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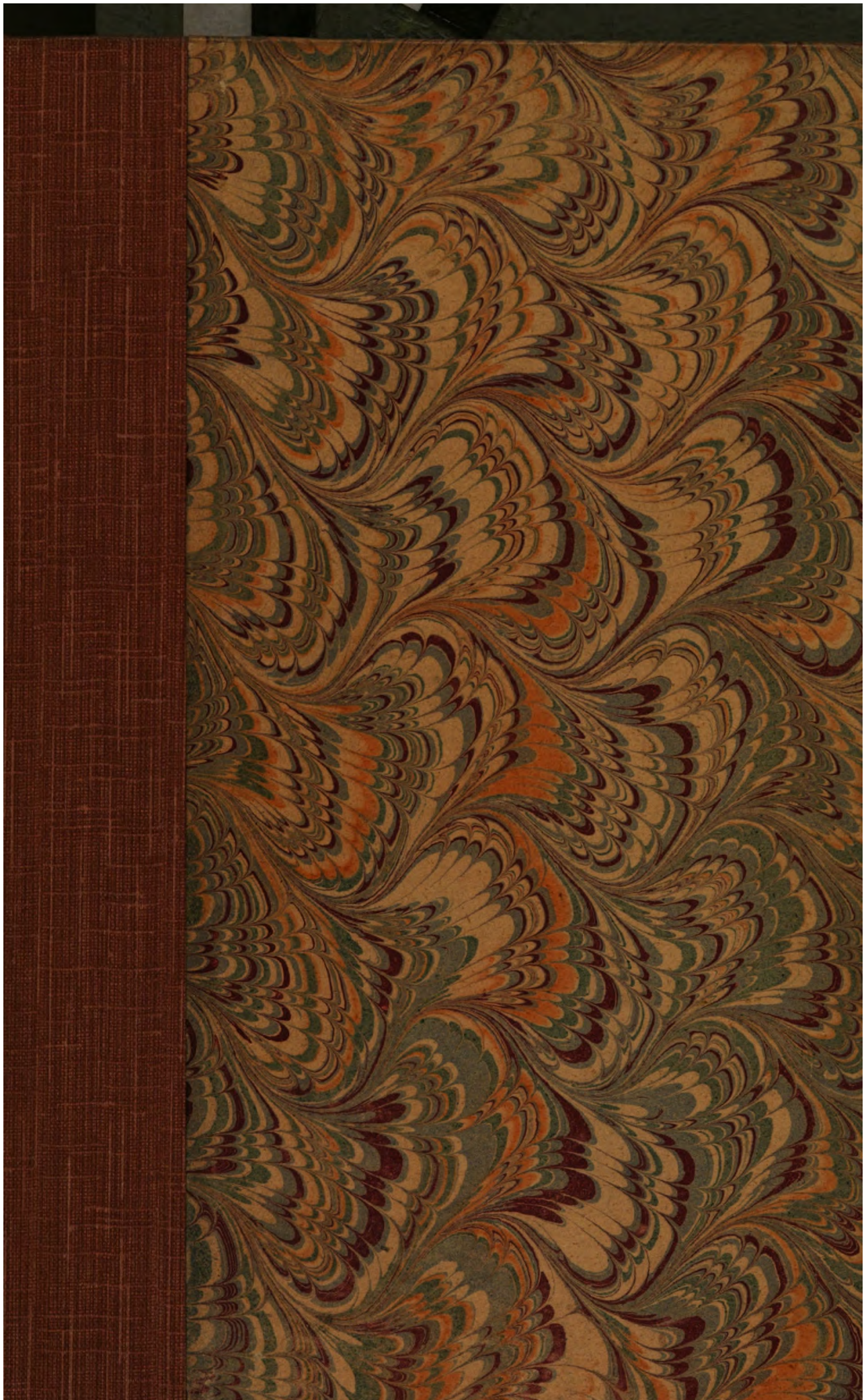
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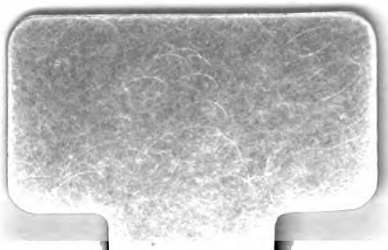
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NOT A LABOURER WANTED FOR JAMAICA:

TO WHICH IS ADDED, AN ACCOUNT OF THE

NEWLY ERECTED VILLAGES BY THE PEASANTRY THERE,
AND THEIR BENEFICIAL RESULTS;

AND OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF

RE-OPENING A NEW SLAVE TRADE, AS IT RELATES TO AFRICA,

AND THE HONOUR OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN BREAKING HER TREATIES WITH
FOREIGN POWERS:

IN

A LETTER ADDRESSED TO A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO SIT ON THE WEST INDIA COMMITTEE,

WITH SEVERAL IMPORTANT ADDITIONS,

BY THOMAS CLARKSON,

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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A LETTER, &c.

Playford Hall, Ipswich, June 9, 1842.

SIR,

I HAVE not the honour of knowing you personally, but only as an upright member of parliament; and as such I take the liberty of addressing you, knowing that you are now sitting as a member of a Parliamentary Committee for inquiring into West India concerns, as they relate to difficulties or impediments which may stand in the way of a fair remuneration to the Planters in the cultivation of their estates. This question, Sir, upon which you are called to deliberate, is of immense importance, and will require the *strictest impartiality*, both towards the interests of the *masters* and of the *servants*, in your development of it, so as to come to a satisfactory conclusion; for if you take the side of the servants *unduly* against their masters, you may become the means of encouraging the former to make *such exorbitant demands* in the shape of wages, as to make it impossible for the latter to cultivate their estates; and if, on the other hand, you take the side of the planters *unduly* against their servants, so that their wages will not enable them to live, the servants will *refuse to work*, and thus the estates will go uncultivated; and you cannot force these to labour by the whip, as they are now *free men*.

