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DELIVERED AT

A FREE CONFERENCE

BETWEEN THE HONOURABLE

THE COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY OF JAMAICA,

Held the 19th of November, 1789.

ON THE SUBJECT OF

MR. WILBERFORCE'S PROPOSITIONS IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

CONCERNING THE

S L A V E T R A D E .

By BRYAN EDWARDS, Esq.

MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE SAID ISLAND.

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&c. &c.

St. Jago de la Vega, 19th Nov. 1789.

THE joint Committee being assembled in the Council Chamber, Mr. Edwards one of the Managers, on the part of the Assembly, desired that a Report which had lately been sent up to the Council from the House, on the subject of the Slave Trade, might be read; and it was read accordingly, in the words following :

“ MR. SPEAKER,

“ The Committee appointed to enquire into and report to the House their opinion concerning the steps necessary to be taken in consequence of the information received from the Agent of this Island of the proceedings had in the House of Commons, during the last session of Parliament in respect of the Slave Trade, do find, that, on the 13th day of May last, certain Propositions were brought forward in the House of Commons by William Wilberforce, Esq. Representative for the county of York, the tendency of which, as he plainly and explicitly declared, was to lay the foundation for an act of the British Parliament for discontinuing and preventing (directly or indirectly) the further importation of African Slaves into this, and the rest of British Sugar Colonies in the West-Indies.

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" The Committee observe, with equal surprize and concern, that Mr. Wilberforce was strenuously supported and encouraged, on this occasion, by many persons in high trust and authority under the Crown : and in a very particular manner by the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is said not only to have expressed himself in very strong terms as an advocate for an immediate and unqualified abolition of the Slave Trade, but also to have declared his opinion, that no compensation is to be expected by the parties who may be sufferers in consequence of such an abolition ; a declaration dreadfully alarming to the proprietors of estates in this and the rest of the Sugar Islands, who, together with our numerous creditors, mortgagees, annuants, and others, trusting to a long-established system, strengthened by royal charters, and confirmed by numerous acts of Parliament, have expended immense sums upon lands whose value depends solely upon the present mode of cultivation, which cannot possibly be carried on without a regular supply of labourers from Africa.

" The Committee observe further, by the Minutes of the House of Commons, that, on Tuesday the 23d of June, the order of the day for the consideration of the petitions in respect to the Slave Trade was discharged, after which the House resolved, that, early in the next session of Parliament, they will proceed to take into further consideration the circumstances of the said petitions.

" As, therefore, it is probable that the House of Commons will, soon after its next meeting, continue to collect evidence, as well on the subject of the said trade, as respecting the present state of this and the rest of his Majesty's Sugar Colonies in the West Indies, the Committee are of opinion, that it becomes indispensably necessary for the House, either by an Humble Address and Memorial to his Majesty in Council, or in such other mode as the House, in its wisdom, shall judge proper, to vindicate the honour and humanity of the good people of this Island, and also to point out in what manner, and to what extent, the interests of this community will be affected, should the future supply of labourers from Africa be suppressed by the authority of the British Parliament ; for it appears to the Committee, that the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer above referred to, must have arisen either from a total unacquaintance with our circumstances in respect of population and agriculture, (especially as to the vast tracts of lands in
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this island remaining uncultivated, for which we have long paid and continue to pay a quit-rent to the Crown) or from a belief that the foul and ignominious aspersions which have been brought against us, by misinformed or malignant writers in Great Britain, of improper and inhuman treatment of our slaves, are founded in truth, and that having no mercy on others, we are entitled to no justice for ourselves.

" The Committee are of opinion, that the concurrence of both branches of our Legislature will give weight to whatever resolutions and measures may be adopted on this occasion. They submit therefore to the House, whether it may not be proper, in the first place, to request a free conference with the Council on this important business ; not doubting that the joint Committee will recommend such proceedings as may be suited to the magnitude of a question, which involves in it our property, our characters, and every interest that is dear and valuable to ourselves, and our posterity."

This report being read, Mr. Edwards addressed the Chairman of the Committee of the Council as follows :

MR. CHAIRMAN,

THE considerations which have induced the House of Assembly to desire a free conference with your Hon. Board, are sufficiently manifest from the report which has just now been read. In compliance with the wishes and representations of our friends in Great Britain ; in justice to our own characters, and that our posterity may not blush at the remembrance of their ancestors ; it is thought necessary, in the present emergency, that both branches of the Legislature should co-operate in defence of our injured honour, and the protection of our property lawfully acquired. Every thing that is dear and important to us all, is staked upon the issue of the question now before the British Parliament ; and it is our peculiar infelicity, that on this occasion, some of the best friends of Freedom and Virtue openly concur in and support the uncharitable misconstructions and malignant efforts of the envious and illiberal. To the language of those unchristian zealots who, without having the least knowledge of the subject, assail us with obloquy and outrage, I would disdain to give an answer. Silent contempt is the only proper return to their calumnies: But
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there are men of a very different character, who are led to think hardly of us; men who certainly have not, nor can have, any improper bias on their minds arising from malevolence or envy, and who are actuated solely by a noble zeal in the cause of freedom and humanity. Unhappily unacquainted with the manners of the Colonists, the term *Slaveholder* conveys to them an idea of every thing that is oppressive, rapacious, remorseless, and bloody minded. Persons of this character it is our duty and our interest to set right; for, next to the secret approving testimony of our own hearts (*the mens sibi conscia recti*) it is the greatest enjoyment of a good mind to possess the approbation and esteem of men of sense and virtue.

Sir, the Report from the Assembly which has been read to you, embraces two leading objects; the first of these, are certain Propositions offered to the consideration of the House of Commons by a very respectable Member, which are avowedly intended as the ground work of an act of the British Parliament, for a total and unqualified abolition of the Slave Trade: The second, is the declaration of a Minister in high trust and authority under the Crown, expressly signifying, that no compensation is to be expected by those who shall be sufferers in consequence of such a revolution in the present system of our commerce and agriculture.

Of the authenticity of Mr. Wilberforce's Propositions there can be no possible doubt; but, Sir, I confess I should hesitate to believe the declaration imputed to the Minister, had we no better authority for it than newspapers and anonymous pamphlets. He is said to have expressed himself in reply to Mr. Dempster, who had strenuously contended for the necessity and justice of indemnification, as follows: "Mr. Pitt rose again, not, he said, to discuss the subject a single moment, but lest the House should go away with an idea that he acceded to the proposition of the Hon. Gentleman under the gallery, who had suggested the necessity of making a compensation for any losses that might be incurred by the people of Liverpool, or *elsewhere*; he thought it necessary to state, that he did not acquiesce in that idea; nor, even should the fact turn out that any losses of the sort in question should be incurred, could he reconcile the listening to any claim of that kind, and giving a compensation, to any one principle of legislation."

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I say, Sir, I should have doubted very much, that a Minister of so enlightened a mind, and so excellent a disposition, as I believe Mr. Pitt to possess, had pronounced a declaratory resolution of such magnitude and importance, in so sudden and hasty a manner, were it not that the pamphlet in which it is contained (in the very words that I have quoted) has been transmitted to us authenticated by our Agent; who has likewise sent us a string of Resolutions of the Merchants and Planters in London, in which the same declaration of the Minister is recited, and animadverted upon in very strong language.

Sir, if any one principle in government and legislation is certain, it is this-- I give it in the words of Montesquieu ---that, "whenever the public good happens to be the matter in question, it is not for the advantage of the public to deprive an individual of his property, or even to trench the least part of it, by a law or political regulation. The public is, in this case, like an individual, who treats with an individual. Those who are injured, are entitled to indemnification."---This then being an established maxim in all civilized states, a general principle of political law, how forcibly ought it to prevail in the English Constitution in particular, under which, as we are vauntingly told by English historians and political writers, not only that *there is no wrong without a remedy*;---but even that *allegiance and protection are reciprocal duties!* Protection, it is true, may be forfeited by misconduct, and justly forfeited; but, in our case, what misconduct has been proved, and *when* have we failed in our allegiance? The fact is, that Mr. Pitt undoubtedly believes no injury will be done to us by the measure which his friend Mr. Wilberforce recommends;---that is, he believes, first, that the present number of negro labourers in the Sugar Colonies is fully sufficient to enable us to keep up our plantations without further supplies from Africa; secondly, that no decrease of the present number can happen, except by our own misconduct towards them.---(of course, he conceives that there is at this time no great disproportion between the sexes;---that our estates are already fully stocked, &c.) and finally, that we have no lands unsettled that are fit for cultivation.---All these data Mr. Pitt must either take for granted, and I suppose does take for granted, (for they are the very facts which the Propositions of Mr. Wilberforce are meant to establish) or he must think so very unfavourably of our general

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neral conduct, that we are utterly unworthy to continue in the enjoyment of our private acquisitions without controul or diminution, or to possess any other of those civil advantages for which we have resigned a part of our natural liberty. He must think, to use the words of the Report, that, "having no mercy on others, we are entitled to no justice for ourselves."

Whether Mr. Pitt's notions on the present subject arise from the want of proper information respecting our circumstances, or from a prejudice founded on our supposed misconduct, it is impossible for us absolutely to determine; but, in either case, it is incumbent on us to stand forward in defence both of our characters and our property. If he has been misinformed, it is our duty to give him more correct information: If he is prejudiced against us, it is our interest to remove his prejudices.—Mistake, Sir, and prejudice too, are common to us all; and the happiest of human beings, however favoured by nature and improved by education, however cautious and dispassionate in their general conduct and determinations, can plead no exemption from their influence. In the hopes of making some impression on a mind so capable of judging truly as that of this great Minister, I shall now proceed to investigate Mr. Wilberforce's Propositions at large. The discussion will necessarily lead me to resume the question of compensation; and I shall consider it with a reference to facts and circumstances, of which I verily believe both Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce are unapprized. The two subjects, though thus discriminated, bear so close a relation to each other, that it is not practicable to treat of one, without entering into a discussion of the other.

Sir, the propositions which we are to consider, are not the reveries of an obscure and ignorant individual; they are not the fanatical effusions of a mistaken zealot; neither are they founded on any theoretical systems of a speculative mind unacquainted with practical habits and living manners. They are respectable, as coming from a man whose virtues add dignity, and whose eloquence gives lustre to the English Senate; and they are formidable, as containing the sentiments of a vast majority of the people of Great Britain. They were therefore received with a solemnity suited to their importance; confessedly as the ground work of an act of Parliament in the ensuing session. Unhappily, Sir, Mr. Wilberforce possesses no personal acquaintance with

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with the Sugar Islands. Not having had the benefit of a local knowledge of our situation, circumstances and manners, he is liable to be misled by the misrepresentations of prejudiced or interested men, to whose authority he submits merely from the want of advantages, which those who have possessed them have perverted. Such, however, has been his caution, and such is his accuracy, that, as far as he goes, he is generally correct. He commonly asserts the truth, but not the *whole* truth. Had his information been more perfect, his candour is such, that I am persuaded he would not have suppressed it; although, in such case, his conclusions must have been widely different from those which he has offered to Parliament. It is a common case, Mr. Chairman; we daily see it—A partial display of facts furnishes *one* conclusion—a full statement, *another*. Our present business, therefore, is to meet Mr. Wilberforce on his own ground: admit his positions to be generally true; but demonstrate that there are other circumstances to be taken into the account, before a just and accurate conclusion can be drawn—I shall explain myself best by a case in point. Among other assertions, Mr. Wilberforce declares, that the Slave Trade destroys a great number of British seamen; and the declaration is undoubtedly right, so far as this; that many parts of the African coast are extremely unhealthy, and that a great number of men employed in the Slave Trade perish of diseases incident to the climate: but Mr. Wilberforce did not advert to a fact which abundantly counterbalances the loss. The fact I mean is, the actual augmentation of seamen in other branches of the British navigation, to the support of which the Guinea trade contributes in a very eminent degree; for instance, the herring and Newfoundland fisheries, those great nurseries of seamen; it being an unquestionable truth, that the negroes, in this island alone, consume of herrings and salted cod to the amount of 100,000 barrels annually! Surely, Mr. Chairman, unless this circumstance be brought forward, it is impossible that the Public can form a right judgement on the strength and solidity of Mr. Wilberforce's declaration.

The Propositions, Sir, are twelve in number; and they may be divided into three classes, each class comprehending subject matter for distinct and separate consideration. The first class relates principally to the number of Slaves annually carried from the coast of Africa, and the manner in which they become enslaved; tending to prove, that the

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Slave Trade must necessarily occasion frequent and cruel wars among the natives, encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud, and obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvement in Africa.

The second class relates to the destruction of British seamen employed in the Slave Trade; to the loss of negroes in the middle passage, and in the harbours of the West Indies between their arrival and day of sale; to the loss of newly-imported negroes within the first three years after their importation; and finally, to the causes by which natural increase, among the Slaves in the Sugar Islands, appears to be impeded.

The third class relates to negro population at different periods, principally in Jamaica and Barbadoes; tending to ascertain the annual excess of deaths above the births, and to shew, from certain calculations and assumptions, that no considerable or permanent inconvenience to the Planter would result from discontinuing the importation of African Slaves.

I shall consider each class in order; and I hope that no gentleman who hears me will be offended if I give it as my opinion, that the first class constitutes the strong part of Mr. Wilberforce's case. I am persuaded, that he has been very rightly informed as to the manner in which Slaves are generally procured. The intelligence I have collected from my own negroes abundantly confirms Mr. Wilberforce's account; and I have not the smallest doubt, that, in Africa, the effects of this trade are precisely such as he represents them to be. Sir, the whole, or greatest part, of that immense continent is a field of warfare and desolation; a wilderness, in which the inhabitants are wolves towards each other. That this scene of oppression, fraud, treachery and blood, if not originally occasioned, is *in part* (I will not say *wholly*) upheld, by the Slave Trade, I dare not dispute. Every man in the Sugar Islands may be convinced that it is so, who will enquire of any African Negroes, on their first arrival, concerning the circumstances of their captivity. The assertion, that a great many of these are criminals and convicts, is mockery and insult; nor can any thing be more fallacious than a comparative reference to the number of felons transported annually from England. Most of the crimes, for which offenders in Great Britain receive sentence of transportation, are incident only to a civilized state. Take away the offences created by the laws that relate to property,

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property, and few will remain. I am speaking to liberal and enlightened men, who will not yield to the loudest of our calumniators, in detestation and abhorrence of all acts of treachery and inhumanity. I hesitate not therefore to affirm, that, IF ALL THE NATIONS OF EUROPE WOULD CONCUR IN A DETERMINATION TO RELINQUISH THE SLAVE TRADE ALTOGETHER, IT OUGHT TO BE RELINQUISHED. I should, in such case, exclaim, "whatever WE may suffer, *fiat Justitia!*" But alas, so inveterate is the disease—so deeply rooted are its concomitant evils, that an attempt to perform a cure by the amputation of a single limb, will serve only to aggravate the symptoms, and heighten the malady. There was a time, I confess, when I thought otherwise; but fuller enquiry has corrected my notions. I am now, Sir, convinced in my conscience, that a sudden discontinuance of the trade *by one nation alone*, will not only be productive of no good effect; but, on the contrary, be attended with dreadful consequences both in Africa and the West Indies: and I will prove this assertion by such testimony and argument as, I think, will carry conviction to the most prejudiced mind.

First then, as to Africa. From the Report of the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council, now before me, it appears that the number of Africans purchased annually on the coast, is about 74,000; of which the French transport 20,000, the Dutch 4000, the Danes 2000, the Portuguese 10,000, and the English 38,000.—Our first enquiry therefore is, whether if Great Britain should relinquish all intercourse with this devoted country, and suppress the further introduction of negroes into her colonies, a less number of negroes (be they captives or convicts) would be brought down for sale in Africa? Admiral Edwards, who served on this station, and was on shore seven months at a time, has given his decided opinion, that, so long as other nations continue the trade, the number would *not* be diminished in the least; and a little reflection must convince us that his opinion is founded in reason and the nature of things. Among the commercial nations of Europe I admit that, in most cases of purchase or barter, the demand and the supply grow up together, and continue to regulate and support each other; but these are the arrangements of well-informed and civilized men. In Africa, Sir, the slave merchants possess no ideas of this kind, neither does the nature of their traffic allow of such regulations as are

dictated by foresight. When two African states are at war with each other, the aim of each undoubtedly is to destroy as many enemies, or seize on as great a number of captives, as it can. Of these unfortunate victims, all such as are able to travel, are commonly sent down to the sea coast for sale; the rest are massacred on the spot. The price indeed on the coast has been known to vary, as the market is more or less plentifully supplied; but so long as ships from Europe create a market, whether the price be high or low, it cannot, I think, be doubted, that wars will be as frequent as ever; and that the same acts of oppression, violence, and fraud, which are said to have been committed by princes on the subjects, and by individuals on each other, for the purpose of procuring Slaves for sale, will exist as usual, without regulation or restraint.

