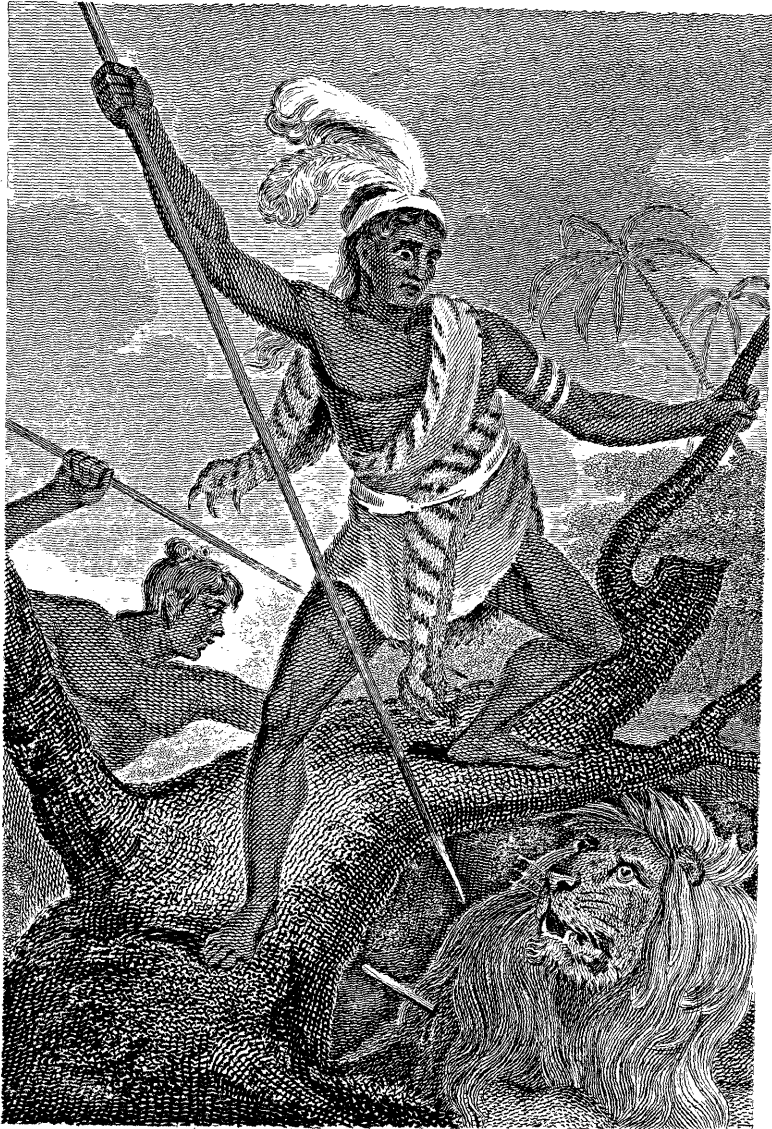


crowded company. Wine and fruit were presented him, which he accepted with apparent satisfaction; his eyes glistened with delight on viewing the table and the guests. All evinced a pleasing emulation in paying court to this swarthy son of Africa, by every mark of attention which might convey favorable impressions of the British character. On returning to his country and government, he could not fail to make known the hospitable reception, and kind treatment which he met with at the Cape.

It was no bad policy for the government to make friends of such a brave and enterprising race of men, and may eventually be attended with the happiest consequences.

The dress of our chief was of that kind, that seemed ill-calculated for the parade of the drawing-room. It brought to recollection the primeval state of man, when his wants were few, and easily satisfied. His head-dress consisted of a plume of ostrich feathers, fastened by a brass fillet; his body wrapped round with the skin of a tiger, with the rough side turned inwards. A brass girdle encircled the lower part of it. He
wore



Engraved from Drawings made from Sketches by the Author.

A Caffe Chief attacking a Lion.

wore three large ivory bracelets on his left arm, which latter is, among the Caffres, an honorable mark of distinction, being the badge of merit, or reward of prowess. The killing of a lion, or an elephant, is sometimes honored with an additional ring of ivory. It fits closely to the arm, and has received a very neat polish from their hands.

It was rumoured at the Cape that he was Angola, a brave and enterprising chief, who had distinguished himself in the late Caffre war. He was attended by an interpreter, who, being formerly in the service of a Dutch Boor, had acquired their language. This attendant recognised an officer present, whom he had seen on duty in the wilds of Africa; he had been taken prisoner by the British troops, and mildly dealt with;—even at this distance of time, his countenance seemed expressive of mingled gratitude and pleasure in beholding a face that seemed familiar to him. I could fancy him busily employed in giving an account of his capture to his chief, by his pointing with his finger to the officer as he spoke. The Caffres whistle in a peculiar shrill manner, and are

heard at a considerable distance. As to these little traits of character in an almost unknown race of men, you will readily pardon my giving them to you as they presented themselves in this interesting moment.