Certain rumours have of late reached this country, originating, I believe, with the West India Planters, which I am sorry to say have found credit with some members of parliament without a fair inquiry into the circumstances of the case: viz. "that the planters are in the *high road to ruin*;" that the *peasantry* are *idle and will not work*; that the *present wages can no longer be paid*, and that the *cost* of keeping up a plantation, with the numerous demands against it, is so great, *that no profit is left to the owner*," &c. Such rumours, Sir, as these have given birth to the Committee at which you now sit as a member. I shall only observe at present *on one part* of these charges, that the negroes of the present day *are not* the sort of people here described. Their behaviour ever since the day of their emancipation has been in general *most exemplary and laudable*. They have been a sober, industrious, orderly, well-disposed, and moral people. Crime has so much diminished amongst them, that the gaols are frequently quite empty. I could bring forward individual evidence in abundance that this is their character; but I shall satisfy myself by an appeal to the speech of Lord Stanley in the House of Commons, on the 22nd of March in the present year, which contains the reports of Sir Charles Metcalfe, the late Governor of Jamaica, and of a stipendiary magistrate there (to which island I shall confine myself, as it contains as large a population as all the other islands in the West Indies put together.) Lord Stanley speaks thus: "Six years after the passing of the Emancipation Act, and after two of his (Sir C. Metcalfe's) government, he (Sir C. Metcalfe) said that the present condition of the peasantry in the island of Jamaica

was very striking. He did not suppose that any peasantry had so many comforts, or so much independence. Their behaviour was *peaceable*, and in some respects cheerful. They were found to *attend divine service* in good clothes, many of them riding on horses. *They sent their children to school, and paid for their schooling*, and not only attended the churches of their different communities, *but subscribed for their respective churches. Their piety was remarkable*; and he was happy to add, that in some respects they *deserved what they had*. They were generally *well ordered and free from crime*, had *much improved* in their habits, and were *constant in their attendance on divine worship* themselves, and in the attendance of *their children*, and were willing to *pay the expenses*." The last report of Sir C. Metcalfe was on the 4th of November, 1841, and he (Lord Stanley) had received it with regret, because it contained the resignation of his government, during which he had rendered most valuable services to the colony. Sir C. Metcalfe said, that with respect to the labouring population, formerly slaves, but now perfectly free, they were more independent than in other free countries. He ventured to say, that in no country in the world could the labouring population be more provided with the comforts of life, or more at ease, or more free from oppression than were the peasantry of the island of Jamaica. The next statement he (Lord Stanley) would read to the House, was by a Stipendiary Magistrate. He, the stipendiary magistrate, said it would appear wonderful *how so much had been accomplished* in the island, in building, planting, and digging, and making fences, *without a cessation of labour on the part of the population*. The reason was, that the emancipation from bondage to new hopes, new desires, and new responsibilities, strengthened the exertions of the negro, and enabled him to labour in his own plantation, and to *spare time to labour in the plantations of others*. And to that statement was attached a most singular document, which showed the number in one parish, not of those who had landed possessions, but of those who had entered their names as being *the owners of property liable to taxation*, and who had stated their *willingness as free men to bear their proportion of the public imposts*. In that parish, in 1836, there were 317 names; in 1840, 1321; and in 1841, 1866: and the number of freeholders, who had become freeholders by their accumulations and industry in the island of Jamaica, was in 1838, 2114; and in the space of two years, in 1840, their number had increased to 7340."

Now whose reports are we to believe—those of a few interested persons, never, never satisfied, or those of Sir Charles Metcalfe, who *had made a tour* over the whole island *on purpose* to ascertain with his own eyes the *conduct* of the labourers there, and who had such an abundance of opportunities of knowing the state of things? But if Sir Charles Metcalfe's report be true, why do we *saddle* the *ruinous state* of the colonies upon the *poor negroes*? Is it not probable, that it may arise in some measure from the fault of *the planters themselves*—from their *wretched system of agriculture*, and from their *slowness* to follow the most improved patterns of husbandry? But are *all* the plantations in the West Indies in this ruinous condition? No. Are there no enlightened men in the West Indies, who know better how to manage their land? Yes; and the plantations of these are *all thriving*, but their example, whether from a *want of capital* or a dislike to innovation, *is not followed*. Do not, Sir, be frightened at this clamour of the planters about *their ruin*. The cry is *not new*. Ever since I took up the *cause of slavery and the slave-trade*, which was in the year 1785, till now,

I have been accustomed to these unpleasant sounds. There was indeed reason for this cry between the years 1772 and 1792, when in Jamaica alone 177 estates *were sold for debt*, and 55 *were thrown up*, while at the end of that period 92 estates *remained in the hands of creditors*. We have this on the authority of a Jamaica Assembly Committee. But what was this owing to? To the *ruinous* practice of the *purchase of new negroes* from Africa to be worked up in three or four years, and then to be renewed from thence; and to the long *unprecedented droughts*, with which that island was afflicted; and to the *vile and defective husbandry* which prevailed there. A Jamaica paper of this year, now before me, ushers this cry into our ears again. "I we must credit a certain class of individuals," says the editor, "the doom of Jamaica is sealed. *The sun of her prosperity is set*. The cry of ruin is not, however, *new*. It has been the planters' ditty for the *last seventy years*. Amidst all this doleful lamentation we search the papers to see how many and what sugar properties were advertised for sale, but we find comparatively few.* We betake ourselves to the cane-fields to see where the ruin exists, but meet with fields beautiful and flourishing. We watch the movements of the labourers themselves, but here we perceive no signs of ruin. Many planters, on the other hand, are *extending their bounds*, and *investing their capital in land*; still *ruin* is the burden of their song. The most credulous finds himself baffled. True, we know some who have been obliged to give up cultivation, or to carry it on on a smaller scale. But some contend that this has arisen from *bad usage* (of the labourers), *extravagance*, or *bad management* on the masters' side." That there may be distress among a few poorer individuals in Jamaica, who have not sufficient capital to carry on cultivation, is probably true, and these are to be pitied.

You are aware, Sir, that in the days of slavery nothing could exceed the *vile management* of a West Indian estate. Negroes were obliged to carry manure in baskets on their heads to enrich the land previous to the coming crop: would not such a practice be laughed at in England as a great waste of time and labour? As to the plough, such an instrument was unknown in this part of the world some years ago. Sir James Johnstone at length introduced it into Barbadoes; and his calculation was, according to my friend Dr. Dickson, who advised him to try it, that the plough with four and sometimes two horses, and with two attendants, did per day the work of *thirty-three* slaves. What a saving of labour was this, and *yet the example was not followed* for some years, *though it greatly increased the sugar crop*. It is however to be observed here, that all the land in the West Indies is not ploughable, on account of a rocky or stony soil, and its situation on the steep sides of mountains, and from other causes. Yet many thousands and *tens of thousands* of acres were to be found, *which were ploughable*, but where that instrument had never been used.

But Sir James Johnstone's calculations were below the truth, if others, who used the plough in the West Indies, are to be believed. Mr. Ashley left Jamaica in 1785. While he resided upon his own estate he was determined upon the use of the plough, and we may see the result in his own statement taken from the report of His Majesty's Privy Council (folio), dated March, 1789. "Holing an acre of canes," says Mr. Ashley, "employs *forty* negroes a day, on an average of soil, for which a jobber had £7 currency, or £5 sterling. He ploughed an acre a day with two sets of eight oxen each,

* No estate is offered for sale for want of hands to cultivate it.

one for the morning and one for the evening, to one plough, and it took half a day more to put it in the same order for planting as land dug by jobbers. But with two spells of oxen he ploughed two acres a day, and *it answered fully as well as land holed by the negroes*. Land holed *by hand* is never *entirely* broken up, there being an intermediate space on which the earth is heaped up. Mr. Ashley experienced, that *ploughed land is more likely to yield good crops* than that holed by the negroes, being more completely shaken by the plough than by the hoe." Thus it appears that the plough in one day did the work of *forty* negroes.