Let us now then enquire concerning the disposal of those unhappy wretches, who, being brought down for sale, are rejected by the European traders, either because the miserable victims are too old or too feeble for labour: and therefore unsaleable.—We shall find—(it is horrible to relate, but the fact is too notorious to be denied)—that, under such circumstances, they are very frequently, if not generally, put to death. The Slave merchant not having the means of maintaining his prisoners, who are commonly brought from a vast distance, makes no scruple to avow that it is his intention to destroy them, if they are not sold by a certain day; and *the work of death*, on such occasions, is sometimes performed in sight of our shipping. This account, which I have received from intelligent people who have been concerned in the trade, and spoke from personal knowledge, is abundantly confirmed in the Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council, particularly by the evidence therein, of Sir George Young, Messrs. Penny, Mahews, Newton, and Weuves.

From what has been thus stated, I conceive, Sir, the inference is clear and incontrovertible, that if the English alone discontinue the purchase of Slaves on the Coast of Africa, the other nations of Europe trading thither will have the choice and refusal of about 38,000 Negroes annually, more than they have at present. Of course, Slaves will become of much less value on the coast than they have hitherto been, and the African Slaveholder more regardless of the lives of his captives. In truth, with such an augmentation of their present supply, neither French, Dutch, Danes,

Danes, nor Portuguese, will purchase any negroes except such only as are called *prime* Slaves. The old, and the very young, the sickly and the feeble, will be scornfully rejected, and perhaps *twenty* miserable wretches will be considered as unsaleable then, and sacrificed accordingly, to *one* that is so considered, and sacrificed now.

Such, Mr. Chairman, would be the consequence in Africa. The effect which a partial abolition would probably have in our Sugar Islands is now to be considered; and here, Sir, I must, in the first place, observe, that it seems not to be known, or is not adverted to, in England, that our Sugar Plantations are not only very much understocked in general, but that there is scarce an estate in this Island that possesses a sufficient number of Negro women in proportion to the men. This is no fault of ours, Mr. Chairman, as we all know. Thus situated, there must necessarily happen a decrease of our Slaves, even under the mildest treatment, and enjoying the greatest plenty of wholesome food; of which indeed the Negroes of Jamaica have happily never been in want, except in those calamitous years when the hand of the Almighty desolated the country. In the second place, it must be remembered that most of our Sugar Estates, having been settled on credit, are burthened with heavy encumbrances to persons in Great Britain. Many Planters I believe are under covenants to consign thither, annually, certain specific quantities of Sugar and Rum. The effect, therefore, in this island of an unqualified abolition, would be this, that while the few persons, who have money at command would be waiting, and perhaps contriving, opportunities to stock their Plantations with the Slaves of their distressed and harrassed neighbours, the great majority of Planters would find themselves in a most cruel and uncomfortable situation; their estates already weak-handed, deprived of the possibility of selling their lands, and no means in their power of augmenting their stock of labourers by purchase; their creditors at the same time clamorous and importunate for produce, which can only be obtained by great exertions of labour. In such circumstances—what are they to do? I cannot better illustrate this part of my subject, Mr. Chairman, than by the case of the Dutch Planters of Essequebo and Demerary. By an impolitic interdiction of foreign Slave ships into those provinces, they are at this moment suffering the effects of a virtual abolition, and I will recite to you, in their

their own language, the account which they give of their situation.—It is transcribed from a late Memorial to the States General. “It is impossible, say the Petitioners, to inform your High Mightinesses of the real annual diminution of our slaves; but it is generally calculated at five in the hundred, or a twentieth part. This is little felt the first year: Nineteen remaining Negroes hardly perceive that they do the work which the preceding year employed twenty. But the second year, the same work falls to the share of eighteen; and, if another year passes without an augmentation by purchase, seventeen must do the work first allotted to twenty. This must give rise to discontent, desertion, and revolt; or if the Negroes put up patiently with this surcharge of labour, illness, and an earlier death, must be the consequence. Or lastly, if the planters seek to avoid all these inconveniences, they must gradually contract the limits of their plantations, and of course diminish their produce.” Fortunately, Sir, for us, the annual diminution of our Slaves is much less than among the Dutch; but the consequence of not having a further supply would be the same with us as with them, in a proportionate degree. The alternative which they point out, can be adopted only by men of independent circumstances. To a man with an encumbered estate, ruin seems, in either case, inevitable.

I have now, Sir, I trust, said enough (perhaps more than enough) concerning the first and most important class of Mr. Wilberforce's Propositions. The substance of my observations I have compressed into a single Resolution, which I shall beg leave to offer to the consideration of the joint Committee. Afterwards, I shall venture to propose some other Resolutions on the remainder of Mr. Wilberforce's system, to be corrected and disposed of as the joint Committee shall think proper. My first Resolution is this:

“Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the suppression, either direct or virtual, of the Slave Trade, by the British nation only, (other nations continuing the trade as usual) would not promote the purposes of humanity, either in respect of the negroes which are annually brought to the African markets for sale, or in regard to the Negroes at present in a state of slavery in this and the rest of the British islands in the West Indies: The effect in Africa of a partial abolition would be this, that the purchasers

chasers from Europe, being fewer in number, would have a greater choice of slaves, equal to the whole demand of the British merchants at present, which is stated at 38,000 annually, whereby prime slaves only would be saleable; and the aged and infirm (many of whom are now purchased of necessity) being rejected in greater numbers than formerly, the horrid practice which has long existed among the Slave merchants on the coast, of putting to death such of their captives as are brought to market, and rejected by the Europeans, would be more prevalent than ever. In the British West Indies the effect (however lightly felt at first) must necessarily, in the course of a few years, from an unavoidable decrease consequent on the present inequality of the sexes, have this operation; that the labour which is now performed by a given number of negroes, must either be performed by a less number, or the Planter must contract the limits of his plantation, and diminish his produce. Thus, immediate interest, and in many cases urgent distress from the importunity of creditors, will be set in opposition to the principles of justice, and the dictates of humanity.”

The second class of Mr. Wilberforce's propositions will give us but little trouble. The first objection contained in them I have already anticipated, and, I think, sufficiently answered; perhaps, however, some further observations on this head which at present occur to me, may not be thought impertinent. The objection, Sir, is expressed in these words: “That the Slave Trade has been found by experience to be peculiarly destructive to the British seamen employed therein.” If Mr. Wilberforce had asserted nothing more, than that the lives of many of the subjects of Great Britain are annually lost on the Coast of Africa, I should have admitted the fact without hesitation;—for what branch of trade, navigation, or manufacture, can be named, wherein human life is not sacrificed to the artificial wants of society? How many thousands perish every tempestuous winter in the British coasting trade! What dreadful havock of the human race is occasioned by working the the lead, tin, copper, iron, and coal mines? These are partial evils, Sir, which terminate in general good, and are interwoven into the constitution of the present world.—They are the natural and necessary attendants on civilized life, and he, who complains of them, arraigns the dispensations of Providence.

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But Mr. Wilberforce's assertion goes much further. He maintains, that a greater proportion of that very valuable class of people, the British seamen, is lost in the Slave ships than in British vessels employed in any other trade. He comprehends, therefore, in this account, the vessels which are employed in other branches of the African Commerce; such as the gum, wood, and ivory trades. In truth, he had these branches in contemplation; for, in one of the Propositions, he points to them expressly, as proper to be encouraged and substituted in the place of the trade which is now carried on for slaves. In support of this idea, Mr. Wilberforce (in the very able speech with which he introduced his Propositions to the House of Commons) referred chiefly to the researchers of a Mr. Clarkson, a Clergyman of the Church of England, who, though he has never visited either Africa or the West Indies, professes to have acquired a more extensive and intimate knowledge both of the manner in which the Slave Trade is conducted on the Coast, and of the treatment which the negroes meet with at sea and in the Sugar Islands, than is possessed either by the African merchant, or the West-Indian planter. What respect is due to this Gentleman's assertions concerning the treatment of Negroes (in this island particularly) I shall hereafter consider. At present I shall confine myself to the circumstance which has been urged on his authority; namely, that if the ships which are now employed in the Slave Trade were sent to Africa for different commodities, they would not lose above one half the number of seamen which they lose at present, for such, I think, is Mr. Clarkson's comparative statement.

Sir, in the voluminous mass of materials which, with the most laudable industry, the Lords of the Committee of Council have caused to be collected on the subject of the Slave Trade, I find evidence which applies to this very point; and it is the evidence of respectable men, and bodies of men, who are certainly much better qualified to speak to the question than Mr. Clarkson. Admiral Edwards, Sir, differs considerably from this Gentleman: He delivers it as his opinion, that "the Slave Trade is not more destructive than any other trade in the same latitudes." He observes, indeed, that "when vessels go up rivers, and remain long there, they become unhealthy." Now this must necessarily happen in the wood trade. Such is the opinion of a British Admiral, who served on the African Coast

Coast four years successively, and afterwards commanded the King's ship that is sent annually to visit the factories. The trustees for the relief and support of sick and disabled seamen, express themselves still more decidedly; for they give a direct contradiction to Mr. Clarkson on this subject. They positively affirm, that "in the ships which go to the coast of Africa for wood and ivory, there is a much greater proportion of the crew die, and become subject to blindness, than in the ships in the Slave Trade;" and they assign as the probable cause of this difference, that "the former ships go up the rivers, into the more interior parts of the country." To this inference, every man who knows any thing of the baneful effects of fresh-water swamps, and the vapours of native woods in tropical climates, will readily accede; and, surely, such testimony is much more to be regarded than that of Mr. Clarkson, though strengthened by what he calls *proof*, viz. A list of ten vessels that were employed in the wood trade, which, he says, lost but twenty men out of one hundred and sixty-four, or *one in eight*; on which pretended proof, I shall beg leave to make a short observation.

You will please to observe, Mr. Chairman, that these vessels are selected out of the whole number that were employed in the wood trade for six years together, viz. from 1781 to 1787. Now admitting they were taken promiscuously and fairly, which I very much doubt, we have only to compare them with the muster-rolls of the Slave ships, transmitted to the Privy Council from the custom houses and seamen's hospitals in Bristol and Liverpool, and Mr. Clarkson is convicted of most unwarrantable misrepresentation, even on testimony produced by himself. These muster rolls contain the number of men that failed, and the number that were lost, in the following ships, viz.

Ports	Ships Names	Number of men	Numb. lost
From Bristol	Amelia	52	5
Ditto	Africa	36	3
Liverpool	Fisher	53	4*
Ditto	Bark	38	4
Ditto	Mosely Hill	52	7
		231	23

* Exclusive of two that were killed by accident.

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Thus we find, that while the wood ships lost *one in eight* of their crew, the Slave ships lost only *one in ten*. We may likewise judge from hence of the truth of another of Mr. Clarkson's assertions; namely, that every vessel which sails from the port of Liverpool to the coast of Africa loses, on an average, *a fifth* of the crew, and every vessel from the port of Bristol almost *a fourth*. It should have been noticed too, but it did not serve Mr. Clarkson's purpose to notice the fact, that (be the loss what it may) one half at least of the people that die in the voyage, cannot properly be called *seamen*; inasmuch as about that proportion of the crew consists of landmen and boys picked up from the manufacturing towns: So that, in truth, the loss of actual seamen in the Slave ships, proves at last to be only above *one in twenty*; and there is good reason to believe, from the provisions of the late regulating act, that even this loss will diminish one half.

But Mr. Clarkson, it seems, declares, that he examined the muster-rolls of 88 Liverpool ships, of which the original crews consisted of 3170 sailors, and that of these, no less than 642 died, or were lost, and 1100 more were discharged or deserted. He claims the merit, too, of extraordinary precision and accuracy in his account of these muster-rolls; observing, that he declined making any reference to the muster-rolls for the London Slave-vessels, because they were not of equal authenticity with those of Liverpool and Bristol, which, he says, *are, as he was constantly informed, delivered in upon oath*; whereas those of London *are received upon trust*. Concerning the 1100 men that were discharged or deserted, he gives an account, of which the following is an abridgement*:

"Some of these unfortunate seamen are in such an infirm and debilitated state when they arrive in the West Indies, that they are sent to the hospitals and die there. Others, who go ashore to have a little relaxation after their hardships, indulge themselves in drinking new rum, to which they soon fall victims. They are seen in the streets of Jamaica, dying, in an ulcerated state; objects both of commiseration and horror! Their situation immediately points them out *as the remains of the crew of a Slave vessel; but they fall without pity, without friends, without a look, but*

* Extracted from his Letter to the Lords of the Committee of Council, and published in their Report.

of contempt, from the hardened multitude that pass by. Others wander about from door to door, till, overpowered by heat, hunger, and fatigue, *they fall equally unpitied.* Others are so hurt by the brutal severities which have been exercised upon them, and the want of protection and redress, that they embark for America, there to spend the remainder of their days."

On the whole, to the dead-list in the muster-roll of each vessel, Mr. Clarkson adds *four*, out of the number which are stated as having deserted, or as having been discharged.

Before I take proper notice of the calumnies which, in the passage I have quoted, are levelled at the inhabitants of this island, I beg leave, Sir, to read to you, from the Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council, a few questions, which, among others, their Lordships, in consequence of Mr. Clarkson's assertions, caused to be sent to the collector and comptroller of Liverpool, with the answers of those gentlemen:

"Q. Does the muster-roll ever shew what is become of the seaman who is run away or discharged, or give an account of the disease of which he died?"

"A. It does not ascertain any of these particulars."

"Q. Do the Master or Owners of the ship swear to the truth of this muster-roll; or are any questions put to them upon oath, concerning it, or is it signed by the Master?"

"A. It is signed by the Master; but it is not the practice to interrogate either him or the Owners of the vessel upon oath, respecting it, or to require them to swear to the truth of it."

"Q. Do you believe that the sailors that run away and are discharged from African and West-India ships, either in Africa or in the West Indies, usually return home, and in what manner, and if they do not return home, can you say what becomes of them?"

"A. We are of opinion, that the sailors that run away and are discharged from these vessels, either in Africa or in the West Indies, do usually return home, by engaging on board other British vessels. Some, no doubt, die, and others find employment in navigating the small vessels which go from one island to another in the West Indies. Those that are said to be discharged in Africa, are not sent on shore, but are transferred from one vessel to some other, or are employed in the small craft engaged in trading there,

and frequently belonging to the same owners as the vessel in which they went hence."

Sir, the same questions, together with several others, were transmitted by the same authority to the Collector and Comptroller of Bristol, and nearly the same answers were returned to them, except that in Bristol the muster rolls are sworn to, which is not the case in Liverpool. To the enquiry as to the return to Great Britain of the sailors that desert or are discharged in Africa or the West Indies, the Collector and Comptroller of Bristol answer, that they believe most of those that run away, or are discharged, get home, by what is called *the run*, in the West-India ships; and they give a very solid reason for such belief, which is, that the West-India ships, seldom taking more men than are sufficient to navigate them out, are frequently obliged to procure men, for the run home, at a very advanced price; which is such a temptation to the sailors in the African ships, that many of those who have gone several voyages in the same vessels desert at last, in the West-India islands, to come home by the run. The Trustees for the Relief and Support of decayed Seamen, give precisely the same account; and state further, that no less a price than 30 guineas is sometimes given in time of war to engage a seaman to go home by the run.

