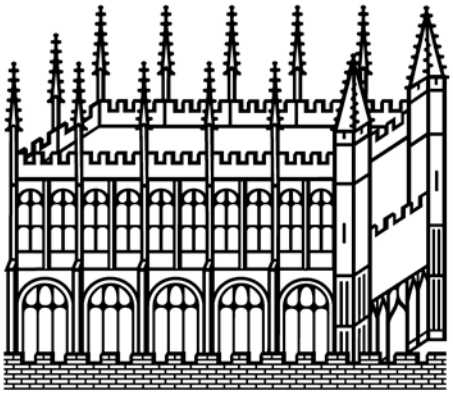

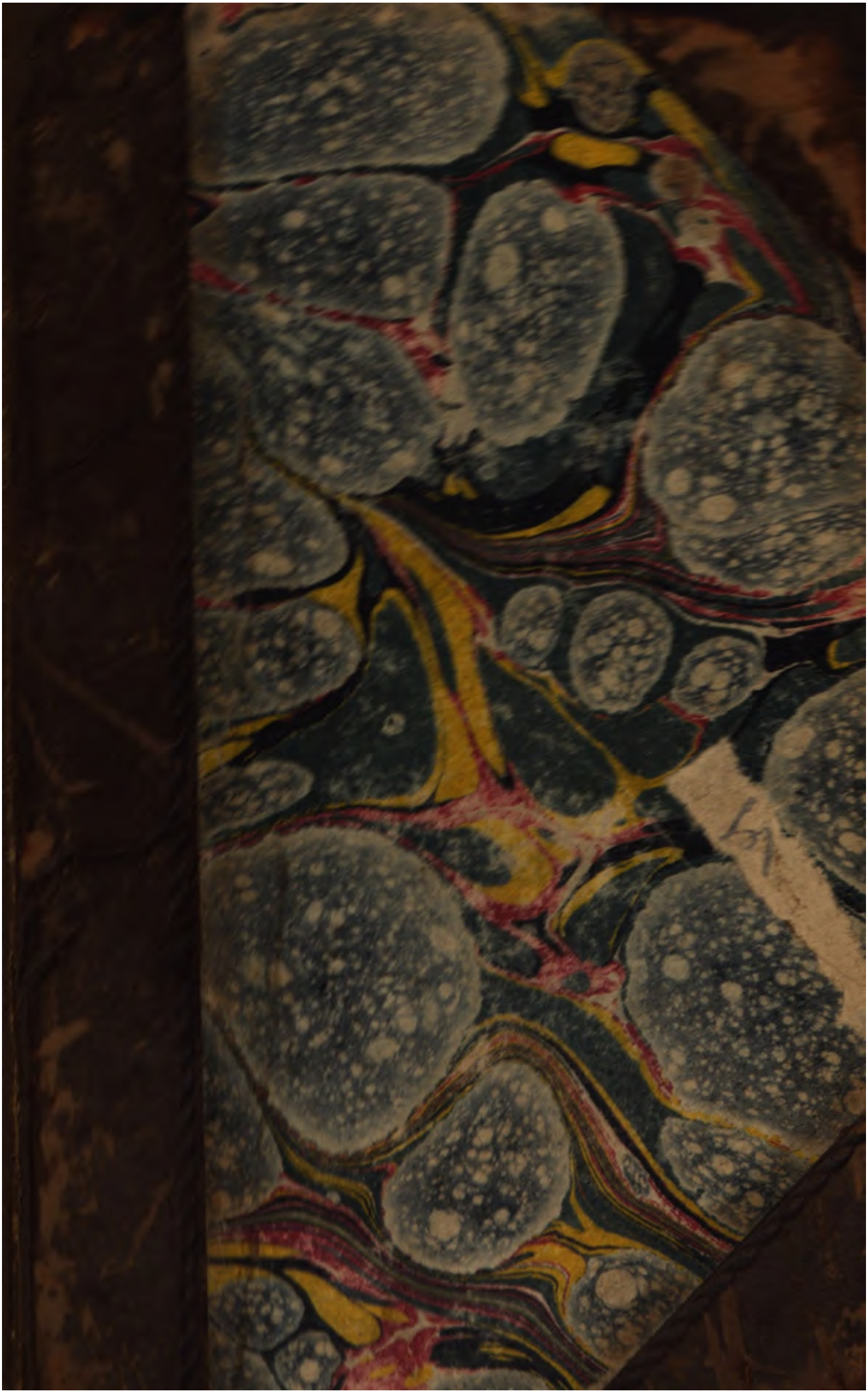

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

THOMAS CLARKSON, M.A.