I find an account so similar to that just mentioned, that though it be given by a planter in the French colonies, I cannot refrain from inserting it. His book is entitled, "Des Colonies Modernes sous la Zone torride et particulièrement de celle de St. Domingue;" par M. Barré St. Venant, Paris, 1802. Mr. Venant wrote his work for the information of Bonaparte. "Instead of *scratching* the land," says he, "with hoes, it must be deeply ploughed. One man and three horses will plough an arpent (rather more than an English acre) per day, which is more than *forty ordinary negroes would do*." But why should I dwell more on this subject? See "Long's History of Jamaica," a most approved work; see "Bryan Edwards's History of the West Indies."—Mr. Edwards was a very large planter, and the most *enlightened man in the Assembly of Jamaica*; see also, "Notices respecting Jamaica, by Gilbert Mathison Esq.;" and many other publications, which speak in similar language in favour of the plough.

Having mentioned the plough, I will state only another instance to show the wretched husbandry of the planters *during the days of slavery*, for want of other proper implements. Will it be believed that there was not even a *common muck-fork* to be found in all Barbadoes, which is found in every farmyard throughout England? My friend, Dr. Dickson before mentioned, one of the ablest and most intelligent writers on West Indian concerns, says positively in his work entitled "Mitigation of Slavery," that when he was in Barbadoes, now about sixty years ago, the only instruments then used upon the land were the *basket* and the *hoe*. Mr. Venant says the same thing of St. Domingo, and speaks of the impolicy of carrying muck on the heads of negro women in baskets, and of not using the *muck-fork*. "Four negro men," says he, "with the dexterous use of the spade and muck-fork, will load a cart with earth or dung in less time than ten women can with baskets in the present way." But to return to Dr. Dickson. "When a cart," says he, "happens to be used in conveying town or stable dung to some distant plantation or field, the negroes first fill the baskets *with their hoes* (who could think of such a scraping instrument for such a purpose), and then empty them into the cart, there being *no such thing as a muck-fork*. Hardly a *plough, harrow, roller*, or horse-hoe is used in all the West Indies." But to complete the bad husbandry of the planter, he goes on to say, "Planted grass and green Guinea corn are *slowly* and *clumsily* cut with a *common knife*, instead of a scythe, or sickle; need we wonder then that the planters are *poor and pinched*." This latter fact is scarcely credible, but that Dr. Dickson, who was private secretary to Governor Hay of Barbadoes, was a man of religious principle, and that he published and advertised his book in London in 1814, when the West India interest was actively employed in watching the coming out of hostile publications, with a view of answering them; but an answer to Dr. Dickson's book *was never attempted*. But here it may be

objected, that the miserable husbandry, of which I have just spoken, relates to *olden* times long since passed, and that nothing like it is to be seen now in our colonies. I wish this were true. This bad husbandry was continued long after Dr. Dickson's time with little or no improvement, and only here and there by an intelligent individual, as long as slavery lasted; I say *as long as slavery lasted*, for while an ignorant overseer, wedded to old customs, could command the *arms and sinews of a slave*, machinery never entered into his head; nay, the very plough had been *long ago abandoned* in Jamaica, though the historian, Mr. Long, of that island, and others, had used it with such *singular success*, and had *recorded its inestimable worth*. No improvement of any kind had taken place till *within the last seven years* in Jamaica. The planters there were as incorrigible as, by Dr. Dickson's account, they were sixty years ago in Barbadoes. Neither the apprenticeship, nor emancipation, had awakened them from their lethargy. Sir Nicholas Palmer, however, about seven years ago, had the honour of introducing the plough upon his own estates in Jamaica, and of establishing the first agricultural society in St. Dorothy's. One or two such societies have been established since in other parishes. But will it be believed when I say (for so a friend of mine informs me who has resided *nineteen years* in Jamaica, and who arrived in England this very month, August), that there is not even now, or at least there was not in July last when he left the island, a *muck-fork* used in the plantation work; that *baskets of manure* were still carried *in most places*, not in all, upon the head to the fields; and that though Guinea grass for sale was cut with a sickle or reap hook, it was still cut in small quantities with knife. During a residence of nineteen years he was intimately acquainted with the parishes of St. Dorothy, St. Catharine, St. Thomas in the Vale, St. John, and St. Andrew, and he never saw a *pair of harrows* either there or elsewhere in the island. The horse-hoe, the horse-rake, the roller, the drill, the scarifier, and other most useful implements of husbandry, are unknown; and now, mentioning the scarifier, I am reminded to say, that vegetation is so quick in Jamaica, that there is constantly rising up an *inconceivable* abundance of weeds. These weeds, which are so detrimental to the land, are *never pulled up*, or *extracted by any instrument*, as they ought to be, but left to grow up, (being *cut but once a year*) till they have done all the mischief they can, and then cut down by what is called a bill, or cane cutlass. Were a farmer to do so in this country, he *could pay no rent*. What wonder then that the farmers in Jamaica should be in *continual distress*? The clearing of lands for pasture or Guinea grass costs a great deal of money, whereas if the weeds or brushwood were fairly subdued in the first process, they would not seed again, and my friend says, that at least *two-thirds of the expense would be saved*. He has tried the experiment himself.

I shall now, Sir, attempt to show you that the conduct of the planters, I mean of *some of the planters* (for I always mean that there are exceptions), has been not only *unjust*, but highly impolitic, since emancipation, and that they have to thank themselves only for the situation into which they *are now brought*. If they complain of a want of labour, or if they complain that the labour hitherto performed has not been adequate to their wants, this charge *will recoil upon themselves*, and is owing, among other things, to the bad management of their estates. Of the quantity of labour done in a day they can have no reason to complain, for every peasant *now does twice the work which he did when a slave*, when justly treated and fairly and punc-

tually paid. The holing of an acre of canes now costs them only £3 10s. 0d.; *it used to cost them in the days of slavery £7.*

And, first, as to a want of labourers. It was exceedingly difficult, where the labourers, as in the days of slavery, had been *paid nothing* for their work, to estimate what would be the fair and just wages now that they were to be paid something for their labour. The emancipated slaves asked so much per day, at the rate at which they had been *valued by their masters themselves* previous to the apprenticeship, with a view of being re-imbursed for their value. They had no other standard by which to judge. Their masters, to get more money, valued them in general at a higher rate than they ought in justice to have done. The negroes charged accordingly for their labour. The fault, then, of their asking too much was owing, at the outset, to the cupidity of *some of the planters* themselves. But the negroes were willing to take less than they had asked, if it could be shown them that this was fair; they wanted only a fair remuneration for their labour. A number of proprietors, in consequence, made them *fair offers*, and *thousands* went to work *immediately* with their old masters, at least with such as had treated them well. The rest of the planters and overseers held out. They would not pay them fair wages as the others had done. Thousands in consequence were unemployed; *many months* passed without any or comparatively but little work being done upon their estates, and these estates *suffered*, as well they might, *most severely*. Now, whose fault was it that for so many months these estates were without their proper cultivators? It was clearly the fault of *those planters and overseers who would not pay them as others did*. Is the negro to work for nothing?

