a defeat. The same gentleman asserts, that in the coffles of slaves brought from the interior, he always found

that a very small proportion of them had ever been in a state of freedom.

The relations of Mr. Park, as far as they go, have every appearance of truth. No one at least will deny them the merit of probability. He certainly made use of the best means in his power to procure correct information, and having exerted great talents and industry in acquiring a knowledge of the Mandingo language, found better opportunities of obtaining such information than could have been expected: but it is impossible to obtain a complete knowledge of all the particulars requisite for forming an accurate judgment on these matters, without a long residence in the country; consequently the shortness of Mr. Park's stay, the distressing circumstances of his journey, the continual fatigues he underwent, and his frequent want of the necessaries of life, as they proved insurmountable obstacles to his proceeding as far as Tombuctoo, the place of his destination, so they could not fail of preventing him from making such accurate observations, and from obtaining such correct information of distinct particulars as his abilities would

would in more favorable circumstances have enabled him, and his zeal have prompted him to procure.

After all, the interior of Africa is, in great measure, *terra incognita* to the Europeans. Circumstanced as those remote regions are, both in a physical and moral view, the information we can obtain of their inhabitants and their police is as vague and imperfect as our knowledge of their geography. Few attempts have been made to explore those vast regions, and these have been attended with little success. The persons who have undertaken the task have experienced such hardships, and met with such disasters, as are sufficient to deter others from imitating their example, and reiterating the attempt. The difficulties which Mr. Bruce encountered in the eastern part of that continent, the unfortunate death of Mr. Ledyard, the deplorable catastrophe of Major Houghton, and the hardships and dangers to which Mr. Park was incessantly exposed, will deter every one from following their footsteps who is not endued with courage equal to theirs. The last-mentioned gentleman advanced

vanced some days journey beyond Sego, the capital of Bambarra, and nearly reached the extremity of that negro kingdom, having penetrated 800 miles east from the factory of Pisania, and about 1120 miles east from the promontory of Cape Verd; but being prevented from proceeding further by a combination of difficulties and distresses, which no human fortitude or perseverance could surmount, he returned to Pisania by a quite different route from that by which he set out. The active abilities and persevering courage displayed by Mr. Park in this arduous undertaking, command our admiration and challenge our applause; for, although his tour bears but a smallⁿ proportion to the extent of that continent, few persons have contributed more to the improvement of the interior geography of Africa, or collected more important information relative to African police, and the system of society among the negro nations.

In regard to what that enterprising traveller says concerning the system of slavery universally established in Africa, to enter into minute details would exceed the limits
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of a letter. It is, however, necessary to observe in general terms, that he describes it as nearly resembling the feudal system formerly existing in this and other countries of Europe, and the condition of the African slaves as not differing much from that of the villains in the feudal times. Now, if we make a just estimate of the case, according to our uniform experience of the nature and conformation of the human mind, we shall find that the lower class of people were not so unhappy under the feudal system of government, as we in this age of liberty, and in the present more improved, civilized, and enlightened state of society are apt to imagine. Habit had reconciled them to the system under which they lived; they entertained no hopes of enjoying a greater liberty; their ideas were contracted within their own sphere of life; their minds were not exercised in the contemplation of a state of freedom; they were attached to their native soil; they were easy and comfortable in their family connections. The very same picture of human life is at this time exhibited in those countries where the feudal system
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yet prevails, or has lately prevailed. That system was not abolished in Bohemia before A. D. 1781, nor in Hungary until A. D. 1785, and in Poland and Russia it still exists. Those travellers, however, who visited Hungary and Bohemia previous to the emancipation of their peasantry, never observed any particular marks of infelicity in the countenance or behaviour of that class of people. M. de Reisbeck, and our countryman Mr. Cox, two very intelligent travellers, whose accuracy of observation, and judicious mode of estimating men and things, entitle them to every degree of attention and regard, although they cannot avoid both observing and lamenting the unhappy state of the inferior classes of the people in those countries in comparison of their situation in countries where a greater degree of freedom exists, yet they do not seem ever to have discovered that those people felt themselves so unhappy as it might be supposed. M. de Reisbeck has sufficiently expatiated on the general state of Hungary and Bohemia, but cannot refrain from remarking the gay and cheerful
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disposition, and apparent contentment of the half-naked populace in those countries: and not only Mr. Cox, but all the travellers who have visited Russia, have remarked the cheerfulness and hilarity of temper which so strongly characterize the very lowest class of the people in that country. They are habituated to their condition; they have been fixed in it from the age of infancy; they see it the same as that of the greatest part of their neighbours, and neither amuse nor torment themselves with distant comparisons. If this was the case of the enslaved Africans, their lot would be less pitiable, and would not have excited the compassion of so many eminent philanthropists, nor should I have so long employed my pen in delineating their condition, in order to display it to the view of my friend, to whom, for the present, I beg leave to bid a short farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