Published by Joseph Ridgway Sherbourn Lane.

A

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

THOMAS CLARKSON, M.A.

WITH

Occasional Brief Strictures

ON THE

MISREPRESENTATIONS OF HIM CONTAINED IN THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE;

AND

A CONCISE HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF THE

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.

BY

THOMAS TAYLOR,

Author of the Memoirs of Cowper, Bishop Heber, and Howard the Philanthropist.

"Your friends are all aware that any attempt to represent you as a person at all mindful of his own interest, would be much too ridiculous to give any body or yourself a moment's uneasiness."—*Lord Brougham's Letter to Clarkson.*

LONDON:

JOSEPH RICKERBY, SHERBOURN LANE,

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To record simply and faithfully, but briefly, the labours of one of the most persevering and indefatigable Philanthropists that ever lived—to vindicate him against the recent attacks that have been made upon his character—and to give a concise historical detail, or bird's-eye view of the leading Events in the great work of Abolition, from its commencement by Clarkson to its glorious termination, are the objects of this publication. It is designed as a sort of familiar memorial of the principal characters and prominent events in the most protracted contest against Cruelty and Oppression that the world ever beheld. It is intended for those who have either not the means to procure, or not the time to spare to consult larger works. If the Author has made any mis-statements, he has not done so intentionally.

Manningtree, Dec. 4th, 1838.

TO

I. T. SHEWELL, ESQ.,

THE

Firm Friend of Abolition,

THIS BRIEF SKETCH OF ITS GREAT ORIGINATOR,

THOMAS CLARKSON, M.A.

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

THOMAS CLARKSON.

AMONG the names that will go down to posterity surrounded with a halo of glory, will be that of THOMAS CLARKSON. Wisbeach, in Cambridgeshire, has the honour of being the birth-place of this distinguished individual. He was born on the 28th March, 1760. His father, who was an exemplary, most benevolent, and kind-hearted clergyman, was at that time master of the Wisbeach Free Grammar School. Here it was that young Clarkson received his early education, and his attainments were alike honourable to himself and to his parent. At a suitable age he was sent to St. Paul's School, and was subsequently removed to St. John's College, Cambridge, where his diligent attention to his studies procured him honourable distinction.

Early in 1785 his attention was first called to the subject of negro-slavery. The occasion that gave rise to it was incidental. Dr. Peckhard, then Vice-Chancellor of the University, had investi-

gated the subject of negro-slavery; and under the conviction that the slave-trade was a most iniquitous traffic, he had announced as a subject for a prize Latin dissertation to the senior Bachelors of Arts, "*Anne liceat Invitos in Servitutem dare?*" "Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" The chancellor might probably have hoped that thus to bring the subject before the public would be followed by some good result; but he could hardly have imagined that it would issue in the organization of a plan for the total abolition of slavery itself. Events the most trifling, and sometimes the most inauspicious, are occasionally pregnant with the mightiest results. On the apparently incidental, though divinely controlled turn of a thought, Providence sometimes suspends the destiny of millions.

Clarkson having in the preceding year gained the first prize for the Latin dissertation, entered with all the ardour of rival scholarship on the subject; determined, if possible, to sustain his reputation. To obtain all the information he could upon slavery he repaired to London, and having purchased Benezet's Historical Account of Guinea, with such other books bearing on the question as he could then procure, he returned to Cambridge, and commenced his task. Little did he imagine what would be the result. Instead of the pleasure he had anticipated in the skilful

arrangement of his materials to secure success in his literary contest, his mind was continually on the rack by the successive narration, in the course of his reading, of oppression the most villanous and cruel. "It is impossible," he remarks, in his History of Slavery, "to imagine the severe anguish which the composition of this essay cost me. All the pleasure I had promised myself from the contest was exchanged for pain, by the astounding facts that were now continually before me. It was one gloomy subject from morning till night. In the day I was agitated and uneasy; in the night I had little or no rest. I was so overwhelmed with grief that I sometimes never closed my eyes during the whole night, and I no longer regarded my essay as a mere trial for literary distinction. My great desire now was to produce a work that should call forth a vigorous public effort to redress the wrongs of injured Africa." Bearing this idea constantly in mind, and being extremely anxious that no thought that was connected with the subject should escape unrecorded, Clarkson always slept with a light in his room, so that he might rise at any time in the night, and put down any thing that occurred to his mind. An essay composed under such intensely excited feelings, and with such great care, could hardly fail to be successful. On completing it Clarkson handed it to the vice-chancellor, and was again honoured with the first

