

We have it, then, admitted by the proclamations of the colonial government, by the pamphlet to which we have referred, published under the sanction of the British government, and by the first authorities of the colony, that the Hottentots are a *free people*; that any thing in the shape of compulsory service is a violent usurpation of their justly recognized rights; and that they had a right to expect that they should be considered and treated as a free people, and that their *persons, property, and possessions* should be protected the *same* as other free people. It is now obvious that, in pleading the cause of the Hottentots, we do not stand upon theoretical grounds merely; we stand upon the basis of their acknowledged civil rights; and it is now for the British government to declare to the world whether those rights are to be realized to them, or whether, in direct opposition to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy, that oppressed people are to be retained in the state of cruel bondage to which they have been unjustly, inhumanly, and impolitically reduced. Britain may yet redeem her character; but if the claims of the natives of South Africa are not heard, her treatment of that people will be one of the foulest blots upon her national honour that ever stained the escutcheon of the most degenerate of nations.

The Hottentots, despairing of help from every other quarter, now look to the justice and humanity of England for deliverance; and they now justly and humbly ask, why they may not, like the colonists, be allowed to bring their labours to the best market? Why they should be compelled to labour for two or for four rix-dollars (equivalent to three or six shillings sterling money) per month,

when they might be receiving twenty or twenty-five rix-dollars per month, if permitted to dispose of themselves as a free people? Why they may not be exempted from the cruelties exercised upon them without any form of law? Why they should be arbitrarily flogged in the public prison, upon the mere *ipse dixit* of their masters? Why, on complaining of bad usage to a magistrate, they should be put in prison till their master appear to answer the accusation brought against him;—and why they should be flogged if their complaints are held to be frivolous? Why they should be liable to punishment at the mere caprice of a magistrate, and without any trial? Why they should be made responsible for the loss of their master's property, and thereby kept in perpetual bondage, without ever receiving any wages? Why they should be treated as vagabonds, and be liable to be disposed of at the pleasure of any local functionary in whose district they may reside, if they do not hire themselves to a master? Why they should be given to any master, by such an authority, without ever having been consulted on the subject? Why they should be liable to have their homes violated, their children torn from them, and from the arms of their distracted mothers, without having the smallest chance of redress? Why they should be denied, by the justice and humanity of Britain, the boon prepared for them by the Batavian government, when the Cape of Good Hope fell into the hands of the English? And why these intolerable oppressions should continue to be imposed upon them, in direct violation of the proclamation of the colonial government, declaring, that the original natives of the country, the Hottentots, must be considered and treated as a free people, who have a lawful

abode in the colony ; and whose persons, property, and possessions ought, for that reason, to be protected, the same as other free people ? \*