By this time, Mr. Chairman, you probably consider this Mr. Clarkson so unworthy of credit, that it is needless for me to give any further answer to the charge (although solemnly delivered in by him to the Lords of the Privy Council) which accuses the people of this island of such monstrous brutality and hardness of heart, as to behold, not only without commiseration, but with insult, hundreds of British seamen, oppressed by poverty and disease, begging charity at our doors, and perishing in our streets from the want of relief. I am myself, Sir, of opinion, that it is unnecessary; but there are circumstances attending this outrageous attack, which mark the character of its author so distinctly, that I beg your indulgence on this subject a few moments longer.—It is certainly true, that, during the late American war, many disabled seamen were frequently seen wandering about the island, soliciting charity; and more especially in this town and Kingston. The houses provided for the reception of itinerant poor being already full, these unfortunate men subsisted on the eleemosynary bounty of the inhabitants; and every candid man, who knows any thing

thing of the disposition of the people of this island, will readily believe that it was not sparingly distributed: At length, however, the evil rose to an height which rendered the interpositions of the legislature necessary. Accordingly, in the year 1776, an act was passed for the establishment, in the town of Kingston, of an Island Hospital; to which, it was ordered that all the transient, mendicant poor, that might be found in any part of the country, should be conveyed; and, in the year following, (the expences attending its support being found to fall heavy on the Public) another law was passed for levying a tax from the ships resorting to our ports, to be applied solely to the maintenance and augmentation of this charitable institution.

Sir, extraordinary as it may appear, it is from the preamble of this very law, that Mr. Clarkson, as I conceive, has adopted the charges which he has brought against our honour and humanity. The preamble itself proves it, I think, beyond a doubt; it is expressed in these words: "Whereas the masters of ships and other vessels trading to this island, having sick, maimed, infirm, and disabled men on board their respective vessels, instead of taking such care of them as in common humanity they ought, put them on shore, and leave them in a most miserable and distressed state, without any means to support and maintain them, or to obtain proper relief; by which cruel practices many of them die in the streets, and others become very burthensome and expensive to the several parishes in this island, particularly to the parishes of Saint Catherine (Spanish Town) and Kingston, where the major part of such miserable objects resort, &c. &c."

Now, Sir, will it be thought possible, that a man affecting the appearance of candour, a scholar, and a clergyman, can have grounded the monstrous charges above recited, on the preamble of an act, which, while it states an evil, applies a remedy at once efficacious and permanent; suppressing, at the same time, all mention of the liberal and humane provisions contained in the same law? Mr. Clarkson, however, has done this;—he has given the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council clearly to apprehend, that the grievance still exists in full force; for it is impossible not to understand him, as affirming, that the miserable persons, for whom relief was intended by the laws that I have referred to, are to this hour turned adrift in the streets, and left to perish there without redress, protection, or pity,

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from the inhabitants of our towns, whom he describes as the hardened and unfeeling spectators of such unfortunate victims!

I have in my hands, Mr. Chairman, authentic documents that shew to what expence the trade and inhabitants of this island are annually subject, in support of the public hospital of which I have given you an account. The tax on shipping supplies about one half of the annual expenditure: The town of Kingston (exclusive of the heavy provision which it is obliged to make for its own poor, and providing an Asylum for deserted Negroes, which alone costs 470l. per annum) contributes annually about 500l. and the House of Assembly supplies what further sums may be necessary, out of the general funds of the country. The disbursements for the last five years amount to 8900l* and the number of persons received into the hospital, in that interval, was 2051, of which no less than 1887 were transient seamen out of employ.

Sir, whatever may be the failings of the inhabitants of this island, they certainly are not deficient in the amiable virtues of generosity and compassion. So far are they from deserving the reproach of inhumanity towards poverty and distress, that I do not believe there is a body of people in the King's dominions, whose benevolence, in proportion to their means, has been so fervent and extensive as theirs. I entreat your attention, Sir, while I relate one other fact in proof of my assertion. At the conclusion of the late unfortunate war, it is well known that some hundreds of distressed loyal Americans sought a refuge in this island. They arrived with their families (chiefly at Kingston) without money, and without the means of getting any; for employment there was none. Although, at that very period, we were daily reproached in the bitterest language, by American Refugees in Great Britain, as abettors of the American revolt; and although, *at their instance*, measures were at the same time actually taking by the British government, which it was foreseen would cut off at least one-fifth of the commerce of the West Indies in general, and of the port of Kingston in particular; what, under such circumstances, was the conduct of the inhabitants of that town towards the poor Americans who had sought an asylum among them? Sir, to their eternal honour be it recorded

Average 1780l per annum

they

they received these unfortunate visitors, not merely without reluctance, but with tenderness; and, sacrificing on the altar of Compassion all considerations of interest and of party, taxed themselves in less than three years, in the sum of 13,275l. for their support! In short, they have given charity with so liberal a hand, that I fear they will soon be compelled to ask charity for themselves. These are the people, Sir, whom Mr. Clarkson has chosen to select for the objects of his calumny. After this, I hope I shall not be thought to exceed the bounds of parliamentary decorum, when I say, that the charges he has brought against us on this occasion, are most scandalously false, cruel, and wicked; and, I have not the smallest doubt, were contrived in the view of preparing the minds of his readers to receive, without scruple, the accusations which he has fabricated against us concerning our treatment of the Negroes. A man capable of doing this, is very capable of going farther: I will not say how far—but this I will say (to return to the immediate object under consideration) that, although his account of the dead list in the muster rolls of 88 Liverpool vessels may possibly be true, I will not believe it until I have better authority.

I shall now, Sir, quit this disagreeable part of my subject. Regard to justice, and the strong affection I bear to a community in which I passed the prime of my life, have led me to take up more of your time than perhaps was necessary. In truth, all that it was requisite to have observed concerning the destruction of seamen by the African Slave-Trade, may be expressed in very few words. This I have attempted in a Resolution, which I now beg leave to read to you; and it is the second in the series I shall have the honour to offer:

“ *Resolved*, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that to condemn the Slave Trade as peculiarly destructive to British seamen, (even if the fact be admitted, which we do not admit) and to adduce in proof thereof the losses sustained on certain unhealthy parts of the Coast, without taking into the account the encrease of seamen from such other branches of the British navigation as are greatly dependant on the African commerce, is partial and unjust: Among these branches may be reckoned the West-India trade, the lumber trade, and, above all, those great nurseries for seamen, the British, Irish, British American, and Newfoundland.

Newfoundland fisheries;—the consumption of herrings and salted fish, among the Negroes, being immense.”

In the further discussion of the remaining part of the second class of the Propositions, Mr. Chairman, I shall confine myself to the loss of Negroes in the middle passage.—The mortality which is stated to occur among Negroes newly imported, arising commonly from diseases occasioned by improper treatment in the voyage, will necessarily diminish, under a better mode of conveyance; and the causes which are said to impede the natural increase of the Slaves in general, will be incidentally considered when I come to speak of the past and present state of our negro population; a subject which is comprehended in the third class of the Propositions.

Sir, I am not disposed to deny that great abuses formerly prevailed in the mode of transporting Slaves from Africa to the West Indies. I know not any institution of human policy which is not liable to abuse. Our Assembly, in their Report of last year, frankly allowed that Slave vessels have been frequently crowded with a greater number of negroes than they ought, in prudence, to have contained; and declared their opinion, that the principle of the Restraining Act of the Parliament of Great Britain is founded in justice, humanity, and necessity. That act, Sir, has lately been revived and amended: it appears, therefore, somewhat extraordinary, that before the least intelligence could have been obtained at home concerning the effect of its regulations, a proposition should be received by the House of Commons, which declares that no regulations can provide an adequate remedy for the evils complained of!

It seems to me, Mr. Chairman, scarce credible, that any gentleman, acquainted with the wonderful success of our late illustrious navigator, Captain Cook, can seriously consider it as an impossible thing to transport a body of people, without loss, during a short passage of a month or six weeks, down the trade-wind of the Atlantic ocean. If the British Ministry entertain such an opinion, I should be glad to learn upon what principle they justify the project of sending convicts to Botany Bay; a voyage comprehending more than one half of the globe's circumference, and encountering every variety of climate, from the 52d degree of north, to the 45th degree of south latitude!

Sir, the mortality which has commonly occurred at sea, has been demonstrably proved to have arisen from ill-constructed

fructed ships, and neglect or improper management on board. Few voyages were ever more fatal to the seamen than Lord Anson's, and none less so than those of Captain Cook. The same difference occurs in the African ships. I have known many of them, though crowded with a far greater number of Slaves than is allowed by the Regulating Law, arrive without having sustained the loss of a single negro, and with the whole cargo in perfect health. Others again, from the same parts of the coast, have lost nearly half their original complement! These instances clearly evince, that (except in the case of epidemic distempers, which sometimes rage on shore as well as at sea, success depends chiefly on the construction of the vessel, and the provident conduct of the master and officers. Admitting the Slave Trade to be justifiable in all other respects, no argument can be drawn from the circumstance of occasional losses in the voyage, for its total suppression. If *regulation* alone is sufficient to correct the grievance, *abolition* cannot be necessary. We might, with equal reason, contend for an abolition of the laws which direct imprisonment for debt, because many thousand poor debtors, in the course of the last century, have perished of the jail distemper. This too was considered as an evil, not to be cured or corrected by the wisdom of man, until the active virtue of a benevolent individual demonstrated the contrary.

Whether the regulations adopted in the present case, are the *proper* regulations, or whether better might not be devised, is another, and a very different consideration. The views of the gentlemen who framed and supported them, were, I have not a doubt, in the highest degree, laudable and benevolent; but I am inclined to suspect, that the leading idea of increasing the tonnage of the Slave-ships, in proportion to the number of Slaves, has occasioned too little attention to their construction, in respect of speed and convenience. A ship may be very roomy, and, at the same time, very slow, and very unhealthy. A fast-sailing vessel, so contrived as to admit a free circulation of air through every part where the Slaves are confined, would probably sustain less mortality than a ship with double the room, if destitute of the same advantages.

But as no man, whose object is truth, will content himself with speculative reasoning, when facts can be ascertained with precision. I have lately made it my business to trace out the actual effect, which the Regulating Act has produced on

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such

such of the Slave-ships as sailed from Great Britain after the law took place, and have arrived in the ports of this island since last January; and I will lay before you, Mr. Chairman, with plainness and sincerity, the result of my researches.

The mortality in many of them has been great; much greater (I mention it with infinite concern) than I believe was ever known, except in very extraordinary cases, before the Regulating Act took effect; and I doubt not, when this circumstance is related in Great Britain, that it will heighten the popular outcry against the Slave Trade. I determined, therefore, if possible, to trace the cause to its origin; and I think I can state to you facts, which it highly concerns us fully to ascertain and make public.

Sir, in three ships, the *Eliza*, the *King Pepple*, and the *Brothers*, I discovered that, out of 1195 Negroes purchased in Africa, no less than 348 perished before the day of sale. Alarmed at this prodigious mortality, I enquired on what part of the coast these, and some other vessels in which the destruction was nearly as great, had traded? I was told they had all come from the river Bonny, in the Bite of Benin. My next inquiries, therefore, were directed to the case of ships from other parts of Africa; and I had the satisfaction to find, that all those from the Gold Coast had arrived in an extraordinary degree of health. I will read to you, Sir, a list of them, distinguishing the number of Slaves purchased, the number brought into port, and the number sold in each vessel, viz.

Ships Names.	No. purchased.	No. brought	No. sold,
Gregfon	377	— 368	— 368
Betty	38	— 38	— 38
Alert	276	— 265	— 262
Chambers	238	— 234	— 234
Lovely Lads	408	— 398	— 394
Diana	352	— 346	— 342
Molly	410	— 407	— 404
	—	— 2056	— 2042

The loss, on the whole, is not more than two and three-fourths on every hundred! A circumstance so favourable, that if the Bonny ships had not arrived, or had arrived with no greater loss than these, I should have ascribed it solely to the salutary

salutary provisions of the Regulating Law: perhaps, in fairness and candor, the same inference ought still to be made; for it has appeared, on further examination, that the loss in two of the ships from Bonny (the *Eliza* and the *Brothers*) was occasioned by the malignant small-pox and the measles, which raged on the coast in the beginning of the year, and broke out on the voyage with great violence in these, and I believe some other, ships. The mortality in the *King Pepple* was, if I am rightly informed, imputable to the improvident misconduct, or inexcusable neglect, of the owners, in not furnishing, in the outfit, a sufficient quantity of provisions for the whole voyage. They ought, undoubtedly, to have foreseen, that the time of the ship's arrival on the coast was not the season for yams; the root which constitutes the chief food of the natives. There is not a vegetable so pernicious as this in an unripe state; yet in this state was the Captain obliged, for want of better provisions, to purchase large quantities for the use of the Negroes; the consequence was, that a dysentery broke out among them, which soon became infectious, and carried off great numbers.

The facts I have thus selected, (which, if the joint Committee shall think proper, may be proved by the evidence of respectable men;*) and the pleasing circumstance, that two ships have since arrived in this island from the Bite of Benin, with no greater loss than that of 14 Slaves out of 785, demonstrate incontestibly, that the great mortality which happened in the ships I have mentioned, is not necessarily incident to African voyages in general, but arose, in those particular cases, partly from great imprudence, and partly from calamities, by which, in all ages and countries, villages, and even towns and great cities, have been sometimes depopulated. The worst that can be said from the account I have given is, that no just estimate can yet be formed of the effects of the Regulating Act. On the whole of this subject, Sir, I beg leave to offer these two resolutions:

“Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the loss of Negroes which is sometimes sustained in the voyage from Africa, as well as in the harbours of this island, between the days of arrival and sale, which is stated to hap-

* On motion of the Attorney General, as soon as Mr. Edwards had concluded, it was resolved to take examinations on oath on this point; which see in the Appendix, No. III.

pen from the mode of transporting Slaves from the coast, being a remediable grievance, affords no argument for a total suppression of the Slave Trade."

"*Resolved*, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that no just estimate can be formed of the effects which the Regulating Act of the British Parliament, passed in 1788, will ultimately produce, in respect of the loss of Slaves in the Middle Passage; inasmuch as it appears, from a return of Negroes purchased on the coast of Africa, by ships that have entered in the port of Kingston since the 1st of January last, that, out of 2099 Slaves purchased on the Gold Coast, 2042 have been sold in this island, a loss of only two and three-fourths per cent.; but that out of 2550 Slaves purchased in the Bite of Benin, only 1642 have been sold; a loss amounting to thirty-five and three-eighths per cent. and unknown before any regulation took place. Two vessels have since arrived from the same coast, the Ann and the Vulture: these vessels purchased 785 Slaves, of whom only 14 have died; a loss not exceeding one and three-sevenths per cent. This amazing difference is partly to be attributed to the small-pox, which raged in some of the ships, and the measles and flux, which broke out in others. The loss by the flux was chiefly occasioned by the use of unripe yams, for want of other provisions."

We are now, Mr. Chairman, arrived at the very extensive field which the third class of the Propositions opens to our contemplation. The path we are to enter upon is, in some places, perplexed and thorny, and we must proceed step by step. But I hope, Sir, if you will have patience with me, to conduct you along it safely at least, if not pleasantly, until we obtain the objects of our researches—truth and certainty.

Mr. Wilberforce, Sir, opened this part of his subject*, by asserting what, in part, is undoubtedly true, that the multiplication of our Negroes depends greatly on their good treatment. He admits, that they are treated much better at this time, than they were thirty years ago; and he contends, that the decrease has lessened, in the same proportion as their treatment has improved. He then lays down the following data or premises:

1st. That the whole number of Slaves in Jamaica, in 1768, was 167,000.

* Vide his Speech in the House of Commons, in the Parliamentary Register.

2d. That

2d. That the number in 1774, as stated by Sir Basil Keith, was 193,000.

3d. That the number in December 1787, according to Lieutenant Governor Clarke, was 256,000.

4th. That, by comparing these numbers with the numbers imported into and retained in the island, and allowing for a loss of one twenty-second part by deaths on ship-board after entry, it appears,

That the annual excess of deaths above births, in this island, in the whole period of nineteen years, has been in the proportion of about seven-eighths per cent., computing on the medium number of slaves in the island, during that period.

That, in the first six years of the said nineteen, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of rather more than one on every hundred on the medium number.

That, in the last thirteen years of the said nineteen, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of about three-fifths on every hundred on the medium number.

The conclusion which Mr. Wilberforce has drawn from these premises is this: That (allowing for an extraordinary diminution occasioned by the late war, and a loss of 15,000 by the hurricanes, and the want of American supplies) there is at this time an actual increase of population begun among the Slaves in Jamaica. "It may," says he, "fairly be presumed that, since the year 1782, this has been the case; and that the births by this time exceed the deaths by about 1000 or 1100 per annum." Of course, he conceives that his proposition is established, "that no considerable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing further importations."