prize. But neither his literary reputation, though he was by no means insensible to this, nor the time which elapsed from the period when he finished his essay to the day when its merits were adjudged, could divert his attention from the all-absorbing subject. His desire to expose the cruelties of slavery abated not. After reading his essay in the Senate-house in June, 1785, as is the usual practice, when the interest in such compositions commonly subsides, the subject continued to engross all his thoughts. "I could not," he says, "divest myself of the feeling that it was the duty of some one to expose the horrors of this bloody traffic. It grew upon me from day to day, and I could no longer keep my mind at rest."

To estimate correctly the labours of Clarkson in this great work, we must advert briefly to what had then been done in the cause of abolition. Far be it from me to depreciate the well-earned merits of the few worthy individuals who had previously exerted themselves in the good cause, for though they had done but little, yet that little ought not to be overlooked. It cannot be denied that in a collective capacity the Society of Friends have the fairest claims to be considered, if not the originators, yet among the earliest, the warmest, and the most persevering supporters of abolition. Their founder had solemnly warned them not to engage in a traffic so utterly indefensible, and the cele-

brated William Penn, so early as 1668, denounced it as cruel, impolitic, and unchristian. At their annual meeting in 1696, the subject was introduced to the whole society in America, and the members, some of whom, notwithstanding the instructions of their leaders, had engaged in the traffic, were cautioned not to purchase any more slaves, and enjoined to treat most mercifully those they might then possess. Similar injunctions and cautions were given every annual meeting for many successive years; and in 1727, at the general Yearly Meeting in London, it was resolved, "That the importing of negroes was cruel and unjust, and was therefore severely censured by the meeting." At each annual meeting for twenty years afterwards, they invariably passed substantially the same resolution; thus keeping the subject continually before their members. In 1760, more than twenty years before Clarkson's attention had been called to the subject, they passed a declaration at their yearly meeting to exclude from their society all who participated in any way in the guilty traffic. Almost the first recorded instance of a voluntary surrender of slave-property was made in 1770, by a gentleman of that society, named Miffin, who having inherited from his father nearly forty slaves, generously gave them their liberty, and employed them as freemen. Some of the most useful writers in behalf of the oppressed

negroes were members of the American Society of Friends. William Burley, Ralph Sandeford, Benjamin Lay, John Woolman, John Churchman, and Anthony Benezet, all members of the American Society of Friends, wrote and laboured much in aid of the good cause. The last-named individual was a schoolmaster, and he took the greatest pains to instil into his pupils a hatred of slavery. He collected the works of his predecessors, and by his literary labours did much service to the cause of abolition. It was his Historical Survey of Guinea which brought the subject so vividly before Clarkson's mind. Among the pupils of Benezet's who inherited their master's spirit, was William Dillwyn, of the same society. He journeyed and laboured much in the cause, and published an able pamphlet on slavery and the expediency of its abolition.

It hence appears, that, as a society, the Friends were the earliest advocates of the negro race, and made the most vigorous and systematic efforts to effect their rescue. But while we give them the commendation which is so justly their due, it would be absurd to assign to them all the merit of abolition. Several distinguished individuals in the English church, and some among other communities, had raised their voices against the accursed traffic. Morgan Godwyn, a clergyman of the Church of England, who had been an eye-witness

to the cruelties of slavery in Barbadoes, was almost the first English writer on the subject. His treatise on slavery was published early in the sixteenth century. Both Wesley and Whitfield had denounced it as an evil of the greatest magnitude; as did the Rev. James Ramsay, who had witnessed the working of the system, and had published an able exposure of its brutalizing effects. Attempts were made to falsify his statements, but they were in all respects confirmed by Captain Smith of the royal navy, who had also witnessed the constantly recurring abominations. But the most efficient opponent of slavery, prior to the efforts of Clarkson, was Granville Sharp. To that benevolent and distinguished individual belongs the honour of bringing to a successful issue the question, whether a negro, on treading British ground, could be any longer a slave. By the slaveholders it was contended, that the negroes they might at any time bring to England were as much their slaves when on British ground as when in the colonies; and as no legal decision had been come to on the subject, it was so far a matter of doubt that none dared to claim it as a right. Granville Sharp had successfully exerted himself in the rescue of several negroes who had been attempted to be kidnapped in London, and conveyed from England against their will. But still the question which he wished to see set at rest was undecided; and he determined,