The Caffres are in general tall, muscular, and athletic; the present subject of my gleanings was not much above the middle size of Europeans. A conscious air of freedom that marked his different movements, an animated countenance that indicated penetration and discernment, added to a certain dignity of manner, composed a *tout ensemble* peculiarly suited to the character of a free nation. They had not the narrow visage, nor prominent cheek-bones of the Hottentot, but, upon the whole, bore a nearer resemblance to an European countenance. The present king of the Caffres is Gaica; he has under him a number of inferior chiefs, who acknowledge his authority, and who are ever ready to obey his commands.—The establishing of a friendly intercourse between those respective independent chiefs, and the government at the Cape, ought surely not to be neglected. To prevent

prevent the encroachments of the Boors on the frontiers of the colony, and to check those multiplied violations of their natural rights, which by the Dutch colonist have been but too often practised with impunity, are measures of sound policy.

The late disturbances that took place in the Cape country, which required the interposition of the strong arm of government to suppress, is well known to have been fomented and encouraged by the Boors of the more distant parts of the colony, aided and abetted by the insidious machinations of a few residents at the Cape. The Caffres were made the dupes of their mingled cunning and treachery, and brought forward to sustain the brunt of the war. Far removed from the seat of government, those incendiaries flattered themselves that they were beyond the reach of punishment, and that they might with perfect security, amid the wilds of Africa, bid defiance to colonial laws and regulations, and sound the trumpet of rebellion. Many of those demi-savages of Africa deserted their families and houses on the approach of the British troops, fear-

ing the punishment due to their crimes, and being excellent marksmen, who could easily annoy the march of regular troops, they carried on an irregular kind of warfare.

In the same manner, we may easily conceive, did the Caffres carry on their operations;—they sometimes made their appearance in numerous bodies, advancing slowly in the form of a wedge. Concealed in their woods and fastnesses, they acted with more effect; and from their superior knowledge of the country, were at times successful against a few straggling parties of British troops. These transactions are so involved in uncertainty and obscurity, that we cannot pretend to remove the veil. Notwithstanding the fatiguing marches, in pursuing the steps of an ever active enemy, ready to take advantage of their followers, and letting no occasion slip when they might dart their assigays with effect, the vigorous and decisive measures of government, in a short time restored the tranquillity of the country. The possessions of the Caffres were acknowledged and secured to them. Such of those infatuated Boors who were most forward in fomenting
discontent,

discontent, and in exciting opposition, were made prisoners, and marched to the Cape, where they still remain in confinement. They must sensibly feel this sudden reverse of fortune, entailed upon themselves by their treacherous conduct to a brave race of men, as well as by an unnatural rebellion against a mild government. We here see, my friend, that the sequestered regions of Africa have not been exempt from the scourge of revolutionary principles, and the factious spirit of modern Europe.

I remain, &c.



LETTER VIII.

The condition of slavery considered—The Malay and Mosambique slaves—Their daily employment—Meagre fare—Slaves often sold by auction—The colonists, particularly the ladies, fond of frequenting those sales—Consequent remarks.

IN a former letter I hinted my intention of laying before you some particulars relative to the slaves of this colony. Unhappy race! how often have you tottered under the heavy burden imposed by your unfeeling masters! In contemplating your hard lot among mankind, the generous bosom will certainly experience those finer feelings of our nature which ever accompany the ardent wishes of thousands for your emancipation. Is complexion alone the grand characteristic of slavery? Since your swarthy coloring

coloring was given you by our common parent, is it for this that you are doomed to be hunted down in your calm retreats, torn from your families and homes, and carried by the trafficker in human flesh to the mart of avarice? Though, for a while, the united efforts of many celebrated characters have proved fruitless in the abolition of this trade, yet, still a gleam of hope pervades the philanthropic mind, that ere long the legislature of a free and enlightened country will interfere with redoubled energy in behalf of the violated rights of humanity, and remove the foul stain that blots the European character. We ought ever to keep in mind, that what is morally wrong, can never be politically right. It has been asserted by many, that the condition, and manner of treatment of the slaves at the Cape, is better and preferable to that which they experience in other European settlements. Are the Dutch settlers at the Cape more alive to the feelings of humanity than those of other countries? Are they more attentive to the little wants of their slaves, or does a greater degree of confidence subsist between both parties, than

is to be found elsewhere? Are their labors less severe, or less scrupulously exacted? While the characters of men are so various and diversified, those under their immediate control must experience, more or less, bad treatment, according to the different humors and tempers of their masters. The African planters are not, indeed, over burdened with these finer sensibilities of our nature, which at times occasion a few alterations from rectitude, yet often prove an exhaustless source of delight.