But this fine system, Mr. Chairman, however pleasing to the ear, and beautiful to the eye, will not bear *the touch*. It is built in fallacy, so plainly and palpably, that although I have not the smallest wish to point any words of reproach or disrespect towards the amiable and excellent proposer, I must (in this instance at least) be free to charge him with a failure of his usual candor and fairness.

Sir, we all know that, in estimating the number of our Negroes, at different periods, for the information of Government, it has been the usual practice for the Commanders in Chief to consider the *tax-rolls* as their best and surest guide. It was always understood, however, that these tax-rolls were imperfect; for, it being customary to exempt persons

persons having no more than six Slaves from the payment of any tax on Negroes, the returns from some of the parishes were always deficient; and from the towns they seldom contained more than a third of the real number of Negroes actually living.

Mr. Wilberforce could not be ignorant of this circumstance, for it is expressly set forth in the Assembly's Report of last year, to which he refers.

He knew, therefore, that the number of 167,000, returned in 1768, was taken from the authority of the tax-rolls.

He knew that Governor Keith, in 1774, returned the number of 193,000 from the same authority. The Governor himself stated that to be the fact; observing, at the same time, that the tax-rolls from which he had taken the said number, were deficient in, at least, 10,000 of the true number.

Mr. Wilberforce likewise knew, that the number of our Slaves in December 1787, according to the tax-rolls, was not 256,000, but 210,894 only. Lieutenant-Governor Clarke did not pretend that his account was taken from the tax-rolls, or from any authentic document: It was a return made by guess. He knew that the tax-rolls were deficient, and endeavoured to supply the deficiency; but herein he differed widely in opinion from the Assembly; a Committee of that House, after diligent investigation, having reported the real number to be about 240,000. As to the tax-rolls, they expressly stated them to contain 210,894 only.

Now, Sir, I contend that as Mr. Wilberforce took the tax-rolls as his guide in one instance, he ought to have done so in another. It is impossible otherwise that a fair and just relative statement, at different periods, can be formed; for if 20,000 Negroes are to be added (according to the Assembly's Report) to the tax-rolls of 1787, the deficiency of 10,000 mentioned by Governor Keith, must unquestionably be added to the tax-rolls of 1774: But Mr. Wilberforce preferring Lieutenant-Governor Clarke's authority to that of the Assembly, has added to the tax-rolls of 1787, no less a number than 45,106; the number on those rolls, as I have before observed, being 210,894, instead of 256,000.—With so gross an error interwoven into the ground-work, the whole system falls to pieces!

From what has been said, I think, Sir, no doubt can remain that the only fair calculation concerning the actual decrease of our Slaves is to be made from the tax-rolls; and it will stand thus:

Number

Number living in 1768	—	167,000
Left in the island from 1768 to 1774 inclusive (as appears from the Privy Council's Report, part III.)	—	41,038
Ditto from 1774 to 1787, (as appears from a return of the Inspector General)	—	87,624
Total	—	295,662
Deduct the number on the tax-rolls in 1787	—	210,894

And there appears a deficiency, in 19 years, of 84,768
This is equal to 4,461 annually, which is near two and one half per cent. per ann. on the medium number on the rolls.*

The calculation of loss, in the last 13 years, will stand thus:

Number living in 1774	—	193,000
Left in the island to 1787	—	87,624
		280,624
Number on the rolls in 1787	—	210,894

Leaves a deficiency in 13 years of 69,730 being 5364 annually, which is more than two and a half per cent. per ann. on the medium number.†

I would now, Sir, ask Mr. Wilberforce, how is the deficiency of seventy or eighty thousand Slaves to be made up? Allowing 15,000 to have perished by famine, (in consequence of the hurricanes, and the strange policy of Great Britain, in preventing relief from America) the deficiency exclusive is more than sixty thousand! Yet we are now seriously told that our Slaves actually encrease!

An inquiry into the causes of this great deficiency, Mr. Chairman, will lead to some important conclusions.

"The causes," says Mr. Wilberforce, "which princi-

* 167,000
193,000
210,894
—
1/3) 570,894 (190,298 is the medium number.

† 193,000
210,894
—
2) 403,894 (201,947 is the medium number.

pally

“ pally impede the encrease of population among the Slaves in our islands, are the following:

“ 1st. The inequality of the number of the sexes in the importations from Africa.

“ 2d. The general dissoluteness of manners among the Slaves, and the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages, and of rearing children.

“ 3d. Particular diseases which are prevalent among them, and which are, in some instances, attributed to too severe labour, or rigorous treatment; and, in others, to insufficient or improper food.

“ 4th. Those diseases which affect a large proportion of Negro children in their infancy, and those to which the Negroes, newly imported from Africa, have been found to be particularly liable.”

The enumeration, Sir, requires very little comment or illustration. No man of an unprejudiced mind can possibly conceive, that our Negroes, under such circumstances, can encrease by generation. The only doubt would be this—Whether we have it not in our power to lessen the effects, by obviating the causes.

Respecting the first and most weighty of these causes, it is sufficient to observe, that the Planters of the West Indies have no concern whatever in the ships trading to Africa, or in the mode by which the trade is conducted on the coast. If it be urged (from the circumstance that women are somewhat cheaper in the West Indies than men) that the Planter prefers purchasing males rather than females, and that, on this account, the European trader regulates his assortment accordingly, I answer, on the authority of Governor Barnes,* that “the European trader on the coast has not an option in the case. It is with great difficulty he can get as many saleable females as will form a tolerable assortment.” Mr. Barnes accounts for this very satisfactorily; but whatever may be the cause, it is certain that the importations from Africa into this island have always consisted of about five males to three females. This disproportion was incontrovertibly proved by evidence, annexed to our report of last year; and the effect which it has produced is this, that notwithstanding every allowance for the Creoles, or natives, who may reasonably be supposed to have encreased according

* See his very clear and intelligent evidence on this subject, in the Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council.

to the general laws of nature, there is, at this moment in this island, an excess of 30,000 males on the whole of our Negro population.

Sir, the full number of our Slaves now living, I take to be about 250,000: Of these, from a variety of calculations and enquiries in different parts of the country, I am persuaded I am near the truth in stating the native Africans at 110,000; which leaves 140,000 Creoles. Among the latter, I take for granted that the sexes are equally distributed: Of the former, the proportion may be stated at 70,000 males to 40,000 females. The relative numbers, therefore, on the whole, are 140,000 men, and 110,000 women.

That this inequality of the sexes is the principal source from which the annual diminution of our Slaves takes its rise, I have no manner of doubt; and he who supposes that a remedy might be found by introducing among them the laws of marriage, as established in Europe, is entirely ignorant of their manners, propensities, and superstitions. Suppose, however, it were possible, by ties of religion and sanctity, to confine one man to one woman, it is evident that, under the present circumstances of our population, no less than 30,000 males must be left in a state of celibacy. I will not deny that, as these drop off, a new race would, under better regulations, spring up, which might more than counterbalance the loss: But we, Sir, who know the country, are well convinced that the introduction of the marriage ceremony among the Negroes, is utterly impracticable to any good purpose. Notwithstanding what may be supposed in Great Britain, concerning the uncontrollable power of the Master, and the submissive deportment of the Slave, it is universally known in these islands, that, in forming connections between the sexes, the Negroes claim and exercise a right of disposing of themselves as they think proper, without licence or control: An attempt to restrain or regulate this claim, would be considered by them as a most wanton, unprovoked exertion of tyranny, and probably give birth to dissention and revolt. Hence the practice of polygamy, which prevails, I believe, throughout all the nations of Africa, is adopted among the Negroes in the West Indies. We know, Sir, that many of our black men, (the tradesmen and artificers especially) though in the condition of nominal slavery, are in a state of comparative opulence. Of these, I conceive that no less than ten thousand possess from two to four wives. This partial appropriation of the women

creates a still greater portion of single men, and produces the mischiefs which are necessarily attached to the system of polygamy. In Africa, the redundancy of males occasioned by an unequal distribution of the females, is undoubtedly one of the sources which supplies the European trader with Slaves; and, in this island, the consequences attending it are a shocking licentiousness and profligacy of manners in most of the Negro women, who are exposed to temptations which they cannot resist. They claim, it is true, entire freedom of choice, but hold chastity in so little estimation, that barrenness and frequent abortions, the usual effects of a promiscuous intercourse, are very generally prevalent among them. To the same origin may be ascribed that neglect, and want of maternal affection towards the children produced by former connections, which every Gentleman must have observed in many of the black females.

Sir, the circumstances I have thus enumerated, operating with combined energy, are abundantly sufficient to account for the annual diminution in the number of our Slaves, and I see no good reason why we should not frankly and candidly admit, that Slavery itself, in its mildest form, is unfriendly to population. The human race, Sir, to increase in numbers, must be placed in favourable circumstances; and unless reason and sentiment in some degree co-operate with corporeal instinct, its offspring is born but to perish. Among men who are deprived of free agency, or by whom it is but imperfectly enjoyed, neither reason nor sentiment can be the ruling principle. We may lament that such is the condition of our Slaves, and perhaps, in some measure, alleviate the evil; wholly to redress it, in their present notions of right and wrong; is, I fear, out of our power. It is needless, Sir, to pursue this argument any farther. Men of reflection and reading, apprized of the fact, that such disproportion between the sexes exists among our Negroes, will draw the proper conclusions from it, and agree that an abolition of the Slave Trade will not afford a remedy: A bounty on the importation of African women for a few years to come, would be much more effectual. One objection however remains: It has been represented in Great Britain, (—not by Mr. Wilberforce, Sir;—he is too well informed;—but) by men who have had weight enough to induce the Privy Council to collect evidence upon the subject, that white labourers may be introduced, with great advantage, from Europe, to supply the diminution of our Negroes.

This idea, which is founded in the grossest ignorance, is unworthy serious discussion. The only observations which occur to me as proper to be made upon it, I have expressed in the second of the two Resolutions I have now the honour to offer:

“*Resolved*, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the number of Slaves at present in this island is about 250,000; of which, according to the best enquiries that can be made concerning the proportion of the sexes, there are 140,000 males and 110,000 females: It follows therefore, that, if future importations from Africa be discontinued, there will unavoidably ensue, from the disproportion of the sexes alone, a very great reduction from the present number of our Slaves, before any augmentation can be expected from natural increase by generation; a diminution which must not only preclude all attempts at the further improvement of our unsettled lands, but likewise occasion a proportionable decrease in the present cultivation; it being an undoubted fact, that almost all the plantations already settled are much under handed.”

“*Resolved*, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that it is absolutely impossible to cultivate the West-India islands, so as to produce any commodities that would enrich the mother country, by white labourers. Fatal experience demonstrates the fallacy of such an expectation. In the year 1749, the Legislature of this island passed a law holding out great encouragement for the introduction of white families into this colony, which proved ineffectual; very few families having come in consequence thereof, and of those that came, not a vestige is left. The French ministry, in 1763, attempted to settle a colony by means of white labourers at Cayenne, on the coast of America: Twelve thousand miserable people were the victims of this impolitic scheme. If further instances are wanting, to prove that Europeans cannot withstand the climate when exposed to the sun and the rains, recourse may be had to the accounts of the siege of Carthage; the expedition to Cumberland Harbour; the siege of the Havanna; the returns of the regiments that came out under the command of General Garth in 1779 and 1780; and the expedition to Fort Saint Juan on the Spanish Main.”

Having thus proved, by a detail of such facts and arguments as I conceive are not easily to be controverted, that, without any misconduct on our parts, our Slaves must un-

avoidably diminish, unless their numbers are occasionally recruited from Africa, I shall now consider the influence which such diminution must have on the system of our agriculture, and in the value of our properties, consisting as well of lands unimproved and unfettled, as of those which are in a state of cultivation.

Jamaica, Sir, is 150 miles in length, and, on a medium of three measurements, 40 miles in breadth. The contents, therefore, supposing the country to be level, would be 3,840,000 acres; but allowing for the irregularities of its surface, which strike the eye in every direction, the total is upwards of four millions. Of these, not quite two millions are patented, or taken up by grants from the crown. I speak from good authority, Sir, having in my hand a return from the office of the Receiver General, of the quantities of land in the several parishes chargeable with quit rents, as made up to December last by the Clerk of the Patents, and the total is 1,907,589 acres.* Whether this return comprises all the land in the island that is worth cultivating, I pretend not to be informed; but not a doubt, I think, can remain that the lands for which quit rents continue to be paid, whether in actual cultivation or not, are considered by the owners as of value; otherwise they would certainly surrender them. Many large uncultivated tracts, particularly the vast and finely-watered territory, called the *Black grounds*, between Trelawny and St. James, on the north, and St. Elizabeth on the south side of the island, are well known to consist of some of the best and richest soil in the country.

Of the lands thus patented, I calculate that about one million of acres, and no more, is at present in cultivation; and in this estimate I include such as are annexed to the sugar plantations; and reserved in woods for the purpose of supplying timbers for building, staves for hogsheds, and fire wood; and also such as are appropriated for common pasturage. This reservation will be found on a general survey to be about one third more than the land in sugar canes.

The calculation, Sir, is short and simple; and I will state to you the principles on which it is founded.

The quantity of sugar produced annually, in this island, may be set down on a medium at 90,000 hogsheds of 16

* Vide Appendix, No. IV.

cwt. And I reckon the general return from the canes which are cut yearly, in all parts of the island, at half an hogshhead per acre. I speak generally. Undoubtedly there are plantations that make much greater returns, but there are many others that yield less. I will pause a moment, in hopes that if any gentleman thinks I am wrong, he will have the goodness to set me right.—

[*The Committee expressed their Approbation.*]

Well then, Sir, the Committee are of opinion that my calculation is well founded: If so, the land which is annually cut for sugar is 180,000 acres. The young canes are about equal to a fifth more, which together make 216,000 acres; and the appending land reserved for the purposes I have mentioned, being about one third more than the canes, the total in sugar plantations amounts to 648,000 acres. I will call it 600,000 acres only; minute certainty not being attainable.

With regard to the lands appropriated to the minor staples, and the pen lands* for the breeding of cattle, it is impossible to speak with equal precision. The pens are supposed to be about 400 in number, and allowing 500 acres to each, on average of the whole, the result is 200,000 acres. This perhaps may be deemed a reasonable allowance; and I am persuaded that if we reckon the cotton, coffee, piemento, and provision plantations, as comprehending an equal extent of country with the pens, the calculation is abundantly liberal. I should rather incline to give 300,000 acres to the pens, and 100,000 acres to those settlements; but this makes no difference on the whole. Add these 400,000 acres to 600,000, and the total in cultivation is one million, which being deducted from 1,907,589, (the land taken up from the crown) leaves somewhat more than 900,000 of cultivatable territory yet remaining unfettled; a space of country more than eight times as extensive as the whole island of Barbadoes!

Sir, there is not a man in the perfect exercise of his understanding, who can seriously believe that, if the Slave Trade be abolished, any part of this great territory will ever come into cultivation. Mr. Wilberforce is silent upon the subject.—The great aim of his Propositions is to demonstrate that we may, by various means, keep up our

* Breeding farms and grass lands, are called in Jamaica pens!

present cultivation: He does not venture to go a step farther. Every acre of uncultivated property must, therefore, on his own admission, remain an unexplored, unimproved, unproductive wilderness. But this is not the whole of the evil: The patented lands in this island are held by purchase: Many of the present proprietors have vested large capitals in wood land, and even those who hold immediately from the Crown, have paid, and continue to pay, a *quit rent* as a consideration for the grant. If I am rightly informed, the quit rents and arrears collected this present year, and now in a train of settlement, amount to about 40,000*l.* Here then the loss is not, as Mr. Wilberforce supposes, mere matter of speculation, but of certainty. The injury is plain and palpable, and unless the public faith is mockery and derision, we have an unquestionable right to surrender back those lands to the Crown, and to be fully reimbursed the capitals vested in them.

Being then *bona fide* purchasers of certain property in this island, the value of which depends solely on a system of commerce and agriculture, originally introduced and uniformly supported, from the first settlement of the colony down to the present time, under the sanction of Royal Charters and Acts of Parliament, let me ask upon what principle of justice or common sense, can it be urged that we have no right to expect compensation, whenever it shall be the pleasure of the supreme power, by virtue of its imperial authority, either to deprive us of the property thus acquired, or (which is the same thing) by an unexpected change in the commercial system, to render it of no value?