I shall now show you, in another case, that some of the planters have no right whatever to *complain of a want of labour*. It is their *own fault again*, that they have not had as much of it as they have had before. Irritated at what they called the exorbitant wages which the labourers demanded, which a Jamaica newspaper tells me was only 1s. 6d. per day, and thinking that they could trample upon them with impunity, as they did when they were slaves, they determined upon a certain but a *most impolitic* expedient, and this was to raise the rents of the huts or cottages in which the labourers lived, to an amount which should reimburse them for the alleged high price of their labour. That they had an undoubted right to do this every one must allow; but, unhappily for themselves, they went too far in this matter, for they charged rents in many instances which it was impossible for the labourers to pay, even to the amount of nearly all their *wages*. They fixed a shilling a week per head on each hut or cottage for every person, man, woman, and child, who occupied it; so that if a man, with his wife, and a grandfather and grandmother, and children, were to the number of ten or twelve to occupy it, the master of the family was charged with ten or twelve shillings a week, and this for a hut or cottage made of the branches of trees, with a small garden, and which cottage did not cost the owner £10 in raising it from the ground; thus charging £25 a year for the outlay of only £10. What would our cottagers say to this, who pay only about two shillings a week for their premises? Incredible as this is, it is nevertheless true; *I assert it from their own papers*. Now, what was the consequence of this procedure? The tenants became dissatisfied; indeed, they could not maintain themselves and families with such prodigious rents to pay, such drawbacks from their wages. What, then, were they to do? Some of them had saved a little money, and they determined to buy little freeholds for themselves.

Some of these, if they had more money than they wanted for this purpose, generously lent it to others of their own class who were poorer. They then procured the assistance of some of the white inhabitants to purchase land for them in eligible situations, and when this land was purchased, they left their masters and settled there. They built houses, and fenced in their gardens. I do not know the number of labourers who thus left their employers, but I believe many hundreds, for there are no less than *ten or more large villages* erected in different parts of Jamaica, which give an agreeable appearance to the country; and new villages, of which I shall say something hereafter, are yet rising up from the same cause, by the last accounts from that island. And now, I would ask, if the planters complain of a want of labour, whose fault was it *in this instance*, that many hundreds of labourers ceased to work for their masters? Were not those planters to blame who resorted to the wicked and impolitic expedient before mentioned to force labour? I am, however, happy to say that the labour in this instance has not been *wholly lost* to the planters themselves, for many who live in these new villages work for *other masters* in their neighbourhood. The negro peasant will work for any man *who will pay him and treat him properly*. But not only were the negroes obliged to leave their cottages on account of the heavy rents, but in one instance, at any rate, the labourers of a whole estate were compelled to seek shelter elsewhere in consequence of their cottages being wantonly destroyed by fire. A Jamaica paper now before me, of March 30th of this year, gives the following account: "These towns," says the editor, alluding to the new villages which I have just mentioned, "owe their origin, like most other noble and beneficial undertakings, to want and necessity. Shortly after the abrogation of the apprenticeship system, the houses of the labourers on Hog Hole estate were wantonly destroyed by fire. Destitute of a home, the people resorted to Miss O'Meally, the former proprietor of the land which constitutes the townships, and implored her to sell them a portion of her property. Though disinclined to do so, her humane and Christian heart could not disregard the cries of suffering humanity, and she formed the noble design of selling the greater part of her property in small portions to the destitute labourers of Hog Hole estate." I do not know the cause of this ejection by fire. Perhaps the labourers had received a legal ejection, and had not obeyed it, or perhaps had not paid their rents. But it is mentioned here as *a wanton act of violence*. I shall only add, that to unroof the houses of the labourers to force them to work (no house or no employment) was an expedient frequently resorted to for this purpose.

There is another cause of the abandonment of the plantations by the peasantry quite distinct from the former, which is, that on many estates they are not *regularly paid*, and sometimes not for weeks or months together. I was greatly surprised, on reading one of the Jamaica newspapers of April last, to find the editor saying that he could *name estates* where the negroes had to wait till even the *crop time* for their pay; that is, till a certain quantity of the new sugar was shipped, and the bill of lading for shipment duly signed. Now, Sir, what could be the cause of this new oppressive procedure? It must have been, I fear, that the proprietors *wanted capital*; and I take this to be the case, because the same editor, in another part of the paper, laments that though twenty millions were paid to the planters for their slaves, this sum has been invested elsewhere; none of it, to his knowledge, having been employed in improving the wretched agriculture of the country. Why, then, should such planters complain of a want of labour, if they have no money to pay for it?

As it is my object to make my letter as short as possible, I shall here omit the mention of many things which I might otherwise have noticed. I have given you *three cases*, where some of the planters (at least in two of them) must have suffered severely for want of labourers; but this suffering *originated with themselves*. But may they not have suffered besides from their own *bad husbandry*? If a plantation goes on so as not to repay its owners from the bad management of the overseers, is the *poor negro* to be blamed? If heavy expenses are incurred where a more economical system might have been pursued, what wonder if the owner of it *should be embarrassed*? I am entirely of opinion that a *great change of husbandry* is absolutely required in the West Indies to remunerate the planter, and that if a wholesome change were adopted, they might *thrive* as well as any *other skilful farmers*. The negroes have nothing to do with the *success* of the plantation in this respect, *except that their wages may be too high*, and this would certainly be a great drawback from its profits. It is the overseer who is the man to *plan* for the estate, and who has the most to do in promoting its welfare. I will now say a few words on this part of the subject.