The Malay and Mosambique slaves principally compose those of the Cape. The former are distinguished by their copper color; and the latter by a jet black, and thick lips. The Malay, cruel and revengeful in his disposition, is allowed to possess a better capacity for instruction, and when taught a trade, becomes a source of profit to his master.—The Mosambique slave has a dull, inanimated appearance strongly stamped upon him, indicating, as it were, an inferiority of intellect. As these are less dangerous from the tameness of their nature, and more apt to become attached to their
masters,

masters, they form a very numerous class of the Cape slaves.

A number of these poor wretches are daily employed in carrying burdens of fire-wood to town, borne across their shoulders. Towards evening the great road leading into town is crowded with returning slaves, almost exhausted under their loads. For this they travel about ten or twelve miles. It is astonishing with what ease they move under their burdens, and it is no unusual thing for them, to trundle them along the greatest part of the way. When they leave their master's house in the morning, they are provided with some bread, and *sheep's-tail* to supply the place of butter. A portion of dried fish is sometimes added, to enrich their repast. The wood that is thus conveyed to town, is either consumed in their master's family, or disposed of to his advantage. The harassed negro has probably next morning, at day-break, the same journey to re-commence, furnished with the same meagre fare, and the same heavy burden to totter under. Such runaway slaves, as have taken refuge amidst the rugged caverns of the neighbour-

ing mountains, are fed by their companions from town, who willingly share with them their scanty meal.

Among the ills incidental to a state of slavery, we may take into the account, that of passing from one master to another. Here there is an ever-shifting scene of all kinds of property, and the poor slave is destined to experience a similar transfer. On the embarrassment, or death of his master, it may indeed sometimes happen, that the slave profits by the change, but this is regulated by the chapter of accidents. Numbered among the live-stock of the family, upon the death of their masters, they are immediately handed about in the bill of sale, and when sold, the profits are as quickly laid hold of by the remaining branches of the family, in their eagerness to share the property left them. Age and length of service, domestic attachments, or any other binding ties, are but too often totally disregarded. No considerations of this kind can secure them from coming to the hammer. It is common to behold aged parents, with their families around them, exposed to public vendition.

dition. The colonists at the Cape seem remarkably fond of frequenting those sales which constitute, in the opinion of many, one of their chief amusements. The ladies possess an equal desire of resorting to them, and are not scrupulously delicate in observing those pitiable objects in a state of nudity. Would the ladies of our country acquire any degree of enjoyment in witnessing scenes of this kind? I flatter myself not. However willing to allow the Cape ladies credit for every personal charm, yet I cannot avoid remarking, that (in my humble apprehension) the accustoming themselves to such barbarous spectacles, must in some manner tend to eradicate those finer feelings of our nature so peculiarly apposite and becoming the female character. The glistening eye of sensibility, that gives its willing tribute to the scene of sorrow, or to the tale of woe, possesses in itself something of a charm far more attractive than the happiest assemblage of external beauties accompanying a callous or unfeeling heart.

Adieu.

LETTER IX.

The subject continued—Beauty of the female slaves—Their love of dress, &c.—An intercourse between them and their masters rendered the source of profit—Daughters of families exposed to danger by these attendants—Severity of the Dutch masters—Riches can palliate the most heinous crimes—Slaves constitute the entire support of the families to which they belong—Anecdote of a planter and a slave boy.

I RESUME the subject of my last letter, for I remember well, when about to leave the happy shores of Britain, where freedom reigns, and to depart for the southern extremity of Africa, the benevolence of your mind prompted you to request that I would make such observations on the state of the slaves in this colony as my situation might enable me. From the influence of early prejudices, together with the ideas of our
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riper years, we are less apt to consider it as a crime, that a class of men, differing in complexion from ourselves, should for a series of ages have been condemned to slavery. When, in our intercourse with the world, we observe their sufferings, and the burdens imposed upon them, we easily persuade ourselves, that their inferiority in the scale of beings, justifies the exercise of severity towards them, and sanctions the traffic in human flesh; but when we see condemned to a state of slavery such as approximate the color of Europeans, we naturally become alarmed, and feel it as an insult offered to our species. What has led me into these reflections, is the number of the latter description to be met with at the Cape. From the fair European to the black Mosambique, you will perceive every intermediate gradation of color;—to this we may add a variety of features blended together, partaking, in some degree, the characteristic traits of the vast assemblage of different tribes and nations to be met with at the Cape.

— The

The female slaves are particularly fair in their complexions, and are not destitute of charms to the sensual eye. Fond of dress, and equally ambitious to attract attention, they are seen on a Sunday parading the streets in all the tawdry finery of a modern courtesan. From their connection with Europeans, which is connived at by their masters, we need no longer be surprized at the fairness of their complexions. An intercourse of this kind becomes a profitable concern to the master of the family, by an addition (if we may be allowed the expression) to his live-stock. Amidst this field of libertinism, it frequently happens that the daughters of the family are not entirely exempt from danger. Being constantly attended by these female slaves, who enjoy their confidence, and enter into habits of familiarity with them, they unavoidably become a dangerous snare to entrap the young mind;—thus the bias they receive in their youth, progressively expands into those little indelicacies of sentiment and manners, that by them open to misconstruction, and the censure of the world.