This reasoning applies equally to our unsettled and cultivated possessions. With the diminution of our Slaves, not only our crops will diminish, but there will likewise be a rapid and immediate arrangement and defalcation in the whole of the capital. There is a consent of parts in the system, and the partial evil will soon terminate in universal mischief. Our cane lands, without the means of working them, will become of little value, and our buildings will be entirely useless. Mr. Wilberforce tells us indeed, and seems to do it seriously, *that we may introduce the plough*, as if it were not already in use in most of the plantations where it is admissible! I should be glad to know how the plough is to be used on the mountains of Hanover, and among the rocks of Trelawny, yet the cane grows with great luxuriance in each of those parishes) or of what advantage

vantage the plough can be to estates that have fortunately no occasion to re-plant their lands, depending altogether on annual returns from the original stocks.*

Nothing can manifest greater misinformation than his reasoning on this subject, unless indeed we except another of his arguments, which is, that indemnification ought not to be asked; because, says Mr. Wilberforce, "if through want of hands your produce shall diminish *in quantity*, you can, and certainly will, indemnify, yourselves by advance of price." This argument, which he is pleased to call irrefragable, I shall presently demonstrate to be fallacious in the highest degree; but I have not yet done with the subject of compensation.

Sir, I maintain that our claim to compensation is not only well founded, but that, under similar circumstances, such a claim has never been rejected by any minister before the present; nor even by Mr. Pitt himself on other occasions. So sensible has the British government always been of the necessity of preserving sacred the property of individuals, when the public convenience was thought to make an invasion of it necessary, that even when alterations were projected in the mode of carrying on the Slave Trade, and new charters for that purpose have been granted, the former African companies were fully indemnified for the losses by them sustained, in consequence of such arrangements. The sum of 34,000*l.* was paid by Parliament on this account in one instance, and 112,142*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.* in another. The Regulating act of last year admits and enforces this principle; for it appoints Commissioners to enquire into the losses, which

* The ignorance manifested by some persons on this subject, who pretend an acquaintance with this island, is remarkable. From the evidence of one Gentleman who was examined before the Privy Council, it would seem as if the plough had been first introduced by himself a few years since, and was used only on a small property in the parish of Vere! It was introduced upwards of thirty years ago, and has been very generally used on the large plains of Westmoreland and other level parishes, I believe for near 20 years past. Nevertheless, it is certain that in this climate the common mode of ploughing, cross-ploughing, harrowing, and round-ridging, is a most mischievous practice, and utterly destructive of the ratoon or second growth.—The only profitable method is to make the cane hole at once, by returning the plough back along the furrow, (and in a light soil) planting immediately. Much severe labour to the Negroes is undoubtedly saved by the auxiliary assistance of the plough; but I do not think the number of the Negroes can be lessened in consequence of it. The same hands are necessary for other purposes, such as those of planting after the plough, repeatedly weeding, hoeing, moulding, and trashing the canes; not to mention all the variety of laborious business in crop time.

may have been sustained by the Merchants and Owners of Slave ships, in consequence of the act of 1787, declaring it to be just and warrantable that compensation should be made to them by the Public: And here, Sir, permit me to observe, that the same argument which is now urged against granting compensation to the Planters, might have been urged with greater propriety against the Merchants and Owners of the Slave ships. They might have been told, that if the restrictions should be found to fall heavy upon their commerce, they had nothing to do but to raise the price of their Slaves. That they have actually done this, we have sufficiently experienced; but I do not affirm, that such an advance has proved any thing like a full indemnification for their losses; much less can I pretend to say how long this increase of price can be maintained; the marketable value of all saleable articles depending on a variety of contingencies and circumstances, which it is not necessary in this place to enumerate.

Sir, I have no doubt, in case the Slave Trade shall be abolished, that some of our staples, sugar among the rest, may, in like manner, become dearer for a time at the British market. Unquestionably less sugar will be sent thither from the British West-Indies than is sent at present; because many of the small plantations must be thrown up. The effect on such of the Planters as are possessed of confined or encumbered estates, will be instantaneously ruinous. The more opulent ones may hold it out for a time; but even these will find a very inadequate and temporary resource in any advance of the price of their produce; for if the rise be considerable it is more than probable that one or the other of these consequences will follow; either the consumption of the commodity will diminish, or Great Britain will admit a supply from the foreign sugar islands, which will increase most rapidly as ours decline: Either way, the price will soon fall back to its former level. Thus we see, by a plain deduction, that the injury to the Planter will be great and permanent, and that the remedy pointed out to us is altogether uncertain, inadequate, and temporary. I hope, Sir, I have as much of the milk of human kindness in my nature as any man living; but I have no idea of that humanity which is repugnant to honesty and justice. On the whole, I have three Resolutions to offer on this most important part of my subject, which, without farther preface, I beg leave to read:

“ *Resolved,*

“ *Resolved,* It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that, according to the best estimate which can be formed, this island may be stated to contain four millions and eighty thousand acres of land, of which not more than one fourth part, or about one million of acres, is at present in actual cultivation; and although a considerable part of the country, consisting of high mountains and rugged precipices, is incapable of improvement, yet it may be presumed, that no part of the lands which are actually patented, falls within that description; inasmuch as the owners thereof pay a quit-rent to the crown for holding the same; which quit-rent, and the arrears thereof, collected since Christmas last, amount to the sum of 27,000*l.* or thereabouts, exclusive of 13,000*l.* now in a train of settlement.”

“ *Resolved,* It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that it appears from the offices of the Clerk of the Patents and Receiver General, that there are at this time patented in this island, or taken up by grants from the crown, 1,907,589 acres of land; from which, the quantity in actual cultivation being deducted, there will remain, with every allowance for unproductive territory, 900,000 acres of cultivatable land yet unsettled; the whole of which, if the Slave Trade be abolished, must become an absolute burthen and incumbrance on its present proprietors; who will, in such case, be entitled, as of right, and on the principles of natural justice, to the liberty of surrendering the same back to the crown, and receiving full compensation for the capitals therein vested, and all quit-rents paid on account thereof. The said land, valued only at 3*l.* currency per acre, is worth 2,700,000*l.* currency, equal to 1,928,500*l.* sterling.”

“ *Resolved,* It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the Planters and Proprietors of Negroes in this island will, in like manner, be entitled to compensation for the diminution which must necessarily ensue in the number of our Slaves, should all further importations be discontinued by authority of Parliament, the present disproportion between the sexes having arisen from causes which are not imputable to us. With the reduction of our slaves will likewise unavoidably happen a proportionate decrease in the value of our lands, buildings, and produce; for which, and all other losses consequent on a change in the present system, it is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the

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inhabitants of this, and the rest of His Majesty's Sugar-Colonies, are fairly and justly entitled to compensation: the said colonies having been originally settled under the most sacred compacts with the mother country, sanctioned by royal charters and proclamations, as well as by a succession of acts of Parliament, authorizing and encouraging the Slave Trade; particularly by the charters granted in 1662 and 1674, by King Charles II. which established a Royal African Company, the last of which was granted in consequence of address from both Houses of Parliament, and by the acts of the 9th and 10th of William III. a period when the principles of civil liberty were minutely investigated, well understood, and freely asserted; and more recently, by the act of the 23d of George II. which recites the usefulness and absolute necessity of the African trade."

In the three preceding Resolutions, and the arguments which introduce them, I trust, Mr. Chairman, I have demonstrated that the people of this island claim their lands, and the maintenance of that commercial system, which alone can give them value,—I mean the liberty of obtaining labourers from Africa,—by the highest and strongest of public sanctions. They are rights which they fairly purchased for money, which have been stamped by the faith of the King,—by the repeated faith of Parliament, and are strengthened by an uninterrupted possession of 130 years!

When I consider all this, and reflect on the vast advantages which have accrued to the trade, navigation, and revenues of Great Britain, from the settlement of this and the rest of the sugar islands,—when I consider further, that the British government cannot possibly be ignorant of many of the facts that I have stated, I confess, Sir, that my astonishment exceeds expression, to find Mr. Pitt so readily declaring an unqualified approbation of a scheme for subverting a system of colonial policy, that hath so long had the fullest support and protection of the mother country.

I cannot, therefore, avoid recurring to the idea which I took the liberty to intimate in the opening of my speech, (first suggested indeed in the Assembly's Report) that Mr. Pitt has unfortunately conceived a very unfavourable opinion of our general conduct towards our Slaves. He thinks, perhaps, that all our possessions and commercial privileges, are grants and concessions from the Crown, and may

may be resumed with very little ceremony, and without any kind of indemnification, on the ground of some delinquency and demerit on our parts; the magnitude and notoriety of which, I suppose, in his opinion, supercede the necessity of proof.

Mr. Pitt, Sir, is a young man, and with the generosity, has, perhaps, the credulity of youth. It is not very wonderful, therefore, that some part of the abuse which, on the present occasion, has been thrown out against the West-India Planters, should have made an impression on his mind to our disadvantage; for, in truth, every popular calumny, every falsehood, which envy, malice, and uncharitableness, have fabricated for a century past, have lately been raked together with industrious malignity, and heaped upon us; and the stale crimes and violences of lawless men in the days of Charles II. are cited as a just representation of our present laws, manners, and dispositions.

These attempts, Mr. Chairman, to blacken a whole community, are not merely the base efforts of obscure persons and anonymous calumniators, but of men of education and appearance in life. Among others who have laboured in this laudable occupation, is the Mr. Clarkson of whom I have already spoken. This Gentleman has published some books on the subject of the Slave Trade, to which he has given the sanction of his name; and for one of which he was presented, if I mistake not, by the University of Cambridge with a prize medal. Mr. Pitt, Sir, does that University the honour to represent it in Parliament, and received, I believe, some part of his education in that learned seminary. It is but reasonable then to suppose, that he generally concurs in sentiment with persons to whom he bears so near a relation, and without much examination or enquiry, considers their judgment, both of books and men, to be well founded. On this account, Mr. Clarkson has, I admit, a great advantage over us; and it becomes indispensably necessary, to take some notice of the many heavy accusations which he has brought against our honour and humanity. I will state to the Committee what he says of the general conduct of the Planters of the British West-Indies towards their Negroes. I say, Sir, their usual and general conduct; for Mr. Clarkson scruples not to affirm that, "though exceptions may be found, yet that they are extremely rare." The usual and common treatment of our Slaves he repeatedly and

solemnly asserts to be precisely such as he represents; and, in order that his representations may be sufficiently promulgated, and that not England only, but all Europe may be found with our infamy, he published his first book both in English and Latin. Sir, among other falsities, equally gross and groundless, he declares,

That, "one third of the number of Negroes imported, is computed to be lost in the seasoning," the whole of which loss he imputes to "the drudgeries imposed on them, and the cruelties of their masters."

He asserts that "the Slaves are sixteen hours out of the twenty-four, at hard and incessant labour; and that in crop time their hours of rest are reduced to three and a half, on a moderate computation."

He avers that "they have no covering to defend them from the inclemency of the night."

He scruples not to say, that "the bare means of a livelihood are not placed within reach of four out of five; consequently that thousands perish every year for want of food."

He declares that "this excessive labour, and want of nourishment, are hourly accompanied with the most shocking instances of cruelty; of which the Planters," he says, "are generally guilty without commiseration or remorse."

He positively affirms, that "frequent acts of deliberate mutilation take place on the slightest occasions; and that many acts of inferior, though shocking barbarity, such as slittings of noses and ears, take place without any occasion at all."

He asserts that "ingenuity is exhausted in contriving modes of torture;" in proof of which he gives a horrible story of a certain Planter, "who (as he says) had an iron coffin made, in which he roasted his Slaves before a fire."

In short, he declares that "our Slaves have not a single law to protect them; that they are without the possibility of redress, and without a hope that their situation will be changed, unless death shall terminate the scene!"

In support of these assertions, he adds that "advertisements frequently appear, offering rewards for the apprehending fugitive Slaves either alive or dead; and that the production of a head severed from the body, is the proof required by law."

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He asserts further, that "if a Negro is found eating a sugar-cane, which his own hands have planted, it is considered as a crime of such magnitude, as to be sometimes punished with death, and always with mutilation." He declares that, "ears are slit, eyes are beaten out, and bones broken, and that this is so frequently the case, (in this island particularly) that it has been a matter of constant lamentation with disinterested people, who, out of curiosity, have attended the markets to which these unhappy Slaves resort weekly, that they have not been able to turn their eyes on any group of them whatever, without beholding these inhuman marks of passion, despotism, and caprice."

Such, Mr. Chairman, is the portrait which the Reverend Mr. Clarkson has drawn of the West-India Planters in general, and of us of Jamaica in particular! Is there a Gentleman that hears me, whose bosom does not swell with indignation at such monstrous and most atrocious calumnies? I declare to God, I do not believe that a series of more abominable falsehoods ever blotted a page in the wide history of human depravity! If one-fiftieth part of Mr. Clarkson's charges were true, we should deserve to be hunted down like so many wild beasts, and be cut off, without remorse, from the face of the earth.

Sir, it has cost me some pains to trace out Mr. Clarkson's authority for these extraordinary assertions; for, understanding that he is a clergyman and a scholar, I was unwilling to suppose that he could sit down calmly and deliberately, with supereminent wickedness, to fabricate them himself. I was inclined to think, as he quotes oral testimony, and the authority of disinterested persons, though he prudently conceals their names, that he had been misled by some insidious villain, who, perhaps, having been driven from hence by the united voice of the community, had chosen to wreak his vengeance on us by foul detraction and slander. Such wretches there are: But I since find that Mr. Clarkson has drawn great part of his materials (the rest is the product of his own invention) from two pamphlets; one of which was published some years ago in North-America, by one Anthony Benezet, a Quaker: The other made its appearance in London in 1759, and bears the respectable name of Mr. Granville Sharp, a gentleman now living, and a man of undoubted worth and humanity. Both these writers appeal for the truth of their representations, so far as the same relates to

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us, to the testimony of the celebrated Sir Hans Sloane, whose history of Jamaica every person is acquainted with.

This author (Sir Hans Sloane) came to this island with the Duke of Albemarle, in the reign of James II., and he left the country in 1688, precisely one hundred and one years ago. In those days the inhabitants of this island were certainly a very unpolished, uncivilized race. They consisted chiefly of the disbanded soldiers of Oliver Cromwell, and, after the restoration, carried on the joint occupation of *planting* and *pirating*.—Being joined by a number of French and Dutch renegadoes, they are well-known in history by the appellation of *Buccaneers*. Certainly neither BLUE-BEARD, nor any of his associates, were ever distinguished for gentleness of disposition, and humanity of conduct; and, therefore, it is possible that some part of Sir Hans Sloane's account may be true;—and what then? Does Mr. Clarkson mean to charge the present inhabitants with the guilt of the *Buccaneers*? Are his prejudices so strong, and his knowledge of human nature so limited, as to make him believe that, in an interval of one hundred years, and in a country where the white inhabitants have been changed in that interval four times at least, the manners and dispositions of the people have continued unaltered. What, Sir, should we think of the candour of an author, who, in describing the present inhabitants of Great Britain, should recur for examples to the profligate age of Charles the Second, or his successor; and recite the cruelties of KIRK and JEFFRIES as a just portrait of the British commanders and judges now living;—Such however is the candour of Mr. Clarkson!