I may begin by observing that a new state of society now exists in the West Indies, and it is folly to think of carrying on cultivation with *free men*, who are to be paid for their labour, as with slaves. It is preposterous to think of managing an estate, with advantage, by *the old and expensive machinery of attorneys, overseers, and book-keepers*. Estates, in order to be cultivated to the most advantage, must be *rented or leased for a period of years*. Many, both attorneys and overseers, would be glad to take the land on fair terms, thus securing to the owners (absentees) something more definite than they at present enjoy. Under the present system it is impossible to make the most of a sugar estate. The attorney is cramped in his energies. He sees, perhaps, that by the present outlay of a few hundred pounds, he could most *materially benefit the estate for years to come*, but he *dares not* do this without the leave of the proprietor, who is generally averse to parting with his money for this purpose, but he *could do it himself* were he to farm or rent the estate. The *overseer*, again, is also crippled *in his plans* for the good of the property, for the same reason; but *he could* gratify his own wishes, and improve the property, if *it were let to him*. Thus the attorney and overseer, being both cramped, and holding their situations, perhaps, for a short time only, and at the will of their employers, cannot *feel that interest in, or do that justice to*, the estate, which they otherwise might, if one or the other held it for a term of years, and if their *own profit* depended on good returns from the estates. Besides, the expense of paying these two officers is *not a little drawback upon the profits*; and if these agents should unfortunately be men of no principle, as too many of them are, who knows what they may not take for themselves out of the produce over which they have the sole control, or how much their employers may be fleeced? The expense of the freight of the sugar to England would also be saved in part, as well as the island tax upon sugar. What the amount of this tax is I do not know, but it must be considerable, and take from the profits of agriculture, if the following extract from a Jamaica newspaper of May 12th be correct:—"We believe that we are correct in stating that the taxes levied directly or indirectly on a hogshead of sugar in Jamaica, before it is put on board ship, are nearly equal to the *whole cost of production of a like quantity of produce* in the adjacent island of Cuba. It has often struck us with admiration, that the West India proprietors in England should

reiterate their complaints, *ad nauseam*, of the *oppressive rate of wages* they are compelled to pay,—one shilling to one and sixpence per day for labour,—when, by enforcing an economical reform in the local government, their expenses might be diminished *far more* than by any reduction of wages that it would be possible for them to effect.

As to the *rotation of crops*, which takes place with every good farmer in England, such process is but little practised in Jamaica, though it is of the first consequence to know it. No good farmer there ought to have his fallows; all his land ought to be in *constant bearing*, with a regular succession of crops. But let us look for a moment at the cane lands in that island. *They are thrown up as fallow* for two, three, or more years. Nothing is planted upon them during this interval, neither plantains, yams, sweet potatoes, Victoria wheat, nor any vegetable, all of which would *fetch money*, and be useful, if carried to market. Proper *artificial grasses* ought also to be introduced, which might be fed off in flying pens, in the same way as turnips and clovers are fed in our English farms, by which the soil would be much improved for the next crop. But *where* in Jamaica are *these grasses*, except Guinea grass, *to be found*, as a part of the system of rotation so indispensable in good farming? With regard to *manures*, the same old plan is in general pursued, whether the soil be heavy or light, hilly or upon a level, dry or wet, and is generally carried in baskets upon the head.

As to implements or machinery in husbandry, the plough has begun but lately to be in use in Jamaica. Agricultural societies have also risen up, as I have said before, and ploughing matches have been set on foot in two or three different parishes, by which a skilful use of that implement will be obtained; but there is a *great unwillingness*, at this moment, to adopt this or any other instrument which would save or facilitate labour. Now is it not easy to see from the above account, if it be correct (short as I have made it), that if the West India farmers fail to make profitable returns from their estates, this failure *may be owing to their own bad management*? There are estates in the island, which under enlightened management are *doing well*. *Why should not others do the same*? The negroes have nothing to do with this part of the subject. They are only labourers, and do only what they are ordered to do. They do not plan what crops the estates shall bear, nor what implements shall be used in producing these. But certainly, as I said before, it is of serious moment to the interests of a plantation, whether the wages to be paid are too heavy for it to bear; but *no lowering of wages* to a reasonable amount will do, *where such bad management prevails*. It would be unjust to lower them to such a degree that the labourers could not live by their industry. This would only be to make the negroes pay for the faults of the overseers. The emancipated slaves are not an unreasonable body; they have already lowered their wages to one shilling and sixpence per day,—and though they are fond of money, they are free to part with it on all proper occasions. They are at a great expense in building their own places of worship. They subscribe to missions in Africa, that their poor brethren there may have the same advantages of the gospel as they themselves have had; they subscribe to other institutions. What other peasantry on the face of the earth have done the like things? But I should be doing injustice to the West Indian planters, if, having spoken so uncourteously of their agriculture, I were not to acknowledge, that they have been more alive of late to their interests in the department of machinery, as connected with the former. I have been told, that a mill has been invented upon

a new construction, in which the rollers go by steam, and grind the canes, and express the juice from them in a new way, and that it receives the canes in a new manner, so that there is a *considerable saving of labour*; and that another piece of machinery has been invented also for winnowing coffee, which answers the same end, so that the productions of sugar and coffee will be attended with *much less expense*. May they go on improving! Let the Absentees lease their lands to proper tenants; let all of them treat their labourers as men; let them encourage the new villages; let them invent a proper rotation of crops; let them adopt especially a regular and efficient *system of weeding*; let them use the plough wherever it can be used; let a deputation be sent to England to converse with our more enlightened agriculturists, where they will see a variety of implements adapted to every purpose of tilling and cleaning the land; let them still keep their eye on the improvement of machinery, and they will then have no occasion to trouble her majesty's government for relief, but they will obtain a respectable competency, and in some cases a moderate affluence.

I am now to say a few words respecting the new villages which have risen up in Jamaica. Will these be a detriment to the planters? This will depend upon the circumstance, whether the labourers *will remain in their cottages and continue to work for the planters*, or whether they *will go elsewhere*. To solve this question, I need only ask another. What was the *reason* why they left their old cottages and raised up the new? The reason was that they were *overwhelmed with rent*, which they could not pay. But if this were the real and only reason, is it likely they would quit cottages, where *they have no rent to pay*, and where, besides, they have a *constant market for their labour*? and besides, with a capital exhausted by their recent purchases, how are they to make further purchases? In my own opinion this cottage system will be the *greatest blessing* that could befall Jamaica; for if they continue to work, then the planters would have *continuous labour at their doors*. If on the other hand they were to go into the back settlements, then *all the waste lands* of Jamaica would in time be put into cultivation, and the whole island would be *made a paradise*. But it is contrary to common sense to suppose that they would take leave of all their present advantages for an uncertainty. I find a paragraph in a Jamaica newspaper, of April 20, so much to the purpose, that I shall copy it here. Remember that this paragraph comes from Jamaica itself.

“It must be peculiarly gratifying to the friends of freedom to see rising up in all parts of this island clusters of neat and comfortable cottages, and the growing determination there is among the labouring population to possess a house and land is most certainly indicative of growing intelligence and industry. It clearly shows they have begun to look beyond the present moment, that they have discovered the right way of obtaining for themselves that degree of respect to which they are entitled by character and station. Such a procedure is unquestionably the best way of *terminating those endless disputes* which are constantly engendered by *the subject of rent*, which if steadily pursued and well directed will speedily tell upon the proceedings of the vestries and the legislature of our country. That certain persons do not approve of *free villages*, we are not surprised, seeing that it gives the labourer an amount of *influence* and *independence* which to them must be both galling and perplexing, but that it would be a *mark of wisdom* for the *proprietary body* to encourage them is easily proved.