The

The Dutch have been rarely behind their neighbours in the exercise of severity in their eastern possessions, where their peculiar interest or policy required it. In the immediate neighbourhood of the waggon-road leading into town, the sad and melancholy spectacle may be daily witnessed of the mouldering bodies of poor black wretches, hung up *in terrorem* to the travellers to and from the country. In a conspicuous part of the town the gibbet is erected, and those other engines of torture that were frequently recurred to as a punishment previous to the arrival of the English. The unhappy wretch about to be launched into eternity, was broken upon the wheel, but those horrid cruelties have been now laid aside. Do we find from the history of mankind, that in employing those engines of torture, the prevention of crimes, (which ought to be the scope and end of all punishment) is more fully attained? There has hardly ever been an instance of the public execution of a colonist! That the white and black man should suffer the same punishment for the self-same crime, would be deemed by the

Dutch at the Cape a political abuse, tending to defeat the ends of justice. Riches can palliate crimes of the deepest dye, and purchase respect to the perpetrator.

Perhaps, in few European settlements, do slaves sell so high. They constitute, in fact, the support of the family to which they belong. From the sweat of their brow, gold is distilled into the pockets of their master; and from the easy manner in which many of the Cape residents are subsisted, we may in some degree account for the inactivity and indolence that pervade the whole. The labors of the slave, being thus a source of wealth to the family, we may naturally conclude that every care is taken of his existence. When a fit of sickness seizes the slave, the whole house become alarmed;—if he dies, tears are shed, not for the mere death of the unhappy wretch, but for the loss of the *rix-dollars* which they derived from his labor. So strongly is this idea of property rooted in the master, that the slave is not allowed to possess the common feelings of his nature. It is from the observance of little traits of character, which, by the
bye,

bye, come not amiss to the pen of a gleaner, that we are enabled to form correct conclusions on the subject. Having one day visited a planter in the neighbourhood of our camp, I went to see a hyena, that had been caught the preceding night in one of those snares of which I gave you some description in a former letter. A slave boy, who had been more forward than the rest in teasing the poor animal, and who, from boldness in approaching him, had been somewhat in danger, was immediately sent away by one of the family with the following consolatory reprimand, delivered in all the guttural vehemence of the language in which he spoke, — ‘*Was he aware, that if he chanced to be torn in pieces by the hyena, that his master would sustain the irreparable loss of five hundred rix dollars?*’ Whether a sense of danger, or the above sound reasoning, was of greater use, I cannot venture to say; however, the forwardness of the slave boy received a complete check. In this manner does the powerful voice of self-interest sweep, like the head-long torrent, every thing before it.

May the genius of philanthropy ever attend my friend; and may the warm effusions of disinterested friendship wipe from his bosom every anxious care that dares to invade it. In the mean time,

Adieu.

LETTER X.

Further remarks on slavery—The origin of this great evil considered—Slavery, as it existed among the ancients—Formerly the punishment of crimes—The consequence of insolvency—Wives and children frequently sold in the latter case—The arbitrary power which the chief of a family possessed over his children and slaves—Parents selling their children, another ground of slavery among the ancients—This unnatural custom expressly forbidden by the Mosaical law.

THE unfortunate class of mankind, who, by *Christians*, are doomed to perpetual slavery, is in general disregarded by the observers of men and manners, and not considered worthy the attention of the sons of ease and affluence, to whom fortune, or rather Providence, has been more favorable.

We are all too prone to look slightly over those evils which we do ourselves endure, but which, nevertheless, sit not the more lightly on the wretched sufferers. It is only the benevolent heart that can feel another's woe—that can resolve to investigate the scenes of human misery, and contemplate the afflictions of his fellow-mortals with an eye of commiseration—that can ever let the scenes of slavery attract his attention. For my own part, I did not think the task which your benevolent curiosity imposed upon me, so irksome as I have on experience found it, nor once considered what melancholy emotions would arise in my own mind on contemplating the misfortunes of suffering humanity.

I have, however, undertaken a task which my own heart would not have permitted me to avoid, even if I had not bound myself by promise to my friend, and, in the course of my occasional remarks, have, in a loose and desultory manner, communicated in my two last letters the observations and reflections which my own feelings have prompted me to make on the evils

evils which Europe has, for her own interest-entailed on the hapless sons of Africa. I was in hopes that more agreeable scenes, and observations of a more pleasing nature, would soon have furnished something amusing for my epistolary correspondence, but an unexpected interval of inaction and leisure, has at present prevented me from visiting the dispersed farms of this extensive colony, and of entertaining you with an account of my gleanings in the interior of southern Africa.