Sir, I have too great a regard for truth, and too well founded a respect for the rights of humanity, to justify either the conduct of our ancestors towards their Slaves, or our ancient colonial Slave-Laws. I do readily admit that there has been a surprising alteration for the better, in the general conduct and deportment of all manner of persons in this island towards the Negroes, even within my own memory; and I contend that the mildness of the Slave-Laws now in force, furnishes an incontestable proof that such is the fact; for though it is undoubtedly true, that we are not, in all cases, to judge of the manners and dispositions of any people by their public laws and political institutions; yet (as was well observed on a former occasion, by a most able and excellent

excellent friend, who sits near me*) “in a country like this, where the law-makers speak the sense of the great body of the people, the manners must have insensibly changed, before any considerable alteration can be made in the laws which regulate our private conduct. Very different is the case in a colony subject to a sovereign who is himself the sole legislator, particularly when that sovereign resides at a distance. A law is then no proof of the manners of the people.” Thus in Hispaniola, notwithstanding the provisions of the *Code Noir*, their Slaves have always been treated with much greater rigour and severity than in this island. No man who has visited both islands will deny this for a moment:† But thus much I have to observe, in justification of our predecessors in the legislature, that the laws which they enacted to give protection to their Slaves, narrow and imperfect as they were, must be considered as limitations of their own authority, spontaneously created by themselves. In most other countries where slavery has been tolerated, the excesses of masters, if restrained at all, have been restrained by the interposition of a single supreme magistrate; but in the British islands the proprietors of Slaves are themselves both the makers and expounders of the law. The case was, that in framing their laws, as they could find nothing analogous to Negro slavery in the English constitution, it was natural for our ancestors to have recourse to the rules and regulations which had been established in states where a species of slavery, the most resembling it, had existed. The Slave system of the civil law, in all its tremendous extent, was before them, and deducing conclusions from principles which had been approved and adopted by the greatest and wisest nations of antiquity, it is not wonderful that they should consider the authority they possessed over the Negroes, whom they had purchased with their money, as little short of absolute. I say then, Sir, that under this impression, they must have regarded the several limitations and restrictions which they created by law, not as giv-

* Henry Shirley, Esq.

† Yet no falsehood is more prevalent in the mouths of our adversaries, than that the French Negroes are treated infinitely better than ours! The French themselves know and admit the contrary to be the truth. The following is a passage in a work of great merit concerning the state of the French Colony in St. Domingo, in 1776: “Les Anglois exigent moins de travail de leurs Nègres, & les nourrissent à plus de frais. Ils font dans l'usage de leur donner des vivres & des poissons salés. Le tiers des Nègres de Guinée meurt ordinairement dans les trois premières années de la transportation.”

ing energy to the rights of their Slaves, (among the ancients the Slaves had no rights) but as so many limitations and abridgements of their own legal authority over them.

Sir, I am not attempting to vindicate these conclusions of our ancestors: Whether they argued justly or not, is another question. It is sufficient for my purpose to shew you, that such were their sentiments; because, with those notions, corroborated as they were by the Trade-Laws of the British Parliament, their conduct as legislators was comparatively mild, temperate, and exemplary. They rejected the Roman code as unnecessarily despotic. They had themselves resisted tyrannical authority in the mother country, and they disclaimed and abridged the exercise of it over others, when circumstances placed it within their reach. On these principles they raised their African Slaves to a better condition than was enjoyed by the Slaves of Greece and Rome. They gave them security in their lives and their limbs: a security, which by degrees is become so strengthened and extended, that I scruple not to pronounce, that many a free subject, in the freest state in the world, has no better.

But it has been loudly urged against us, that very cruel punishments were inflicted on some of the Negroes who rose into rebellion in this island about thirty years ago.—Sir, it is true. I was at that time a youth, just arrived from England, and I felt a shock at a scene which presented itself to me on my arrival, that has not yet lost its impression: If it had, a paper which I wrote on occasion of a miserable wretch that was burnt, and which has since appeared in a great number of different publications, would stand in judgement against me.—Two others of the rebels were hung up alive in irons, and left to perish in that dreadful situation.—But, though I felt the utmost indignation and horror at such extraordinary punishments, let not my sensations at the sufferings of those wretches, conceal the crimes of which they were convicted. They were savages just imported from Guinea, of the *Koromantyn* nation, (a fierce and warlike people, as we all well know) and having been purchased, with many others, by my late relation and benefactor, Zachary Bayly, were by him placed on *Trinity* plantation in St. Mary's, the overseer of which, one Abraham Fletcher, was a man of singular humanity. In truth, not one of the whole number had done any work, nor received the least shadow of punishment or ill usage, when they rose into rebellion. They had observed a wonderful disparity in point
of

of numbers between the whites and the blacks, and were encouraged by the old negroes to believe they might easily murder all the former, and take possession of the country;—this appeared in evidence. Being joined by some of their countrymen from the *Frontier* Plantation, they first proceeded to the Fort at Port-Maria, killed the centinel, and furnished themselves with arms and ammunition. They then marched up the high road from Port-Maria to the interior part of the country, carrying death and destruction as they went.

At *Ballard's Valley* they surrounded the Overseer's house, about four in the morning, in which eight or ten white people were in bed, every one of whom they butchered in the most savage manner, and literally drank their blood mixed with rum. At *Esber*, and some other estates, they acted the same tragedy, and then set fire to the buildings and canes. In one morning they murdered between thirty and forty whites (not sparing even infants at the breast) before their progress was stopped.

The wretches who were executed as before-mentioned, were proved to be the ringleaders by the most unquestionable evidence, and it was thought necessary to make a terrible example of them. They met their fate without fear or remorse. The negro that was burnt, by some means got his right arm loose, and snatching a brand from the faggots that were consuming him, flung it in the face of the executioner; and the two that were hung up alive were indulged, at their own request, with a hearty meal before they were suspended on the gibbet.—From that time, until they expired, they never uttered the least complaint, (except only of cold in the night) but diverted themselves all day long in discourse with their countrymen, who were permitted, very improperly, to surround the gibbet.

On the 7th day, a notion prevailed among the spectators, that one of them wished to communicate an important secret to his master, who being in St. Mary's, the commanding officer sent for me. I endeavoured, by means of an interpreter, to let him know that I was present; but I could not understand what he said in return. I remember that both he and his fellow-sufferer laughed immoderately at something which occurred; I know not what. The next morning one of them silently expired, as did the other on the morning of the ninth day.

A year or two after this, another rebellion broke out on a plantation in the parish of Hanover; and I will state to you, from a publication which appeared soon afterwards, an account of the conduct of the savages concerned in it:

“ The rebels took the opportunity of their owner’s absence to surround the dwelling-house, and seize the person of their unhappy mistress. She was a young lady of great beauty, meek, modest, and unoffending; had been married about two years, and was in bed with a lovely infant, when the bloody savages surrounded the house, and demanded her person. Resistance and prayers were equally fruitless. The female Slaves who attended her, dared not to express their pity, if pity they felt; but, having hastily thrown a loose robe over her, delivered the miserable victim into their hands, and she heard the savages calmly deliberate on the means of putting her to death, by the most lingering torments, without uttering a single groan; so entirely were her faculties absorbed in astonishment and horror. It happened, however, that her person and appearance (for the moon shone bright) excited the appetite of the ringleader of the savages, who declared that he would carry her into the woods, and preserve her to be his mistress. The others, dreading his resentment, reluctantly consented, and the next object of their cruelty was the child, which they devoted to instant destruction. —Nature now resumed her seat in the bosom of the unfortunate mother. She screamed aloud, and clasping the knees of him who had spared her life, implored him to save her infant. She implored in vain. The savages derived a luxury from her cries, and holding up the poor babe by the feet, in the mother’s sight, they cleft it in twain with a hatchet; and, indeed, happy would it have been for the poor lady had her own fate been as quickly decided; for, though at that instant assistance came and rescued her from their hands, it came too late. The unhappy woman was saved but in part.—Her senses were gone for ever, and she remains at this day (for she is yet alive) hopelessly and incurably distracted.”

I would now, Sir, ask Mr. Granville Sharp, whether he would term crimes like these, “a laudable endeavour in the Slave to recover his freedom, founded on just and warrantable principles;” for these, I think, are Mr. Sharp’s expressions. It is probable, Mr. Chairman, that most of my audience will dissent from Mr. Sharp in this respect. They will

will think, perhaps, after hearing the account which I have read to you, that no punishment could be too severe,—no torments too great, for such horrible excesses. Nevertheless, I am of a different opinion: I think that simple death, unaccompanied with any circumstances of cruelty, should be the utmost exertion of human authority over our unhappy fellow-creatures; and that revenge ought never to be admitted as a principle of penal law. I am convinced that, in countries where barbarous and indecent executions are exhibited, such punishments are always productive of crimes proportionably savage and shocking; and I rejoice that the criminal Slave-Laws of this island have been meliorated. The measure of punishment is now precisely the same to all men, whether free or in bonds. Hanging by the neck is the utmost penalty that justice can inflict, even in cases of the most atrocious murder committed by a negro on a white man; I had, myself, the honour of proposing the clause which repealed and abolished all greater punishments, and the satisfaction of seeing it adopted, without a single dissenting voice.

The horrible excesses, Sir, which I have thus represented, arose unquestionably from a principle of revenge in some of the old, seasoned Negroes, by whose instigation a body of their ignorant, newly-imported countrymen rose into rebellion. That such scenes will never be renewed in this island, I do firmly believe; because I am persuaded that, under the present improved system of laws and manners, our Negroes have no revengeful purposes to gratify. Sir, if the British Parliament are still dubious on this head, why do they not appoint men of worth and character Commissioners to enquire on the spot into the actual situation of our Negroes? Let their appearance be appealed to:—Let their modes of life, and means of subsistence, undergo a strict scrutiny. If any one man of character, acquainted with this island and the various parts of Europe, will aver that the peasantry of France, or even of many parts of Great Britain, are more plentifully furnished with good and wholesome provisions than our Negroes in general, (I certainly do not mean to include those calamitous seasons in which the Hand of Omnipotence desolated the country) why then, Sir, I will submit to bear my share of the calumnies which have been so plentifully heaped upon us all, with the shame and confusion of conscious guilt, and convicted falsehood.

Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, I ought to apologize to the Committee, for taken up so much of their time on this subject; and the more so, as, in truth, a very sufficient answer has been given to all those calumnies already, by the most respectable evidence. I allude to the testimony personally given to the Lords of the Committee of Council, by Lord Rodney, Sir Peter Parker, Admiral Barrington, Sir Joshua Rowley, and Admiral Hotham. It were shameless mockery to oppose to the weighty assertions of these Gentlemen, the anonymous and incompetent evidence produced by Mr. Clarkson.—Mr. Wilberforce supposes, indeed, that the Admirals on this station reside chiefly on board their ships, and never visit the Sugar estates, except on particular occasions, when their presence creates a holiday. This is easily said: The fact, however, is, that both Lord Rodney and Sir Peter Parker lived chiefly on shore for several years together; the former resided constantly in this island, from the beginning of 1771 to the middle of 1774: He returned again in 1782, and the latter continued here near five years, if I mistake not, during the last war.

To my own knowledge, Lord Rodney visited most parts of the country, and I believe, there are but few men who know it better, or are more intimately acquainted with our manners and dispositions, than his Lordship. Yet he solemnly declares, that he never beheld any other than humane and proper behaviour to the Negroes. "I never," says his Lordship, "saw an instance of cruelty; but, on the contrary, great forbearance." Sir Peter Parker gives evidence to the same effect. "I not only," says he, "never saw, but never heard, of any instance of cruelty exercised towards the Negroes. At the houses where I visited, I observed that they were treated with the greatest humanity and attention." Sir Joshua Rowley, Admiral Barrington, and Admiral Hotham, speak to the same purpose. In short, all these gentlemen are decidedly of opinion, that the condition of the Negroes in the West Indies is preferable to that of the poor of Great Britain. It follows, then, either that Mr. Clarkson stands convicted of the grossest and most shameless slander and defamation, or that some of the first naval characters, and most respectable men in Great Britain, are persons devoid of truth and honour, and capable of the vilest prostitution.

Sir, I have only one resolution to offer on this part of my subject, which I will now read to you:

"Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the charges which have been brought against the Planters of this island, of improper and inhuman treatment of our Slaves, may be fully refuted and disproved; first, by an appeal to our laws: and, secondly, by the evidence of respectable men who have resided among us, and have been witnesses to our manners. Whatever may be said of our ancient colonial Slave Laws, the acts which have been passed within the last ten years, are written in characters of justice, mercy, and liberality. Concerning the general treatment of our Slaves we refer to the evidence personally given to the Lords of the Council, by the Right Hon. Lord Rodney, Sir Peter Parker, Admiral Barrington, Sir Joshua Rowley, Admiral Hotham, Vice-Admiral Edwards, and Sir George Young; some of whom resided many years in this island, and are intimately acquainted with our conduct and manners. We conceive, that the testimony of such persons is unanswerable and conclusive."

I have now, Sir, nearly finished all that I proposed to offer. Two Resolutions indeed remain, the first of which rather concerns people in Great Britain, than the Planters of Jamaica; and the second is intended to point out, with some degree of precision, the value of this island, considered as a British capital; in order that government may be fully apprized of the cost and magnitude of the object that is staked on the question now under the consideration of Parliament. The Resolutions, therefore, will speak for themselves, and I beg leave to read them without further explanation or preface:

"Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that, in confidence of the validity of plantation security, and the support and encouragement the Sugar Colonies and the African Trade have hitherto experienced from government, the merchants in Great Britain have been induced to enter into very large advances, and engage in extensive loans to the West-India Planters; and, on the faith of an act of Parliament passed on purpose to make the receiving of six per cent. on colonial securities lawful in Great Britain, great numbers of private persons at home, as well as the subjects of foreign States, have likewise embarked considerable sums on mortgages, and have purchased annuities to a very large amount on West-India estates: Now the Slave Trade being the great source of every West-India improvement, its abolition must inevitably diminish the value of

all such securities, and drive the creditors to use every means in their power to extricate their property from such a precarious situation; to the immediate distress of the Planters and their families, and the ultimate ruin of many of the mortgagees and annuitants themselves."

"*Resolved*, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the present value of property in this island may be fairly and reasonably estimated as follows; viz. 250,000 Negroes, at 50l. sterling per head, is 12,500,000l. The patented lands, with their erections, and the personal property appertaining thereunto, at double the value of the Negroes, (being the best general rule of valuation) amount to 25,000,000l. and the article of houses in the towns, the coasting and trading vessels, &c. may be estimated at one million and an half at the least; it appearing by the Report of the Committee of the Lords of the Privy Council, that the houses in Kingston and Spanish Town are alone worth 1,428,521l. sterling. The total is thirty-nine millions of pounds sterling; the whole profits and produce of which capital, as also of the various branches of commerce to which it gives rise, center in Great Britain, and add to the national wealth; while the navigation necessary to all its branches, establishes a strength which wealth can neither purchase nor balance."

Thus, Mr. Chairman, have I laid before you the whole of my plan. If the Resolutions I have the honour to offer, shall receive the approbation and correction of the joint Committee, and be adopted by both branches of our Legislature, it will remain to be determined in what manner we are to dispose of them afterwards. Whether it may be proper to insert the substance of them in a memorial to the Crown, or transmit them in their present shape, annexed to a Remonstrance to both Houses of Parliament, is submitted to the superior judgment of the Committee: But, in all our proceedings, let us constantly keep in mind that, if ever concurrence in sentiment, and co-operation in conduct, were necessary in any conjuncture, they are so in the present, when ruin hangs over us by a thread. *Vis unita fortior*. Unanimity will give dignity to our proceedings, and energy to our cause. Let us remember the perils of our situation, the magnitude of the object, and the vigilance of our enemies. Time, and better information, will, no doubt, remove the mist of prejudice from the virtuous and the liberal; but we have other enemies to encounter, against which

which Truth and Justice are opposed in vain. We have to combat religious prejudice, commercial prejudice, and political prejudice. The religious man thinks it his duty to encourage and abet every species of outrage against our characters, on the plea *that it is lawful to connive at evil, that good may arise from it*. Commercial prejudice, though perhaps less violent in outward appearance than the former, is founded on a baser principle; that of selfish and malignant envy. Many of the seaport and manufacturing towns in Great Britain, have long beheld with jealous eyes, the growing prosperity of Liverpool, and exult in her threatened ruin. Political prejudice, on much the same ground, contemplates with sensible mortification, every token of colonial opulence. One reverend Gentleman* gravely opposes, that our Sugar colonies may be assigned over to the French. He trusts, he says, that Great Britain has learnt wisdom sufficient not to fight to retain them. Another† expresses a pious wish that these islands, with all their inhabitants, were sunk into the sea. These, it is true, are the ravings of fanatic madness; but unhappily the feeble voice of Reason is lost in the tumult. The poison of detraction has spread where no antidote can reach. Men of the highest character and most distinguished ability, have proclaimed themselves hostile to our interests. The great leaders of opposition have concurred, on this occasion, with the friends of the Minister. I trust, indeed, that neither the clamours of the frantic, nor the malice of the wicked, can long prevail over the sagacity and integrity of such men as Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Burke; but there are other eminent persons, whom I much fear we must consider as our determined and persevering adversaries. Among these, and not the least formidable, is the noble Duke at the head of the Ordnance, (himself a Cabinet Minister) who has publicly declared his opinion to be unfavourable towards us; and yet, Sir, this noble person is unquestionably a man of sound judgment, and, I verily believe, of inflexible virtue. We have, therefore, to lament, that, immovably tenacious of his purpose, and even avowing a pride in never changing an opinion he has once formed, he must, as a necessary consequence of human fallibility, sometimes give the praise of consistency to unretracted error.