“Any person at all acquainted with the feelings of the labouring population must

know, that the desire they have for a free house will not be easily quenched. If they cannot get land in one parish they will obtain it in another; if it is not to be procured in one district they will seek that in which it is. The attachment to certain properties and *particular localities* is *fast dying away*; the people are becoming more and more alive to their own interests; the feelings engendered and kept alive by slavery will soon be extinct, and their place will be taken by those that freedom calls into exercise and will sustain. The signs of the times tell us plainly that estate houses, mean and uncomfortable as they are, will not long be tenanted, nor will new and better ones give satisfaction; houses *without rent*, houses *they will not be obliged to leave till they choose*, are those that best suit the negro character, and soon it will be seen that the *prosperity* of an estate will be *closely identified with a free village*. Let any one who pleases to take the trouble, find out the estates that are *having the present crop taken off with the greatest ease, and the least expense*, and they will find them to consist of those who *have in their neighbourhood a free village*. At such places they will find plenty, and what is more valuable, *continuous labour*.

“ We cannot help being struck with the *shortsightedness* of those who refuse to sell even an acre of their *unmanageable properties*. Does it not stand to reason, if a labouring man builds for himself a freehold, that he would desire to reside in it? If so, then he will of course *find it to his interest to labour upon that property* that is nearest to his freehold. We would advise therefore, seeing there is a determination on the part of the peasantry to obtain land somewhere, *those who know the value of continuous labour* to sell to the persons now located upon their properties those parts of their estates they can never use, but which would be prized by free labourers, and which will be the only way of *keeping upon the spot a large body of labourers*, who will find it advantageous to themselves to take an interest in properties near to their own residence. On the other hand, if such land continues to be refused them, they *will seek it in the back settlements*, and being far distant from any other place where their labour will bring money, they will either become small settlers themselves, or else to learn to eat and drink, and become quite indifferent whether sugar be cultivated or not.”

I shall now only say a few words on the question, “ Whether the *quantity of labour* in the colonies is *sufficient* for the *present* demands of the planters, and if it is *likely to be sufficient* in *future* for the *same purpose*?” I believe it will be allowed that the planters had sufficient hands for their work *at the time of emancipation*. I ask only that this should be granted me. Now, since that time it is said that there has been a great falling off in the quantity of labour from the following circumstances. It was usual for the women, and boys and girls of a certain age, to be employed in the fields. But now the women many of them spend the forenoon in washing, cooking, sewing, and taking care of their families (*their proper occupation*), but not all of them, and the boys and girls go to school in the forenoon, where they get the knowledge which fits them to become useful members of society. Thus *half a day's labour every day* is lost to the plantations, or there is half a day's work less done there than before, as far as the women and children are concerned. But it is to be observed here, that the labour of these (the women and children) is not wholly lost to the estates near which they reside, for both women and children (such of the latter as are able) generally go into the field in the afternoon; and it is to be *particularly observed*, also, that it is *an undeniable fact* that where the negro works *by the piece* (and this is

now the general practice) *he does twice more work than he did when he was a slave.* It follows then from these premises, that *double the work is done by the men alone* in the day of *that which was done by them before emancipation.* Now, if we add this double work on the part of the men to the work done by the women and children together in the afternoon, it will follow that there is now as great a quantity of work done, if not greater, than in the days of slavery. Where, then, is the want of labour in our colonies? Let me now state an advantage which will arise from the great change which has taken place. Thousands of infants perished in the days of slavery who are now saved; all accounts agree in this, that much greater numbers of children are reared than ever; most of whom at a proper age will go into the field; and that the population of Jamaica (to which island I have hitherto confined myself) is increasing almost beyond belief. The prospect now is, that the island would be *overstocked* in a few years, but for the prodigious quantity of waste land which might be cleared and cultivated. And this reminds me to ask, for what purpose, then, do the planters want labour? Not for their present estates. Is it, then, for clearing new land on speculation? We have no right to waste human life, as it would proverbially be said to be wasted, in clearing new land on the base principle of speculation.

The editor of a Jamaica paper, of the 18th May, gives the following answer and challenge to a person who signed himself "Montanus," in the "Morning Herald," and who had made a great hue and cry on the subject of a want of labourers. "Were Montanus," says he, "to throw aside his assumed name, and submit to be interrogated as to *where the scarcity of labour existed; where any have refused to work for fair wages regularly paid; where the many estates have been found which have consequently been thrown up,* we fancy that, like 'echo,' he would only answer 'Where?' We have no hesitation in saying, that these assertions would be found destitute of proof, and consequently worthless." The same editor goes on to speak of the current wages as connected with labour. "What Vindex," says he, "has asserted is correct, and we defy any one to disprove it, that one and sixpence is the highest average of daily wages for an able-bodied labourer; and we know too that even that sum is, on many estates, withheld for five, six, seven, and eight weeks, and on some properties even for three months together. It is no wonder, then, that however honest overseers and other agents may be, that mistakes sometimes arise between them and a people (the labourers) who cannot keep accounts, and who have, moreover, been so often cheated that they are ready to distrust every body." I add to this extract, that though for a common day's labour 1s. 6d. is paid, yet the labourer frequently earns half-a-crown. This is when he works by the piece, or does double labour, which he cannot do without uncommon exertion, so that the planter gets his pennyworth out of him.

But here an opportunity is afforded me again of saying a word or two more, by way of further information, on the important subject of labour. The labourers on a pimento and on a coffee plantation are paid one shilling, and on a sugar plantation from one shilling to one and sixpence per day, except in crop season, and then they are paid more. They labour eight and a half hours per day, from six in the morning till four in the afternoon, one hour and a half being allowed them for their meals. They work only four days in the seven (except in crop time), so that the pimento labourer earns *but*