This moment of leisure I have employed in extending my observations and reflections on the unhappy system of slavery, which has so long and so extensively prevailed, and been productive of such an accumulated mass of evils to mankind. I have not in this investigation relied solely on my own observations, and my own judgment, but have occasionally consulted the best authors who have treated on the subject. With many of these I know you are not unacquainted, but perhaps they have not made so lively an impression on your mind, as they have on mine, while

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every day affords me an opportunity of seeing the verification of their recitals, and the justness of their remarks. I know your feeling heart will accompany your friend in tracing the origin, the causes, and consequences of one of the greatest evils exhibited in the moral system; and if the dreary and disgusting view excite in your breast some melancholy sensations, they will be dispelled, and your mind will be exhilarated by the pleasing prospect that slavery must be gradually approaching towards its extinction.

The vast theatre of the moral world does not, among all its diversified scenes, exhibit a more disgusting spectacle than the existence of slavery, that odious and detestable system, which gives to one man so undue and unnatural a power over another. Equality among men is a chimera formed in the imagination of enthusiastic reformers; an ideal thing pleasing in an abstract theory, but incompatible with the plan of Divine Providence in the constitution of the moral system. In their origin, it is true, all men are equal, but in their

powers, natural as well as acquired, they are very unequal, and Nature has varied their talents as much as fortune, or rather Providence has diversified their condition. Some men are as evidently born to govern, as others to obey. Due subordination must, therefore, be maintained between the governors and the governed, otherwise the bonds of civil society will be relaxed, and no numerous community can long subsist in tranquillity. This is the chain which links together all civilized society, and is the foundation and support of all rational liberty. Slavery, on the contrary, that odious and abominable system, which renders one man the property of another, is the degradation of humanity, and a direct violation of the laws of Nature.

To bring forward to distinct inspection, the circumstances of that system, as it has existed among the ancients and moderns; to trace its history; to examine the principles on which it has been founded and carried on; to develop its causes, and display its effects; to endeavour to demonstrate the expediency and practicability of its abolition,

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is my peculiar aim at present. In the course of the investigation, a comparison will be made between a state of slavery, as it existed among the ancients, and the modern system of negro slavery.

Slavery has existed in one part of the world or another, in every age since the time when men first began to be collected in numbers, and regular communities were formed. It is well known that it existed among the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Jews, the Greeks, and the Romans, and there is little room to doubt of its prevalence among all other nations of antiquity.

The circumstances from which it originated, and the principles on which it was founded, were different. Sometimes slavery was the punishment of crimes, as it is now, in some instances, among most nations; but with this difference, that in the modern nations (of Europe at least,) delinquents condemned to slavery are employed in the service of the state, and commonly for a limited time; whereas, among the ancients, they were generally sold to individuals,

either natives or foreigners. This kind of slavery has been sanctioned by most legislators, and, in its principle, does not appear unjust; at least, in civilized nations, where criminals have the privilege of a legal trial; and such a mode of punishment, properly regulated, may have a salutary influence on the morals of those who have rendered themselves obnoxious to it, and prove ultimately beneficial to the state.

Another principle of slavery was, the consequence of insolvency. The debtor who was unable to satisfy the legal demands of his creditor, was generally condemned to be his slave, and to satisfy, as much as lay in his power, pecuniary claims by personal services. This law admitted of different modifications and regulations at different times, and in different countries. Sometimes the debtor himself only, and sometimes his wife and children along with him were delivered up to slavery; sometimes, also, they were sold with him in cases of criminal delinquency. This kind of procedure involving the innocent in the same punishment with the guilty, was diametrically

metrically opposite to every principle of justice and reason, and was founded on a very erroneous principle of ancient jurisprudence, which considered a man's wives and children as a part of his property, and equally so as his cattle. In the ages of remote antiquity, in most countries the chief of a family possessed the power of life and death over his children, as well as over his slaves. The laws established by Romulus, immediately after the building of Rome, gave to every father the absolute power of life and death over his children, and this exorbitant authority of parents continued some ages among the Romans; the father could put his children to death, sell them into slavery, or punish them as he pleased. The laws could not call him to any account on that subject. The same principle prevailed in some degree among the Jews; the authority of parents over their children was very great, but it was placed under legal restrictions. They did not, in their private capacity, possess the power of being the arbitrators of life and death to their children; and could only exercise it over such as were refractory

refractory and disobedient by an accusation and proof before the magistrates, and in virtue of a judicial sentence pronounced by them.