* Mr. Ramsay.

† Dean Tucker.

Of Mr. Pitt I have happier expectations. I hope, and I believe, that he is not yet so hardened in the ways of the world, as, in a case like ours, obstinately to resist the impression of truth and equity, by rejecting an appeal to better information and more correct enquiry. Mr. Pitt, Sir, has begun his progress in public life with great and wonderful advantages. To such accomplishments and talents as might have exalted the most obscure person to the highest distinction, he has brought noble birth, ingenuous youth, conciliating manners, an illustrious name, and hereditary virtue. He is now placed on a lofty eminence, and generally beheld with partiality and favour. May he not forget that, as the Minister of a kingdom consisting of an extensive and widely dispersed people, its most remote subjects are entitled to an equal participation of the Royal protection with those of the realm. His fame, though deservedly great, can never be lasting unless it be founded in equal justice.—His path, Sir, must be the path of rectitude, and he must pursue it, regardless alike of popular clamour and popular affection. Such was the path, and so was it trodden by his immortal Father: May it lead him to his Father's Glory!

Mr. Fox is an original genius, of such marked and acknowledged superiority, that the respect which is paid to his abilities, is paid not only without reluctance, but with eagerness and pride. His eloquence, masculine, impetuous, and sublime, proceeds with undeviating and irresistible force immediately and directly to its object.—Neither seeking ornament, nor courting praise, conscious of his own powers, and disdainng every adventitious aid, he shines from himself alone, with native, unborrowed, resplendent lustre!

Such a man, supereminent in candour as in abilities, I do not despair of seeing a convert to our cause. Superior to little artifices and double dealing, the characteristics of petty minds and narrow hearts, and feeling that HE can suffer no degradation by the acknowledgment of error, I am persuaded he will not hesitate a moment, if convinced by our arguments, to avow his conviction; and, I trust, he will then become, from a most formidable opponent, the assertor of our rights, and the strenuous supporter of our injured properties, and insulted honour.

Of Mr. Burke it may be said, in the language of scripture, that, "he extracts honey and oil from the flinty rock." Every question on which he displays his eloquence

quence, he traces through its various relations and dependencies: He ranges through all the regions of science for images and illustrations, and pours on his audience clearness, information and delight, even from subjects the most barren and uninstrucive. If he sometimes manifests a few exuberances and irregularities, let it be remembered that they are the redundancies of a luxuriant genius; and, if his exquisite sensibility for the miseries of mankind, renders him liable to imposition from tales of imaginary distress, let us not withhold the praise that is due to so benevolent a disposition. Though we cannot but lament, that this tenderness of his nature has given him impressions to our prejudice, I trust that, after yielding for the moment to his first feelings, he will allow us to appeal to the acuteness of his investigation, and the liberality of his justice. If our cause is tried before such a judicature, we may be confident of success.

After all, Mr. Chairman, I will not conceal from you that I am no friend to slavery in any shape, or under any modification. If it be at all necessary, it is a necessary evil. That slavery has existed, however, in all ages of the world, among the most civilized, as well as the rudest nations, I dare not dispute. The most rancorous of our adversaries admits, that "it has had the concurrence of all the nations which history has recorded, and the repeated practice of ages from the remotest antiquity."* Wholly to banish such a system from social life, I fear, therefore, is not permitted to us by Divine Providence. Perhaps, like plague, pestilence, famine, and all the various calamities of our condition, it may have been originally implanted in the constitution of the world, for purposes inscrutable to finite wisdom. Thus much, however, is allowed; the miseries we cannot remove, we may in some cases mitigate. We may alleviate, though we cannot cure. This, I am willing to hope, is the principle aim and endeavour of several of those persons, who are now active to suppress the Slave Trade. I will confess to the Committee, that, on considering the mode by which Slaves are obtained in Africa, I was, myself, at one time, of opinion the trade ought to be abolished: My return to this country has given me, with the means of better information, very

* Clarkson's Prize Essay.

different ideas. Maturer judgment, and a mind more enlightened, (—I hope not hardened—) convince me that the greatest deliberation and caution are to be observed, as well in what regards the abolition of the trade, as concerning any attempt to exalt the condition of our negroes. Much has been done to meliorate that condition within the last twenty years. May the time soon arrive, when the name only of Slavery shall remain, without any of its attendant miseries! Most of us, Sir, I rejoice to say, may justly boast that our conduct corresponds to this wish. As we neither introduced the system of Slavery into this island, so neither are we answerable for its abuses. Many of us came by our plantations, in the same manner as the reverend society for propagating the gospel came by theirs; * and what has been the conduct of that society? Like us, they have found themselves under the necessity, not only of supporting the system, but also of augmenting their Negroes, by frequent purchases of newly-imported Africans, in order to divide the work, and keep up the stock. They knew that moderate labour, unaccompanied with that wretched anxiety to which the poor of England are subject, in making provision for the day that is passing over them, is a state of comparative felicity; and they knew also, that men in savage life have no incentive to emulation. Devoid of reflection on the past, they feel no apprehension for the future. Persuasion is lost on such men, and compulsion, to a certain degree, is humanity and charity. Civility and improvement must therefore gradually prepare our Negroes to receive greater indulgence. *That* civility, and *that* improvement, are now making a silent, but visible progress. God forbid that we should retard;—but let us at the same time be greatly cautious not to urge them onwards faster than Nature allows us. Give the full reins to the mistaken benevolence of some men, and gratify the malignant purposes of others, and you involve both Planter and Slave in one common ruin.—That this is the wish of many among our adversaries, there can be little doubt; and they are attempting to render us odious, that we may fall unlamented. Let us not sink, however, without a struggle. If we *must* perish,—at least let us first remove the load of infamy which our enemies have heaped upon us, nor by a cowardly sub-

* In Barbadoes.

mission tell the world we deserve it! Sir, I thank you for the indulgence you have shewn me; and I now beg leave to move my first Resolution.

“ *Resolved, &c.* ”

The Attorney General, after observing on the variety and extent of the several matters offered in the preceding speech, proposed an adjournment, that time might be had to ascertain and authenticate the facts which had been stated. This being agreed to, the joint Committee adjourned to the 26th day of November, when witnesses were examined, and the first four of the Resolutions were adopted, with some amendments. Another adjournment was made to the first of December, when the remainder of the Resolutions passed in like manner. A Remonstrance to both Houses of Parliament (equally spirited and temperate, constitutional and loyal) was afterwards offered by the Hon. Temple Luttrell, one of the Managers on the part of the Council, and agreed by both branches of the Legislature to be annexed to the Resolutions.

F I N I S.

A P P E N D I X.

For the Satisfaction of the Reader, it has been thought necessary to annex the following Documents:

Number I.

Mr. WILBERFORCE'S PROPOSITIONS.

I.

THAT the number of Slaves annually carried from the coast of Africa, in British vessels, is supposed to be about - - - - - 38,000

That the number annually carried to the British West-India islands has (on an average of four years, to the year 1787 inclusive) amounted to about - - - - - 22,500

That the number annually retained in the said islands, as far as appears by the Custom-house accounts, has amounted, on the same average, to about - - - - - 17,500

II.

That much the greater number of the Negroes carried away by European vessels, are brought from the interior parts of the continent of Africa, and many of them from a very great distance.

That no precise information appears to have been obtained of the manner in which these persons have been made Slaves.

But that from the accounts, as far as any have been procured on this subject, with respect to the Slaves brought from the interior parts of Africa, and from the information which has been received respecting the countries nearer to the coast, the Slaves may in general be classed under some of the following descriptions:

- 1st. Prisoners taken in war.
- 2d. Free persons sold for debt, or on account of real or imputed crimes, particularly adultery and witchcraft; in which cases they are frequently sold with their whole families, and sometimes for the profit of those by whom they are condemned.
- 3d. Domestic Slaves sold for the profit of their masters; in some

some places at the will of the masters, and in some places, on being condemned for real or imputed crimes.

4th. Persons made slaves by various acts of oppression, violence, or fraud, committed either by the Princes and Chiefs of those countries on their subjects, or by private individuals on each other; or, lastly, by Europeans engaged in this traffic.

III.

That the trade carried on by European nations on the coast of Africa, for the purchase of Slaves, has necessarily a tendency to occasion frequent and cruel wars among the natives, to produce unjust convictions and punishments for pretended or aggravated crimes, to encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud, and to obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvements in those countries.

IV.

That the continent of Africa, in its present state, furnishes several valuable articles of commerce highly important to the trade and manufactures of this kingdom, and which are in a great measure peculiar to that quarter of the globe; and that the soil and climate have been found, by experience, well adapted to the production of other articles, with which we are now either wholly, or in great part, supplied by foreign nations.

That an extensive commerce with Africa in these commodities might probably be substituted in the place of that which is now carried on in Slaves, so as at least to afford a return for the same quantity of goods as has annually been carried thither in British vessels.

And, lastly, that such a commerce might reasonably be expected to increase in proportion to the progress of civilization and improvement on that continent.

V.

That the Slave Trade has been found, by experience, to be peculiarly injurious and destructive to the British seamen who have been employed therein; and that the mortality among them has been much greater than in His Majesty's ships stationed on the coast of Africa, or than has been usual in British vessels employed in any other trade.

VI.

That the mode of transporting the Slaves from Africa to the West-Indies necessarily exposes them to many and grievous sufferings, for which no regulation can provide an adequate remedy; and that, in consequence thereof, a large proportion of them has annually perished during the voyage.

VII.

That a large proportion of the Slaves so transported, has also perished in the harbours in the West Indies previous to their being sold. That this loss is stated by the Assembly of the island of Jamaica at about four and a half per cent. of the number imported;

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ported; and is, by medical persons of experience in that island, ascribed, in a great measure, to diseases contracted during the voyage, and to the mode of treatment on board the ships, by which those diseases have been suppressed for a time, in order to render the Slaves fit for immediate sale.

VIII.

That the loss of newly-imported Negroes, within the first three years after their importation, bears a large proportion to the whole number imported.

IX.

That the natural increase of population among the Slaves in the islands appears to have been impeded principally by the following causes:

1st. The inequality of the number of the sexes in the importations from Africa.

2d. The general dissoluteness of manners among the Slaves, and the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages, and of rearing children.

3d. Particular diseases which are prevalent among them, and which are in some instances attributed to too severe labour or rigorous treatment, and in others to insufficient or improper food.

4th. Those diseases which affect a large proportion of Negro children in their infancy, and those to which the Negroes newly imported from Africa have been found to be particularly liable.

X.

That the whole number of Slaves in the island of Jamaica, in 1768, was about 167,000;

That the number in 1774, was stated by Governor Keith, about 193,000;

And that the number in December 1787, as stated by Lieutenant Governor Clarke, was about 256,000.

That, by comparing these numbers with the numbers imported into and retained in the island, in the several years from 1768 to 1774 inclusive, as appearing from the accounts delivered to the Committee of Trade by Mr. Fuller; and in the several years from 1775 inclusive, to 1787 also inclusive, as appearing by the accounts delivered in by the Inspector-General; and allowing for a loss of about one twenty-second part by deaths on ship-board after entry, as stated in the Report of the Assembly of the said island of Jamaica, it appears,

That the annual excess of deaths above births in the island in the whole period of nineteen years, has been in the proportion of about seven-eighths per cent. computing on the medium number of Slaves in the island during that period.

That in the first six years of the said nineteen, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of rather more than one on every hundred on the medium number.

That in the last thirteen years of the said nineteen, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of about three-fifths on every hundred

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hundred on the medium number; and that a number of Slaves, amounting to 15,000, is stated by the Report of the island of Jamaica to have perished, during the latter period, in consequence of repeated hurricanes, and of the want of foreign supplies of provisions.

XI.

That the whole number of Slaves in the island of Barbadoes was, in the year 1764, according to the account given in to the Committee of Trade by Mr. Braithwaite 70,706

That, in 1774, the number was, by the same account 74,874

In 1780, by ditto - - - 68,270

In 1781, after the hurricane, according to the same account - - - 65,248

In 1786, by ditto - - - 62,115

That by comparing these numbers with the number imported into this island, according to the same account, (not allowing for any re-exportation) the annual excess of deaths above births, in the ten years, from 1764 to 1774, was in the proportion of about five on every hundred, computing on the medium number of Slaves in the island during that period.

That in the seven years from 1774 to 1780, both inclusive, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of about one and one-third on every hundred, on the medium number.

That between the years 1780 and 1781, there appears to have been a decrease in the number of Slaves of about 5,000.

That in the six years from 1781 to 1786, both inclusive, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of rather less than seven-eighths in every hundred, on the medium number.

And that in the four years from 1783 to 1786, both inclusive, the excess of deaths was in the proportion of rather less than one-third in every hundred, on the medium number.

And that during the whole period, there is no doubt that some were exported from the island, but considerably more in the first part of this period than in the last.

XII.

That the accounts from the Leeward Islands, and from Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent's, do not furnish sufficient grounds for comparing the state of population in the said islands at different periods, with the number of Slaves which have been from time to time imported into the said islands, and exported therefrom.

But that, from the evidence which has been received respecting the present state of these islands, as well as of Jamaica and Barbadoes; and from a consideration of the means obviating the causes which have hitherto operated to impede the natural increase of the Slaves, and of lessening the demand for manual labour, without diminishing the profit of the Planter, it appears that no considerable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the farther importation of African Slaves.

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Number II.

The following are Mr. EDWARDS' RESOLUTIONS, with the Amendments, as finally agreed on by the joint Committee, the 1st December 1789. The Amendments, which were chiefly proposed by the Chief Justice, and the Hon. Robert Sewell, His Majesty's Attorney General, are printed in Italic.

I.

RESOLVED, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the suppression, either direct or virtual, of the Slave Trade, by the British nation only, (other nations continuing the trade as usual,) would not promote the purposes of humanity, either in respect of the Negroes which are annually brought to the African markets for sale, or in regard to the Negroes at present in a state of slavery in this and the rest of the British islands in the West Indies. The effect in Africa of a partial abolition would be this, that the purchasers from Europe, being fewer in number, would have a greater choice of Slaves, equal to the whole demand of the British merchants at present, which is stated at 38,000 annually; whereby prime Slaves only would be saleable; and the aged and infirm (many of whom are now purchased of necessity) being rejected in greater numbers than formerly, the horrid practice which has long existed among the Slave merchants on the coast, of putting to death such of their captives as are brought to market and rejected by the Europeans, would be more prevalent than ever. In the British West Indies the effect (however lightly felt at first) must necessarily, in the course of a few years, from an unavoidable decrease consequent on the present inequality of the sexes, have this operation; that the labour which is now performed by a given number of Negroes, must either be performed by a less number, or the Planter must contract the limits of his plantation, and diminish his produce. Thus immediate interest, and in many cases urgent distress from the importunity of creditors, will be set in opposition to the principles of justice, and the dictates of humanity.

II.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that to condemn the Slave Trade as peculiarly destructive to British seamen (the contrary whereof is proved by the evidence of Vice Admiral Edwards before the Privy Council) and to adduce in proof thereof the losses sustained on certain unhealthy parts of the coast, without taking into the account the losses sustained in other branches of the African commerce, such as the wood and ivory trades, where the mortality principally occurs, and the increase of seamen from such other parts of the British navigation as are principally dependent on the African commerce, is partial and unjust. Among these branches may be reckoned the West-India and lumber trades, and,

above

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above all, those great nurseries for seamen, the Irish, British, British-American, and Newfoundland fisheries; the consumption of herrings and salted fish by the negroes, being immense. *We have likewise reason to believe, that, since the late Regulating Act, the mortality of British seamen in the Slave Trade has decreased nearly one half.*

III.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the loss of Negroes which is sometimes sustained in the voyages from Africa, as well as in the harbours of this island, between the days of arrival and sale, and which is stated to happen from the mode of transporting them from the coast, being a remediable grievance, affords no argument for a total suppression of the Slave Trade.