four shillings, and the labourer on the sugar estate *but six shillings* per week ; and these wages are considered by the planters to be *ruinous*.* Did I say ruinous ? To what, then, would the planters wish them to be reduced ? Is not the labourer worthy of a proper remuneration for his toil ? The wages which the peasantry have in *Jamaica* are *lower* than those of *England*, that is, lower than in that part of the county of Suffolk in which I live. Is one and sixpence a day for *able-bodied* men, *toiling nearly nine hours under a burning sun*, too much ? A European could not afford to do the same work in the same climate for three shillings at least, seeing that he would be at least *twice as long about it*, and *destroy his constitution in the end*. My friend before-mentioned, who was nineteen years in *Jamaica*, and who has but just left it, informs me that the planters can afford to give more wages (*he* himself having often stepped in as a middle man to regulate wages between them and their labourers), and that the labourers cannot *afford to work for less*, considering the burthens to which they are subject in the shape of taxes and rent, and the high price of provisions and clothing in *Jamaica*. Indeed, the wages paid would be found *inadequate* to the support of the labourers had they not the resources of their provision-grounds, from which it may be said their principal mean of subsistence is derived, and which enables them cheerfully to contribute towards the support of their religious teachers and the education of their children, and also, for the most part, to take on themselves the support of the aged and infirm poor. And as to *labourers*, the same friend declares, that *none are wanted for Jamaica*, while things remain *as they are*, or while cultivation is not extended beyond its present bounds. There is, in fact, at this time *more labour* than there is *capital* to employ it. He has seen frequently negroes travelling and *asking for employment*. If the labourers are properly treated, there is *no want of hands*. *No estates*, to his knowledge, have been *thrown up* for want of labour ; on the other hand, many planters are *enlarging their boundaries*, and are *looking out* for the sale of properties. If a large amount of labour is wanted, it is only to try, *by competition*, to *reduce wages* ; a most ungenerous return to the negroes for their past laudable conduct since emancipation, when the wages are *already* as low as can be afforded, considering the heavy burthens upon them just mentioned.

The planters, therefore, are not in want of labourers if they would conduct themselves properly towards them. But a very important question arises here. Where will they get these labourers ? Not from Europe. The burial grounds in *Jamaica*, where hundreds of the poor Irish men, and women, and children are interred, and which, for a long time, will serve as monuments of *the deceit and false promises* of those *who trepanned them* from their country, have sickened even the Assembly of *Jamaica* from encouraging similar immigrations. Where, then, will they get them ? From Africa, *every day robbed by some foreign miscreant of her children* ? No. I tell you, Sir, that this would only be to institute a new slave-trade ; I tell you, Sir, (and after a fifty-seven years' attention to the subject I ought to know something about it) that they can never get *voluntary* labourers there. I think I shall prove this asser-

* *Ruinous*. Observe the falsehood and trickery of this assertion. The planters say that they cannot afford to give 1s. 6d. per day to the negro. The assembly say they can, and even more ; for they offer by *public advertisement* 1s. 6d. per day to an emigrant Irishman, who cannot perform, under a burning sun, one half a negro's day's work.

tion by an appeal to facts. And first let us go to those parts of Africa, over which *we have no jurisdiction*, and which are the great markets for slaves, such as Bonny, Calabar, the Cameroons, &c., and see how the trade is conducted there. The captains of ships, when they go to these places for slaves, must buy them of the *petty chiefs*, into whose territories they go. These are the *only traders*. They have no access to those natives *intended to be the labourers*, so as to treat with them personally; and besides, they do not understand their language. And what will these petty chiefs do, when the ships arrive upon their coast? They will send out kidnappers through the country, or they will go in a body to burn villages in the night, and seize the inhabitants, men, women, and children, as they are escaping from the flames; or they will sell their own slaves, such as they have on hand, and supply the deficiency by the same cruel means. Nor can the British Parliament regulate the trade, so that *none but they who are willing should be received* as labourers. The African chief knows nothing of *willing* emigrants. All his emigrants go in chains to the ships, and he knows nothing of our parliament. He wants our money only, and we must take such labourers as he brings us. Thus, then, a slave-trade will be opened afresh with all its former horrors. If, however, it should be said by the West Indians, we do not want to go any where but to the British settlements in Africa for recruits, the answer is, that in none of those settlements is there such a surplus population as would satisfy their desires; indeed, it may reasonably be doubted whether, if a judicious system of management and cultivation were adopted, the whole of the population of such settlements might not find full and useful occupation. The idea, therefore, of a stream of *free* emigration from thence is *absurd*;—to obtain it from any other part of the coast *utterly impossible*.

If, however, it were *possible* to realise the desire of the planters, slavery, which it has cost the country so much money to remove, would inevitably follow. What else but slavery do the planters mean, when they and their agents say that they want continuous labour? Is not continuous labour their cry, and the cry also of their organs, the colonial newspapers? And what does that awful word “continuous” mean? Labour at all times, without the requisite rest, when the planters think they want it. Labour all the day in crop season, and alternately all the night at the mills. What free man, or what free men, willingly will submit to this? The planters must have a different machinery for making sugar, as they must have a different mode of husbandry for their fields; for almost all other countries, I am told, make their sugar at a cheaper rate. And again, is not a wish for the revival of the slave-trade and slavery meant by the intimation given us in a Jamaica newspaper, that they, the people of Jamaica, will have immigration, though this immigration be a slave-trade. The Jamaica Morning Journal tells us, “The opinion prevails, and is increasing, that the government ought to take the measure of African Immigration into their own hands. A meagre permission to take such Africans only as would be willing to come, is less than the colonists have a right to expect at the hands of the government.” Now, men who hold the opinion (and this opinion is increasing) that they should feel no remorse in being instrumental in tearing the Africans from their own country against their will, would feel no remorse in being instrumental in making them work against their will, if it were for their own advantage.

And now, Sir, I will close my letter with the following remarks. The question now before us is, "Will the Parliament of England allow ships to go to Africa to fetch labourers from thence for our colonies?" This may be answered by asking for an answer to another question, which question is—"Can you get the Africans to go by their own consent?" In the first place, as I said before, you cannot even have access to that class of natives, whom you intend to be your labourers, so as to treat with them at all, for they live in villages up the country, many miles from the shore; and even if you could get at them, you could not explain to them, knowing nothing of their language, the nature of the services required of them, the sort of work they were to do, the time and duration of their labour, the remuneration they were to have, &c. &c.; and without such an explanation, the contract would be unjust. You will then, after all, be reduced to the necessity of employing a native agent to make a bargain for you. But this native agent must of necessity be the slave-trader of the place. Now this trader knows nothing of bargains with his countrymen for their services; he procures them by fraud and violence. His only bargain is with the captains of the ships, and he sells them to these as slaves. A new slave-trade, therefore, would be thus opened in Africa, the same as the old, which we *have thought it our duty to abolish*. But even suppose the natives had the means of understanding the contract, and they would go willingly, it does not become us, of all the people in the world, to be seen in such an undertaking. We hinder, and we have strained every nerve to make treaties to *hinder*, all other nations from going to Africa for labourers, and we *go there for labourers ourselves*. Will not Europe *suspect our motives*, and brand us with the name of hypocrites? I know that we now stand well on the continent of Europe as a glorious nation, as the friends of justice and the enemies of oppression, from the simple circumstance of the *abolition of the slave-trade*. But shall we retain this character any longer? No; even though our motives may be pure, and we go to Africa only for willing labourers, we shall not be believed by any foreigner, if we say that we go there for free labourers; but we shall be called hypocrites. What shall we say in excuse for our conduct to the *four powers*, whom we have brought to join us in the abolition of this traffic? What shall we say to Holland, with which country we have lately remonstrated for going to *Africa* for labourers (*soldiers*) for Surinam? What shall we say again to France, with whom we have lately remonstrated also, for going to the same continent for soldiers to recruit a regiment in Cayenne? But here a most gigantic evil may arise. There is no country that has *such a hatred* to England as France; and at no time has the French nation been so hostile to our own as at the present moment. Will not the merchants of Bordeaux, Havre, and Nantes,* who were made so reluctantly to give up the slave-trade, *seeing us go to Africa* for labourers, *by which we break the treaty*, petition Louis Philippe to revive it? and will not that king, unfavourably disposed to us as he now is, and unwilling as he appears to be to