the first opportunity that offered, to have it fairly settled. A case exactly in point soon occurred. A negro named James Somerset was brought to England by his master in 1769, who intended, after a time, to take him back; but before their departure Somerset, anxious to avoid another exposure to the evils of slavery, absconded. A strict search was made for him, and he was taken and forcibly conveyed on board the ship. The case was brought under the notice of Mr. Sharp, who immediately commenced legal proceedings upon it, and as the master defended his right to the negro, it was brought to a trial; and was argued at three sittings. The ablest counsellors were employed on both sides, and the opinion of the judges was taken upon it. The memorable result was a glorious triumph for the cause of humanity. It was declared "that as soon as the negro set his foot on British ground he was free." In allusion to which Cowper thus beautifully writes:—

"Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs
Imbibe our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing; spread on then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire—that, where Briton's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

Encouraged by the success of his exertions Mr.

Sharp now addressed a letter to Lord North, then prime-minister, forcibly urging him to abolish entirely and promptly that iniquitous system which had been thus legally denounced as utterly at variance with the British constitution. The minister saw the magnitude of the evil, and would gladly have given his support to some legislative enactment for its removal, but he believed the difficulties connected with it to be inseparable. The horrors of slavery were now beginning to be made the subject of public enquiry. The Society of Friends about the same time presented a petition to the legislature, the first that was ever presented on the subject, praying that something might be done to ameliorate the condition of the negro slaves. Almost at the same juncture the cause of the negro was brought feelingly before the queen, in a well-written letter from Anthony Benezet, the first historian of slavery. Not satisfied with merely petitioning the legislature, the Society of Friends at this crisis published a pamphlet exposing the horrors of slavery, copies of which were sent to the king, the queen, and most of the members of parliament. The following year public attention was again called to the subject, by Benezet's "Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies on the calamitous State of the enslaved Negroes." Copies of this pamphlet were sent by the Society of Friends to magistrates, clergymen, ministers of

all denominations, and the masters of all the great schools. These efforts led to the combined exertions in the good cause of a few individuals, at the head of whom was William Dillwyn. In the summer of 1783, two years before Clarkson had thought on the subject, William Dillwyn, George Harrison, Samuel Hoare, Thomas Knowles, John Lloyd, and Joseph Woods, met together to consult what steps could be taken to abolish the slave-trade and to liberate the slaves in the West Indies. After considerable deliberation they resolved that each member should endeavour to procure the insertion, in some newspaper, or periodical publication, of such information on the subject as they might think likely to excite public attention. A tract, by Joseph Woods, entitled "Thoughts on Slavery," was printed at their expense, and gratuitously distributed, as were also some other books of a useful character.

To produce a powerful impression on the public mind in behalf of any measure must be a work of time. The efforts of this little association seemed to be of scarcely any use, but their publications were silently working a happy change in the minds of many influential individuals. It might have been expected that the information thus diffused would have produced a universal burst of feeling, on the part of the British public, for the abolition not only of the slave-trade but of

slavery itself. But the town of Bridgewater was the only place where the subject was taken up in the manner it deserved. A public meeting was held there in 1785, the year when Clarkson's attention was first called to the subject; the mayor, the Rev. G. White, and some other gentlemen advocated the cause; and the second petition to parliament was presented from that town. The petition was read, and ordered to lie on the table; but the cold reception it met with afforded little encouragement to hope for a favourable result, the general impression being, that to abolish slavery would be to ruin entirely the West Indian colonies.

Notwithstanding the discouragement they met with, this little association continued their exertions, and they were not without private testimonials that their labours were useful. They were about this time joined by David Barclay, an active member of the Society of Friends, who, on becoming possessed of an estate in Jamaica on which were more than thirty slaves, honourably emancipated them all. Among the individuals who had read the publications with attention and interest was Dr. Peckhard, then Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University. At this juncture his attention was afresh called to the subject by the publication of Benezet's History before referred to. In a sermon which he had preached before the University, he