IV.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that no just estimate can be formed of the effects which the Regulating Act of the British Parliament, passed in 1788, will ultimately produce in respect of the loss of Slaves in the Middle Passage, inasmuch as it appears, from a return of Negroes purchased on the coast of Africa by ships that have entered in the port of Kingston since the first of January last, that, out of 2099 Slaves purchased on the Gold Coast, 1042 have been sold in this island, a loss of only two and three-fourths per cent.; but that, out of 2550 Slaves purchased in the Bite of Benin, only 1642 have been sold; a loss amounting to thirty-five and three-eighths per cent. and unknown before any regulation took place. Two vessels have since arrived from the same coast, the Ann and the Vulture: these vessels purchased 785 Slaves, of whom only 14 have died; a loss not exceeding one and three-sevenths per cent. This amazing difference, as appears by the evidence taken on oath, is partly to be attributed to the small pox, which raged in some of the ships, and the measles and flux, which broke out in others. The loss by the flux was chiefly occasioned by the use of unripe yams, for want of other provisions.

V.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the number of Slaves at present in this island is about 250,000; of which, according to the best enquiries that can be made concerning the proportion of the sexes, there are 120,000 males and 130,000 females: it follows therefore, that, if future importations from Africa be discontinued, there will unavoidably ensue, from the disproportion of the sexes alone, a very great reduction from the present number of our Slaves, before any augmentation can be expected from natural increase by generation; a diminution which must not only preclude all attempts at the further improvement of our unsettled lands, but likewise occasion a proportionable decrease in the present cultivation; it being an undoubted fact, that almost all the plantations already settled are much under-handed.

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VI. *Resolved*

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VI.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that it is absolutely impossible to cultivate the West-India islands, so as to produce any commodities that would enrich the mother-country, by white labourers. Fatal experience demonstrates the fallacy of such an expectation. In the year 1749, the legislature of this island passed a law holding out great encouragement for the introduction of white families into this colony, which proved ineffectual; very few families having come in consequence thereof, and of those that came, not a vestige is left. The French ministry, in 1763, attempted to settle a colony by means of white labourers at Cayenne, on the coast of America: twelve thousand miserable people were the victims of this impolitic scheme. If farther instances were wanting to prove, that Europeans cannot withstand the climate when exposed to the sun and the rains, recourse may be had to the accounts of the siege of Carthagena; the expedition to Cumberland Harbour; the siege of the Havanna; the returns of the regiments that came out under the command of General Garth in 1779 and 1780; and the expedition to Fort Saint Juan, on the Spanish Main.

VII.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that, according to the best estimate which can be formed, this island may be stated to contain four millions and eighty thousand acres of land, of which not more than one-fourth part, or about one million of acres, is at present in actual cultivation; and although a considerable part of the country, consisting of high mountains and rugged precipices, is incapable of improvement, yet it may be presumed, that no part of the lands, which are actually patented, falls within that description; inasmuch as the owners thereof pay a quit-rent to the crown for holding the same; which quit-rent, and the arrears thereof, collected since Christmas last, amount to the sum of 27,000*l.* or thereabouts, exclusive of 13,000*l.* now in a train of settlement.

VIII.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that it appears, from the offices of the Clerk of the Patents and Receiver-General, that there are at this time patented in this island, or taken up by grants from the crown, 1,907,589 acres of land; from which, the quantity in actual cultivation being deducted, there will remain, with every allowance for unproductive territory, 900,000 acres of cultivatable land yet unsettled; the whole of which, if the Slave Trade be abolished, must become an absolute burthen and incumbrance on its present proprietors; who will, in such case, be entitled as of right, and on the principles of natural justice, to the liberty of surrendering the same back to the crown, and receiving full compensation for the capitals therein vested, and all quit-rents paid on account thereof. The said

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land, valued only at 3*l.* currency *per* acre, is worth 2,700,000*l.* currency, equal to 1,928,500*l.* sterling.

IX.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the Planters and proprietors of Negroes in this island will, in like manner, be entitled to compensation for the diminution which must necessarily ensue in the number of our Slaves, should all farther importations be discontinued by authority of Parliament; the present disproportion between the sexes having arisen from causes which are not imputable to us. With the reduction of our Slaves will likewise unavoidably happen a proportionate decrease in the value of our lands, buildings, and produce; for which, and all other losses consequent on a change in the present system, it is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the inhabitants of this, and the rest of His Majesty's Sugar Colonies, are fairly and justly entitled to compensation; the said colonies having been originally settled under the most sacred compacts with the mother-country, sanctioned by royal charters and proclamations, as well as by a succession of acts of Parliament authorizing and encouraging the Slave Trade; particularly by the charters granted in 1662 and 1674, by King Charles II. which established a Royal African Company, the last of which was granted in consequence of an address from both Houses of Parliament, and by the acts of the 9th and 10th of William II. a period when the principles of civil liberty were minutely investigated, well understood, and freely asserted; and more recently, by the act of the 23d of George II. which recites the usefulness and absolute necessity of the African Trade. *Our claim of compensation is founded in, and supported by, not only the rules of natural as well as moral justice, but by the expectations we are warranted to entertain from the examples of compensation made by Parliament to the Royal African Company for the resumption of their lands, forts, &c. &c. (see stat. 25, Geo. II. c. 40) in 1752, and to the British merchants and owners of ships engaged in the African trade, for losses sustained by them in consequence of the Act for regulating the shipping and carrying Slaves in British vessels from the coast of Africa, passed the last session of the British Parliament: And it is our opinion that, before any farther measures towards the abolition of the Slave Trade be taken by the Parliament of Great Britain, Commissioners ought to be appointed for ascertaining the losses to arise therefrom.*

X.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the charges which have been brought against the Planters of this island, of improper and inhuman treatment of our Slaves, may be fully refuted and disproved; first, by an appeal to our laws, and secondly, by the evidence of respectable men who have resided among us, and have been witnesses to our manners. Whatever may be said of our ancient colonial Slave laws, the acts which have been passed within, the last ten years, are written in characters of justice, mercy, and liberality. Concerning the ge-

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neral treatment of our Slaves, we refer to the evidence already personally given to the Lords of the Council, by the Right Hon. Lord Rodney, Sir Peter Parker, Admiral Barrington, Sir Joshua Rowley, Admiral Hotham, Vice-Admiral Edwards, and Sir George Young: and to the further evidence that may be produced from gentlemen of character in England who have resided many years in this island, and are intimately acquainted with our conduct and manners. We conceive that the testimony of such persons is unanswerable and conclusive; and shall therefore only remark, that it is notorious our Slaves in general are not only treated with kindness and humanity, but that they are also protected by law from immoderate chastisement or cruel treatment, and enjoy more easy, comfortable, and happy lives, than multitudes of the labourers in Great Britain.

XI.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that, in confidence of the validity of plantation security, and the support and encouragement the Sugar Colonies, and the African trade, have hitherto experienced from Government, the merchants in Great Britain have been induced to enter into very large advances, and engage in extensive loans to the West-India Planters; and, on the faith of an act of Parliament passed on purpose, to make the receiving of six per cent. on colonial securities lawful in Great Britain, great numbers of private persons at home, as well as the subjects of foreign States, have likewise embarked considerable sums on mortgages, and have purchased annuities to a very large amount, on West-India estates: now the Slave Trade being the great source of every West-India improvement, its abolition must inevitably diminish the value of all such securities, and drive the creditors to use every means in their power to extricate their property from such a precarious situation, to the immediate distress of the Planters and their families, and the ultimate ruin of many of the mortgagees and annuitants themselves.

XII.

Resolved, It is the opinion of the joint Committee, that the present value of property in this island may be fairly and reasonably estimated as follows; viz. 250,000 Negroes, at 50*l.* sterling per head is 12,500,000*l.* The patented lands, with their erections, and the personal property appertaining thereunto, at double the value of the Negroes (being the best general rule of valuation), amount to 20,000,000*l.* and the article of houses in the towns, the coasting and trading vessels, &c. may be estimated at one million and an half at the least; it appearing by the Report of the Committee of the Lords of the Privy-Council, that the houses in Kingston and Spanish Town are alone worth 1,428,521*l.* sterling. The total is thirty-nine millions of pounds sterling; the whole profits and produce of which capital, as also of the various branches of commerce to which it gives rise, center in Great Britain, and add to the national wealth, while the navigation necessary to all its branches, establishes a strength which wealth can neither purchase nor balance.

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Number III.

EXAMINATIONS of Alexandre Lindo, Esquire, John Taylor, Esquire, and Captain Sherwood.

The Examination of ALEXANDRE LINDO, of the Parish of Kingston, Esq. taken in the joint Committee on the Slave Trade, in the most solemn manner.

Question 1. PLEASE to inform the joint Committee, whether a ship, named the King Pepple, did not come consigned to you from Bonny?

Answer, *The ship King Pepple came consigned to me from the Bite of Benin.*

Q. 2. Please to say, whether a great mortality did not happen amongst the Slaves in that ship during her passage, and to what cause was it owing?

A. *The mortality was very great: I think the loss in the Middle Passage was about 150, and twenty, or thereabouts, died after the ship's arrival. The cause of the mortality was an epidemic flux, principally occasioned, as I have been informed and believe, by the ship's taking on board on the coast a large quantity of unripe yams, the time of her sailing not being the yam season, and the Captain could not therefore get better.*

[Signed]

Alexandre Lindo.

The Examination of JOHN TAYLOR, of the Parish of Kingston, Esq. taken in the joint Committee on the Slave Trade, in the most solemn manner.

Q. 1. Please to inform the joint Committee, whether a ship, named the Eliza, Captain Bullock, came consigned to you from Africa, with what number of Slaves, and from what part of the coast?

A. *The Eliza arrived to my address, from New Calabar in the Bite of Benin. 283 Slaves were purchased, and put on board that vessel on the coast; 210 were brought to this island in the vessel, of which I sold 180.*

Q. 2. Can you assign the causes of such mortality?

A. *I believe the small-pox, of a malignant kind, was the cause of the great mortality. From the ship's journal it appears that, soon after leaving the coast, it was discovered some of the Slaves were infected with that disorder, and it continued to rage amongst them during the whole of the Middle Passage. On the arrival of the ship, I immediately ordered such of the Slaves as did not appear to have caught the infection, to be inoculated: 30 Slaves died afterwards, part of whom had the disorder in the natural way, and part were of those that had been inoculated. The whole loss was 130 Slaves.*

Q. 3. Was there a Surgeon on board during the voyage, and did

did the Slaves want provisions or other necessaries, particularly medicines?

A. *There was a Surgeon on board during the voyage, and I employed an assistant to him immediately on the ship's arrival. The Slaves had provisions and water in great abundance; and I did not hear they were in want of necessaries of any kind; After the Slaves were disposed of, more than a sufficient quantity of provisions for the voyage to England were left on board the ship, and I sold a quantity of both beef and bread in Kingston.*

Q. 4. Did the Surgeon inoculate any of the Slaves on board, before the ship's arrival?

A. *He did not.*

[Signed]

John Taylor.

Examination of Captain WILLIAM SHERWOOD, taken in the joint Committee on the Slave Trade, in the most solemn manner.

Q. 1. What ship do you command, of what tonnage, and how many Slaves are you allowed to carry by the late Regulating Act?

A. *I command the ship Brothers, of Liverpool, of 325 tons; and am allowed, by the Regulating Act, to carry 459 Slaves, but took in only 455.*

Q. 2. What part of the coast did you sail from last? and how long was you there in getting your cargo?

A. *I sailed from Liverpool the 24th of June last, and arrived at Bonny, in the Bite of Benin, on the 2d of August; from thence I sailed the 20th of September, and arrived at Kingston the 10th of November last, after a fine passage of fifty days.*

Q. 3. In what state of health were the Slaves when you purchased them?

A. *Apparently healthy, but some of them a little emaciated, which I imputed to their having been brought from a vast distance inland, in the rainy season.*

Q. 4. What was the mortality on board?

A. *I lost 63 in the Middle Passage.*

Q. 5. Had you ever such mortality in any former voyage, and how many voyages have you been as Master?

A. *Never in the same proportion. I have been ten voyages as Master.*

Q. 6. Can you assign the causes of the mortality in your present voyage?

A. *About eight or ten days after we left Bonny, the measles broke out, and carried off from 55 to 60 of the Slaves; one died of apoplexy, and the rest of fevers.*

Q. 7. How many Slaves did you lose between the days of arrival and sale?

A. *I lost five. They had had the measles before my arrival, and*

and died of fluxes in consequence thereof, though I had them landed immediately on their arrival, and all possible care taken of them.

Q. 8. Are you of opinion that the measles and flux were the sole causes of this great mortality?

A. *I am firmly of opinion, if the contagious distemper had not happened, that I should have brought the Slaves with as little loss as is sustained by ships in general coming from that part of Africa.*

Q. 9. Had you any Surgeons on board?

A. *I had two on board.*

Q. 10. How many of the seamen died?

A. *I had 42, and none of them died.*

Q. 11. What quantity of provisions had you on board when you sailed from Liverpool, and of what quality; and what provisions did you purchase on the coast?

A. *I had, as nearly as I can recollect, 14 tons of biscuit, 40 tons and 30 barrels of beef, 6 barrels of pork, 4 tons of shelled beans, and 3 tons of flour, when I left Liverpool, all of good quality. I purchased, while on the coast, from sixteen to seventeen thousand good sound yams, each weighing, upon an average, about seven pounds; from eight to ten thousand plantains; and about five or six thousand heads of Indian corn. On my arrival, I had left about seven tons of biscuit, three thousand eight hundred yams, and about a ton and a half of beans, eleven tierces and seven barrels of beef, a ton and a half of flour, and twelve butts of water of 180 gallons each.*

Q. 12. Were the Seamen and Slaves continued at the usual full allowance of provisions and water during the whole voyage?

A. *They were.*

Q. 13. Is not the construction and the conveniencies on board a Slave ship of more consequence to the health of the Negroes, than confining the number of Slaves to a certain tonnage?

A. *I think the construction more material than the tonnage. In a long narrow ship, the air circulates more freely: a short quarter-deck, no top-gallant fore-castle no gangway, and a very low waist, are circumstances of greater advantage than a mere extension of tonnage.*

Q. 14. Do you remember any instance of the small-pox taking place on board any vessel under your command, during any passage from the coast of Africa?

A. *I went out in 1777, in the Joshua, a brig belonging to Liverpool, for 120 Slaves, and took in 184, at the Isle de Los, on the windward coast. When I had got about 100 on board, I perceived one with the small-pox, which I immediately put on shore, hoping to stop the infection: but about a fortnight after, on my going to sea, I found it had broke out again.*

Q. 15. Did you cause the Slaves to be inoculated at sea, and how long after the first appearance of the disorder?

A. *I caused them to be inoculated immediately on its appearance; and all of them, except , took the infection.*

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Q. 16. What success attended such inoculation?

A. I lost seven only out of the 184.

Q. 17. Is the loss of seamen on board a Slave ship greater in proportion than that of landmen, and would not the seasoning of landmen in the West Indies be as fatal to them as on the coast of Africa?

A. The greatest loss is of landmen. In some parts of the West Indies, I think the loss of men equal to any loss I ever sustained on the coast of Africa.

Q. 19. Please to say whether, from your own experience, and the information of others, the late Regulating Act has, in your opinion, been of advantage?

A. In some ships I think it has, and in others not.

[Signed]

William Sherwood.

Number IV.

An Account of the Number of ACRES OF LAND patented in the several Parishes, as given in the Years 1784 to 1788.

Parish of Saint Andrew	—	—	82,822
Saint Ann	—	—	184,685
Saint Catherine	—	—	76,892
Clarendon	—	—	174,099
Saint David	—	—	35,914
Saint Dorothy	—	—	12,870
Saint Elizabeth	—	—	244,788
Saint George	—	—	83,759
Hanover	—	—	96,614
Saint John	—	—	55,931
Saint James	—	—	56,191
Saint Mary	—	—	94,588
Port Royal	—	—	71,159
Portland	—	—	80,280
Saint Thomas in the East	—	—	127,485
Saint Thomas in the Vale	—	—	74,755
Trelawny	—	—	148,818
Vere	—	—	66,514
Westmoreland	—	—	180,125
Total number of Acres			1,907,589

Jamaica, Nov. 16th,
1789.

ELIPHALET FITCH, REC. GEN.

END OF THE APPENDIX.