Reflections on the state of society--The ideas of people assimilated to their station--The negro, though in a state of bondage in his own country, must be feelingly affected at being sold into European slavery--Arguments in favor of this observation.

IN resuming my pen I purpose to submit to your consideration some reflections which may be made on the state of society, perhaps, in every country, and which arise from circumstances that highly merit the attention of the judicious observer of men and manners. It is evident that happiness and misery depend in a great measure on the opinions entertained in the mind, and human opinions arise from human circumstances. He would have but a small claim to the title of a moral philosopher, who should be ignorant that two different persons

sons might be placed in the same situation of life, in which, while one of them would find his happiness as complete as he could wish, the other would be completely miserable. The richest clothing, or the daintiest fare, would not constitute the happiness of a parent forcibly torn from his children, or of an affectionate wife compulsively separated from her husband. The feelings of the heart are the criterion of happiness or misery.

In the most refined and civilized countries, even where the greatest degree of freedom prevails, and is enjoyed by every class of the inhabitants, there may always be found a number of individuals, whose condition is in effect little better than that of a slave, yet habit renders such situations, if not pleasant, at least tolerable. The laboring man, oppressed by the burden of a numerous family, and obliged to work as hard as slaves, perhaps, any where do, with scarcely ever a moment of leisure, sees notwithstanding, without the least envy or discontent, the splendid palace, the abode of opulence and luxury arise in the vicinity of

his homely hut. He cheerfully employs his hours in labor. His ideas are assimilated to his station. His hopes and expectations, from the first dawn of reason, never flattered him with the prospect of a much happier lot. The poorest day-laborer would, notwithstanding, be as sensibly affected at being torn from his family, his connections, and his native soil, and sold into foreign slavery, as the high-spirited man of fortune. The Russian peasant has as great an aversion against being torn from his home, and forcibly enrolled in the army, as any free-born Englishman could have; and although military or naval service in Russia confers freedom, it is well known that volunteers are more difficult to procure in that country than in England or France; and, whatever we may think of the matter, our forefathers under the feudal bondage would have felt the same sentiments of horror at the apprehension of being sold into foreign slavery, as an Englishman of the present age. Reasoning from the justest analogy, founded on the immutable principles of human nature, we may therefore with certainty conclude, that

that a negro, although in a state of bondage in his own country, is as feelingly affected at being sold into European slavery, as an Englishman would be at becoming a slave to the Moors or Algerines. Happiness and misery are in a great measure dependant on a certain association of ideas, and their limits are determined rather by the imagination than by any external circumstances. From this cause it proceeds that a degree of felicity is sometimes found in the humble cottage, which is not to be met with in the lofty palacc. The greatest luxury which opulence can procure is not sufficient to confer happiness. Crowns and sceptres sometimes cannot give it, and all the combined efforts of ambition and avarice cannot obtain it. If we investigate the cause of this phenomenon, why happiness is often absent from the mind to which power, opulence, bodily health and vigor, and all the whole train of temporal blessings and advantages combine to give it an easy entrance, we must direct our observations to the invariable principles and universal feelings of human nature. Some imaginary want is

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