* Since writing the above, an English gentleman, who has resided several years in the vicinity of Nantes, and who is personally acquainted with some of the principal inhabitants of that city, paid me a visit a few days ago, and from him I collect, that there are old mercantile houses or firms there, who have made their fortunes by the slave-trade, and to whom no news would be more agreeable than to hear that an English ship had been seen going to Africa for labourers. They would strain every nerve to do the same. Indeed, every nation after this would have an excuse for breaking their treaty with us.

abolish slavery in his own colonies, *be glad of the opportunity, seeing that we have broken the great treaty*, of granting the petition? What, then, will be the consequence? The example will be followed, and the blood-hounds of desolation will be let loose again from all quarters upon poor hapless Africa, and the labours of half a century in the cause of justice and humanity will be lost perhaps for ever.

I am, Sir, with every good wish to yourself,

Very sincerely and very respectfully,

THOMAS CLARKSON.

Having just read the reports of the two committees appointed by the House of Commons in the present year; the one "to inquire into the state of the British possessions on the west coast of Africa, more especially with reference to their present relations with the neighbouring native tribes;" and the other "to inquire into the state of the different West Indian colonies with reference to the existing relations between employers and labourers, the rate of wages, the supply of labour, the system and expense of cultivation," &c. I do most *heartily congratulate* the friends of emancipation upon *the result of these inquiries, as to the object sought to be obtained*. The first committee, after having examined and weighed the facts brought before them, have come to the conclusion, that there are but *two countries on the coast of Africa*, namely, our possessions on the Gambia and at Sierra Leone, in which there is any thing like a certainty of procuring labourers for the West Indies, *without creating a new slave-trade*; and that there are *no hopes of procuring any considerable number of them even from these parts*. This report, therefore, must be considered as *a failure*, as far as recruits from Africa are concerned, considering the thousands and tens of thousands which the planters are said to want.

With respect to the other, the West Indian report, the friends of emancipation have no need to fear about *the result*, for I am told by a friend of great judgment, who attended all the examinations, that no *disinterested* man of *sense* can read it, without perceiving from the statements allowed to be made and taken in as evidence by the committee, that they are of so extravagant a nature, on the part of the planters, as to carry their own refutation with them.

Let us now look at some of the contents of this report, and see whether they do not *materially affect the worth of it*. The committee tell us "that they have examined persons *who were interested*, as proprietors or managers of estates in the colonies, and that they have examined others *who were disinterested*, and that the latter (the *disinterested*) not only doubt the *extent* of the present difficulty and distress in the West Indies, but differ materially from the West India proprietors as to the *causes* which have led to this distress, and believe that the great advantages which have resulted from emancipation have been *unchecked and unalloyed by any consequent evils*." This is an avowal of the committee itself. It appears then, according to this avowal,

that there were persons among the *disinterested* witnesses, who, though they had resided in the West Indies like the witnesses on the opposite side, and had had equal opportunities of seeing things as they were, and were equally capable of judging of the case, yet doubt the *fairness* of the planters' evidence, and *deny their inferences*. Now, this alone is a blot upon the evidence; but let me go a step farther, and ask which of the two parties would the world say *ought to be believed**—they who have an *interest*, or they who have no selfish or pecuniary interest in what they say, to accomplish a purpose? The circumstances now mentioned must be a considerable drawback to the *credibility of their evidence*.

There is another drawback from *the worth of this report*, which is, that some of the members of this committee gave unequivocal signs that they had *prejudged the question*, and that the emancipated peasantry were to *have no hopes that their interests were to be weighed in the scale*. I forbear alluding to any particular instances, but refer to the report itself in proof of the justice of my remark.

I will now disclose another fact, which, if known, will most *materially affect the value of the report*. The committee give us the following information: "Your committee deeply regret that the advanced period of the session, to which their inquiries have extended, and the large amount of verbal and documentary evidence which they have received, preclude the possibility of their now submitting to the house *a detailed report*, framed with that *careful regard* to every part of the great subject referred to them, *which its importance requires*, and which would be *essential to a full explanation* of the opinions they entertain. It is feared, on the other hand, that if the report of your committee were to be *postponed till the commencement of the next session of parliament*, the evils and inconveniences of such a delay would greatly counterbalance any benefits which could result from the statement of their opinions which they might then present." It appears then, by the above declaration, that the committee had not time to *finish their report*, as they could have wished. It is of course an *imperfect one*. They examined the witnesses on the planters' side of the question *first*, and having got possession of the ground, they kept it (not perhaps designedly, but certainly unfortunately for us) till they were obliged to deliver the report to the proper office. At this time, that is, when the report was obliged to be delivered in, they had examined *eighteen* witnesses on the side of the planters, *three* sent by government, and *only three* on the side of the negro. Thirteen other witnesses remained to be examined *on the side of emancipation*, but the door was thus closed against them, so that none of them were heard. Now, what name shall we give to this report? Shall we call it an *ex parte* report, seeing that the planters had it *nearly all their own way*, there being *eighteen* witnesses on their side, to *only three* of ours? It certainly was not a fair report—not one upon which *a government ought to act* in a matter of such serious concern, because it did not *contain the whole truth*, as it might have done, had more time been allowed for examination, and because the validity of some of the testimony in behalf of the planters might have been swept away by counter-evidence. How, for example, would the planters' evidence have stood, if the *thirteen* witnesses had been

* I do not mean to say that the planters' witnesses told direct falsehoods, but there are other ways of damaging a cause, such as equivocation, not telling the *whole truth*, evading, keeping back, exaggerating, &c.

brought forward, who were put as it were upon the shelf for want of time to examine them. I will venture to say, that if these had been properly questioned, they would have *substantiated most of the facts in the preceding pages*, and that the report would have been of a very different complexion ; it would have denied the *want of labour* in the colonies, and the *necessity of immigration*, and concluded with a recommendation to the planters to change the vile husbandry upon their estates, *the old system having been the real cause, among other things, of their distress*. It is to be recorded as a very remarkable circumstance, that with *eighteen* evidences chosen by the planters, and only *three* on the side of emancipation, that the report should not have been more favourable to their cause, but, in fact, that it should have been a failure.

T. C.