Another ground of slavery among the ancients, was the custom of parents selling their children, which proceeded from the same erroneous principle of jurisprudence, and the same exorbitant power of parents over their children already mentioned, an unnatural authority, which existed in most of the nations of antiquity, and even at this day in some uncivilized countries; an authority so inimical to society, and so pregnant with mischievous consequences, that if its operations were not incessantly counteracted by parental affection, might be extremely prejudicial to a nation, and eventually cause its depopulation and ruin. Indeed, we may suppose, that nothing but a presumption that parental tenderness would prevent any abuse of this power, could have induced the legislators of antiquity to leave it so long in the hands of parents. These laws and customs, however, although they long remained in force in different nations, have been gradually exploded

ploded by the progress of civilization and religion, and are no longer found, except in countries not yet emerged from barbarism. It is not unworthy of remark, that this unnatural custom of selling children, never existed among the Jews, but was expressly forbidden by the Mosaical law, which prohibited the sale of an Hebrew to any foreign nation, and even limited to the year of release the servitude of those, who by reason of insolvency, became slaves to their creditors.

Amidst the dreary prospects of slavery, those historical remarks, besides illustrating the subject, and exhibiting a more extensive view of the circumstances with which it has been at different times connected, will tend to dissipate the gloom with which the mind of my friend will be liable to be overcast in contemplating those scenes of human misery.

Adieu.

LETTER XI.

The history of slavery continued—The capture of prisoners, its chief origin—Treatment of slaves in ancient times.

I AGAIN resume my pen to excite the benevolent emotions of the feeling mind of my friend. Your historical knowledge will enable you to accompany me in developing a far more fertile source, and more extensive system of slavery among the ancients, than that which arose from the sale of innocent children, and the punishment of insolvency. The reflections it will excite, cannot but be of a melancholy nature; but, while they rouse the feeling heart to commiseration, they inspire us with sentiments of gratitude to that Divine Providence, which

which has fixed our lot in a land of freedom, under the fostering influence of the British constitution.

The causes enumerated in my last letter, all contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the introduction and continuance of slavery among the ancients; but the principal and most productive source of that greatest as well as most unnatural of human evils, was the capture of prisoners in time of war. The mode of carrying on war among the ancients, was cruel and sanguinary. When a war was terminated by treaty, we seldom find any provision made for the ransom or exchange of prisoners in the primitive times. During a series of ages, the Romans were so far from ransoming their prisoners, that every Roman who was so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of the enemy, was esteemed legally dead, and his property passed to his heir at law; and it was not until some centuries after the building of Rome, that a law was passed to allow the ransoming a Roman prisoner. In the ancient wars, when a province or country was conquered without treaty or capitulation, the
conqueror

subdued Canaanites, this exterminatory principle of warfare was, except in some instances, in a great measure laid aside, and the remnant of the subdued natives of Canaan, were suffered to live on condition of paying tribute, and furnishing levies for the public works, as they did for the temple, and other magnificent structures erected by Solomon. This was generally the mode of treating the conquered among all the ancient nations; but the condition of those people, thus reduced to a state of national servitude, was widely different from that of prisoners taken in battle, and in towns stormed and sacked by the armies, who were generally either put to the sword by military law, or else sold into slavery, unless the conqueror, for political reasons, thought proper to dispose of them in some other way, as it sometimes happened to be the case.

Very little is known in regard to the particular modes of treating slaves in the times of remote antiquity. Among the Greeks, slaves were exceedingly numerous, and
often

often very hardly treated. Mr. Gibbon makes, in this respect, an observation which seems contradictory to reason, but is unfortunately verified by experience, that in those states where the subject enjoys the greatest share of liberty, the system of slavery has been carried to the greatest extent, and that slaves have been there treated with the greatest severity. Although the truth of this observation be exemplified and corroborated by the conduct of the Greeks and Romans, yet this conduct could not be an effect of the liberal system of their governments, but must have proceeded from some other causes.

It is, however, from the histories of Greece and Rome, that we learn the vast extent to which this odious system was carried, the principles upon which it was founded, the means by which it was supported, the extreme rigour with which it was at first exercised, its gradual relaxation, and the circumstances which led to its final abolition in Europe.

We must, from more modern records,

and a new order of things, trace its origin and progress in America. My friend will accompany me in taking the melancholy retrospect.

Adieu.



LETTER XII.

Number of slaves in the Roman empire—Their immense number accounted for—Their cruel treatment during the first ages of the Republic—Their situation ameliorated by the progress of civilization and the introduction of luxury.

THE number of the slaves in the Roman empire is computed by Mr. Gibbon, an historian whose keen penetration, accuracy, and indefatigable industry, authorises us to believe that he has carefully investigated those matters, to have amounted to no less than one half of the inhabitants of the whole empire; and as the Roman empire is, according to the most moderate calculation, supposed not to have contained less than one hundred and twenty millions of people, the number of slaves could not amount to

less than sixty millions, a fact which strikes humanity with horror, and exhibits a dreadful and affecting display of the tyranny of man over his fellow mortals. This astonishing multitude of unhappy beings, of unfortunate rational creatures excluded from the privileges of society, and deprived of the common rights of mankind, consisted principally of prisoners taken in war, and their posterity; for, although some few had been purchased from foreign countries, the general mass of Roman slaves were persons of the former description.