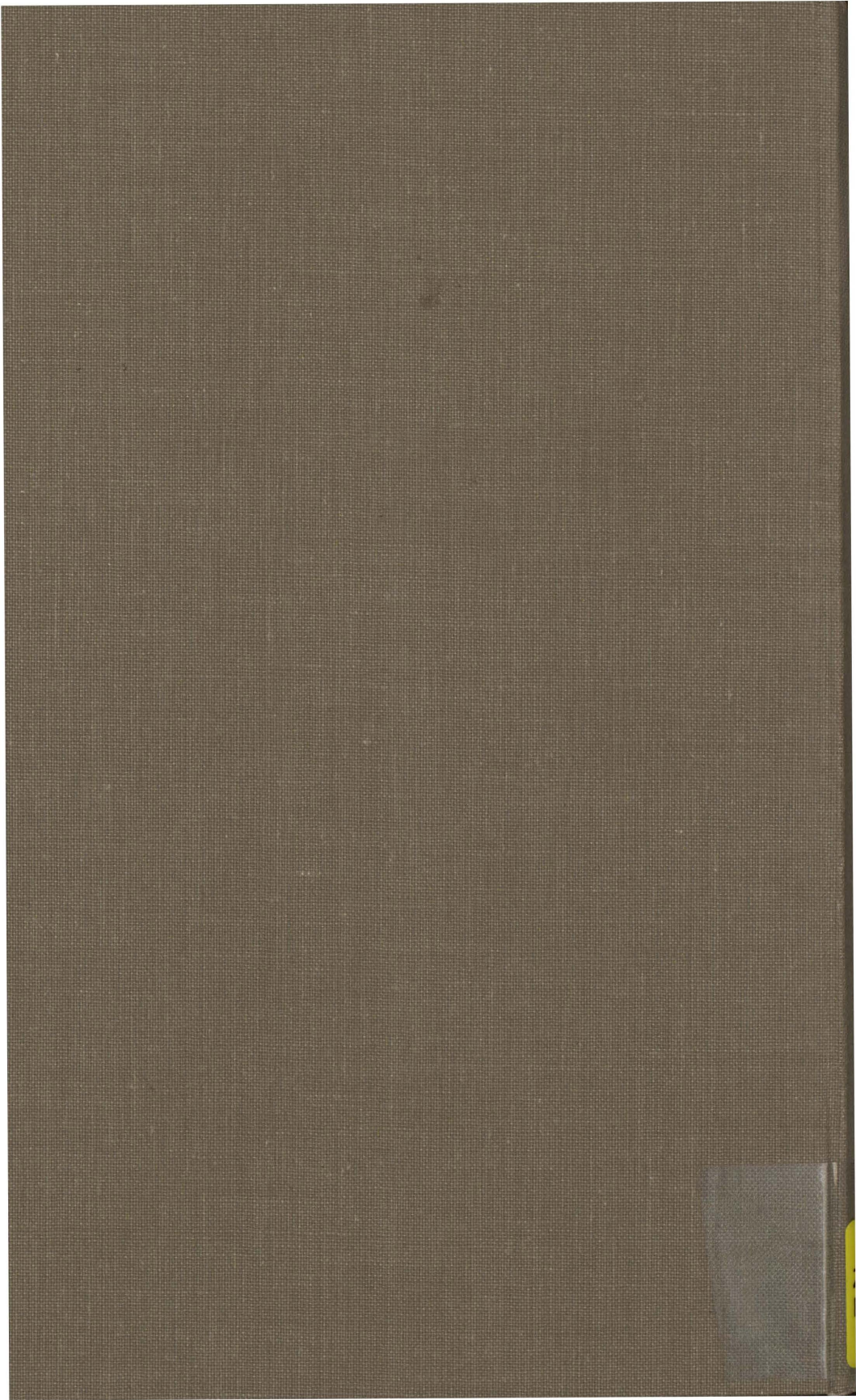
The interest of the colony cannot require that such a system of cruel oppression should be continued ; and it is impossible that the justice, the humanity, and the magnanimity of the British government can suffer longer that evils so enormous should exist in any of its foreign dependencies. Let justice be done to the Hottentots ; let them be exempted from the oppression of the local authorities of the country ; let them be at liberty to bring the produce of their labour to the best market ; let them have all the genial stimulus arising from the elevated cares of a family ; let them feel all those powerful energies which arise from seeing the

\* The manly letter of Dr. Vanderkemp to Governor Janssens (see Appendix, No. XV.) shows how such oppressions prevailed, and in what terms they were denounced, in his time : the note of my esteemed friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Campbell, (see Appendix, No. XVII.) gives his important testimony to their continuance at the period of his travels in South Africa ; and full and unanswerable evidence of their existence down to the present time will be found in the *Theopolis and Bethelsdorp Correspondence*, and in the articles numbered XII., XIII., and XIV. of Appendix.

In addition to the respectable testimonies already adduced in regard to the existence of such abuses, and in favour of our missionary institutions, I may here mention that of my esteemed friend H. E. Rutherford, Esq., merchant in Cape Town, who had ample opportunity, during his various journeys into the interior, of forming a correct estimate of their true character and effects. Mr. Rutherford's opinion on the subject was boldly and decidedly expressed in a Cape journal, (*South African Commercial Advertiser*, March 17, 1824), at a period when it was almost opprobrious in the colony to avow such sentiments ; but, such was the power of truth, and the pure character of its advocate on this occasion, that malice itself was silenced, and calumny for a period was dumb.

support,—the lives of their children dependent upon their labour; let the churches of the colonists be thrown open for their devotional exercises; let the ministers of the colony be enjoined to recognise them as a part of their charge; and let not this interfere with the self-denied labours of those who are willing to impart to them the first elements of instruction;—and, when those invidious distinctions which mar all fellowship but that which arises from a partnership in guilt are done away, the loathsome appearances which now deform the face of our African Society, and which indicate a rottenness deeply seated at the core, may be expected, under the impartial administration of equal laws, the fostering wing of the British constitution, and the purifying influence of Christian instruction and evangelical ministrations, gradually to pass away along with them.

To use the eloquent language of Mr. Wilberforce,—  
“Africa will then become the seat of civilization, because the seat of liberty—the seat of commerce, because the seat of liberty—the seat of science, because the seat of liberty—the seat of religion, because the seat of liberty—the seat of morals, because the seat of liberty—the seat of happiness, because the seat of liberty!”



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