The Romans, during the whole period of the existence of their republican government, were almost continually engaged in hostilities with the neighbouring nations. That military republic, intent on war, on rapine, and on conquest, allowing her citizens no repose, was incessantly directing her arm against the neighbouring states; every victory added fresh numbers to the daily increasing multitudes of Roman slaves; and as slavery was always entailed from generation to generation, if we consider the increasing posterity of the slaves, and the augmentation

augmentation of their numbers by the daily accession of prisoners taken in war, we shall not wonder at the amazing number of slaves in the Roman empire.

During the first ages of the republic, this unfortunate class of people were treated with extreme severity. Totally excluded from the protection and benefit of the laws, they were liable to the most rigorous punishment. The state, apprehensive of their numbers, and considering their desperate situation, enacted severe and sanguinary laws against them for the most trivial crimes; and, indeed, the Roman government could not use too much precaution against so numerous a body of men, so hardly treated, so daring, and so desperate. Those fierce and warlike barbarians, reduced from a state of military independence and warlike depredation, to a life of drudging and laborious servitude, were always suspected as dangerous to the state, and sometimes were actually found to be so. On this consideration they were put under the most severe and strict regulations, and their slightest irregularities punished with extreme and merciless severity;—be-

sides, by the regulations of the state, every master, in his private capacity, had the absolute power of life and death over his own slaves. This absolute power of the master continued in force until the reign of the emperor Adrian, who deprived him of this unreasonable authority, and put the slave under the protection of the laws about A. D. 120, and 872 years after the building of Rome.

But, although the laws had not, during so long a space of time, done any thing in favor of that unfortunate class of men, the progress of civilization, and the introduction of luxury, had operated an important change in the circumstances of their condition; and instead of being constantly occupied in the most laborious drudgery, great numbers of them were employed in the houses of the wealthy citizens as domestics, agents, and ministers of luxury.

As I shall seize the earliest opportunity of resuming this interesting subject, for the present I shall bid my friend adieu.

LETTER XIII.

Historical remarks continued, setting forth the improved condition of the Roman slaves--The grand source of slavery exhausted--Their sufferings mitigated by the introduction of Christianity--Slavery in Rome abolished by the Gothic conquests--Feudal system of slavery established by the northern nations--Overthrown by the extension of commerce--Some traces thereof in Poland and Russia--Slavery introduced in the east--Prisoners of war made slaves by both parties in the time of the Crusades.

THE prospect begins somewhat to brighten, and we have a flattering view of the ameliorated condition of the slaves of ancient Rome. Every circumstance which exhibits any alleviation of human misery, gives pleasing sensations to the feeling heart, and will, I am sure, have the happiest effects on the mind of my friend. I think that I see his

countenance exhilarated in contemplating the improved condition of the Roman slaves, and his joy still increased in reflecting on what the illustrious senate of Great Britain has already done towards alleviating the evils of modern slavery. It is a pleasing reflection that the history of slavery, horrid as it is to read, admits of some pages less gloomy than the rest, and especially that the British parliament, by its humane regulations, has so eminently contributed to brighten the volume. We have now a more pleasing retrospect of the gradual amelioration of slavery; and a prospect still more agreeable opens before us, which leads us to expect, at a due time, its total extinction. I shall endeavour to entertain you for a few moments with a continuation of my historical remarks.

After the reign of the emperor Adrian, the laws were more and more favorable to the slaves, as were also the manners and feelings of the people, as well as the general circumstances of the empire. From the very first establishment of the imperial government, the emperors had cultivated a more
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pacific system than the republic had ever aimed at; and, as the wars became less frequent, more humanely conducted, and of shorter duration, with much longer intervals of peace under the imperial than under the republican system, the grand source of slavery was in a great measure exhausted. The natural consequence of this change was, that the numerous mass of slaves in the empire not receiving constant supplies, as before, by the capture of prisoners, the life of a slave was esteemed of greater value, and his person in every respect considered of greater importance. That numerous body of men did not then consist so much of captives taken in war, as of the posterity of those who had undergone that fate, and these being domesticated among the Romans, had acquired more peaceable and regular habits. Not retaining the indignant resentment, nor inheriting the fierce and ungovernable dispositions of their ancestors, they were become faithful servants. Thus, by a concurrence of various circumstances, the system of slavery was gradually softened, and the condition of slaves exceedingly meliorated.

rated. The gradual introduction of Christianity among the Romans, and at last its establishment in the reign of Constantine, before the middle of the third century, had also a powerful operation in favor of that unhappy and oppressed part of mankind. Indeed no true Christian, although he might chastise his slaves for their faults, could ever treat them with capricious and unprovoked cruelty. However, notwithstanding the happy effects of Christianity, and the favorable operation of other circumstances, a mitigated system of slavery still continued in the Roman empire till the Goths, and other northern nations, by a long continued succession of the most bloody and destructive wars that ever desolated and depopulated Europe, at length totally subverted the colossal power of the Roman empire, and overwhelming all in one general conquest, confounded every distinction. We are not acquainted with all the particular circumstances relative to these matters, but from a general view it appears, that these Gothic conquests, although destructive to the arts and sciences, to literature and civilization, had

had yet, among all the evils they produced, at least this good effect, of contributing to the abolition of that odious system of slavery which had so long existed, and prevailed to such an extent among the ancients, especially the Romans; but these northern nations, instead of the old, established a new, though less rigorous system of slavery, known by the denomination of the feudal system, which, by leaving an exorbitant power in the hands of the nobles, reduced the commons to a state little better than downright slavery. The nobles, taking advantage of every commotion, in process of time increased their power so much in many parts of Europe, as to set their sovereigns at defiance, and to reduce the whole mass of the people to the most abject state of villainage:—thus, instead of reposing under the guardian care of the magistrate, the people were deprived of the protection of the laws, and the nobles disdaining their authority, trusted solely to arms. This is a shocking picture of the state of society during the period alluded to; but such it was, and such it continued until the progress of civilization, and the extension

extension of commerce, concurred gradually to weaken, and finally to overthrow this system of government, or rather of anarchy, by giving wealth and importance to the commons, and inspiring the nobles with moderation and humanity. These favorable circumstances were carefully attended to by the princes of Europe, who let slip no opportunity of depressing the power of the nobles and raising that of the commons, for it may be observed that a monarchical government properly regulated, is of all others the most attentive to the rights of the subject, and the most favorable to the lower ranks of the people. This great undertaking, the destruction of the feudal system, was at length accomplished by granting charters to corporate bodies, and various other measures, but above all, by granting permission to the nobles to sell, and to the commons to purchase land, which proved a measure in reality advantageous, and in most countries agreeable to both parties, as the increase of commerce, and the introduction of luxury, had thrown considerable wealth into the hands of the commons, and the nobles by
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having the privilege of selling their lands, and also by enfranchising their vassals, and converting personal service, and rents in kind, into stipulated payments in money, were enabled to live more comfortably.

There are now but few traces of the feudal system remaining in Europe, except in Poland and Russia: indeed, it never rose to a more exorbitant height in any country than in Poland; but at this time many of the Polish nobles, impressed with sentiments of humanity, and a knowledge of their true interests, have enfranchised their vassals, and have found the measure equally conducive to the happiness of the peasants, and to their own advantage, by improving the cultivation, and augmenting the annual value of their estates: and the sovereigns of Russia (especially the late illustrious empress, Catharine) have, by many prudent regulations, begun to bring about the emancipation of the peasantry of that extensive empire.

The west had not emerged from the confusion into which it had been thrown by the
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subversion of the Roman power, when the east was astonished by the appearance of a new political and religious phenomenon, Mahomet and his successors. The Calyphs shook the eastern, or Constantinopolitan empire, to its centre; conquered Persia, Egypt, and the other northern parts of Africa, the kingdom of Spain, and several of the islands in the Mediterranean. It does not, however, appear, that those conquerors imitated the Romans in making slaves of their prisoners. The terms they offered to Christians were conversion to Mahometanism, tribute, or death by martial law. To Pagans they offered no other conditions than conversion or the sword, without leaving them the alternative of tribute; but, after the extinction of the Caliphate, the nations who founded their greatness upon its ruins, especially the Turks, adopted in its fullest extent the custom of making slaves of prisoners of war. The Christians in the time of the crusades retaliated, by adopting the same system, and inhumanity and enthusiasm on both sides, produced new scenes of horror.

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In the laws of Godfrey of Bouillion, king of Jerusalem, in the commencement of the eleventh century, twelve oxen, or three slaves, were deemed an equivalent for one war horse;—thus, we see, a man was valued at no more than a third part of the price of a horse. At this time, the Turks are become more civilized, and conduct their wars generally on the same principles as the nations of Christendom, and the barbarous practice of making slaves of prisoners is chiefly confined to the Algerines, and other piratical states of Barbary. Slavery, however, is not yet abolished among the Turks, the Persians, and some other nations of Asia; but they content themselves with purchasing slaves, mostly children, from Georgia, Circassia, and other countries, where parents still possess the unjust power, and retain the unnatural practice of selling them.

Having thus exhibited a general view of this unnatural tyranny of man over man, and traced as concisely as possible its origin and causes, with the circumstances of its existence among the ancients at different periods of time, we are now brought to con-

template that train of events, that coincidence of circumstances, and series of causes, which gave rise to the system of negro slavery. Here I shall at present bid my friend adieu.