had powerfully and eloquently exposed the evils of slavery, denouncing it as a system utterly at variance with every Christian precept; and as he was now considering on what question he should select for a Latin prize essay for the senior batchelors, it occurred to him (the idea we cannot doubt came from above) that none would be more suitable than some point connected with slavery, and he accordingly proposed the question before referred to—"Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?" Thus was Clarkson's mind brought to bear on the subject, and such was the state of things when he commenced his labours. It is clear that though much had been done, yet but little good had been the result. Some more decided step required to be taken to bring the facts of the case more fully before the public—some individual who would boldly and courageously labour in the work was needed. Such an one, in fact, as Providence (always wise, though often mysterious in its operations) now raised up in the person of Clarkson, on whose mind a growing conviction fastened itself, that a vigorous personal effort ought immediately to be made His feelings, on repairing to London, after having read his essay in the Senate, he thus touchingly describes:—"During my journey the melancholy subject was not a moment absent from my thoughts; I became several times seriously affected on the road. I oc-

casionally stopped my horse, dismounted and walked. I tried frequently to persuade myself that the statements in my essay could not be true. But the more I reflected on the authorities on which they were founded, the more constrained was I to give them credit. I sat down disconsolate on the turf by the road-side, and here it forcibly occurred to me, that if the statements I had made were facts, it was high time that something should be done to put an end to such cruelties." This was in the summer of 1785.

In the autumn this conviction became, if possible, deeper. It was the sole subject of his thoughts; waking or sleeping he scarcely ever forgot it. He sometimes walked into the woods, that he might think on it in solitude. "But there," he says, "the question came, Are these things so? and the reply could only be the same; and the same inference was drawn. Then surely some one ought to interpose; and finding scarcely any one at that time who even gave it a thought, I felt as if I must myself undertake the great work. But innumerable difficulties instantly presented themselves. It struck me that a young man of only twenty-four could not possess the knowledge and judgment requisite for an undertaking so important. Besides, as I had none with whom I could unite my efforts, it seemed to me so much like the fabled labours of Hercules, that I

imagined the soundness of my understanding would be suspected if I ventured to propose it."

At this period Clarkson was evidently not aware of the existence of the little association of excellent men which had been formed two years before, to which sufficient publicity appears not to have been given. The subject had but recently occupied his thoughts, and as no public effort had been made in the cause, he naturally concluded that all were as indifferent about it as he had been before it had been introduced to his attention. It cannot, indeed, be denied, that though a few individuals were exerting themselves in the cause, yet the atrocious cruelties of negro slavery were at that time almost totally disregarded by a professedly Christian nation. Here and there a benevolent individual was to be found who mourned over the horrid details of the odious system, as they were reluctantly dragged from their concealment; but these were confined chiefly, though not solely, to the Society of Friends, who, greatly to their honour, continued to protest against it at their annual meetings.

At this juncture, and while considering what course he should take, it occurred to Clarkson that if he could do nothing else he could at least translate and publish his essay. He accordingly commenced the work, adding to it as he proceeded, such facts and illustrations as had occurred to him since he had composed it, taking care to give the

statements in a form the most likely to impress the public mind with the abominations practised in the horrid traffic. This was in November 1785, from which time he tells us, in his late masterly Strictures, he dates his systematic exertions in the sacred cause.

Having finished the work, he sought for a suitable publisher: and here the guiding hand of Providence was signally apparent. The first person he named it to thought the essay might suit persons of taste, but was not likely to obtain circulation among general readers. As, however, Clarkson's object was not to obtain literary celebrity, but to call the attention of the public to a great national evil, he did not treat with him. On his way to another publisher's he casually met with Joseph Hancock, one of the Society of Friends, whom he had known for many years, but had not seen for a considerable time. Hancock had heard of his prize-essay, and inquired why he had not published it, expressing an opinion that it would meet with a ready sale among the Friends, and he thought also among the public generally. Clarkson replied, "I am now in pursuit of a suitable publisher, can you recommend me to one?" on which Hancock took him to William Phillips, a respectable bookseller in George-yard, Lombard-street, to whom Clarkson offered the work, and whose advice he found to be of great advantage. Phillips was on

terms of intimacy with William Dillwyn, and with all the members of the little association who had been silently pursuing their labours in the good cause; to all of whom, as well as to Granville Sharp, Clarkson was by him introduced. The joy of our then young philanthropist, on perceiving, thus unexpectedly, that he should not in future have to labour alone in this great work, but should have the happiness to be associated with a small band of most useful coadjutors, was almost overpowering. Adverting to it, he remarks, "How surprised was I to hear of the labours of Granville Sharp, of the writings of Ramsey, and of the controversy in which the latter was engaged, of all which I had hitherto known nothing. How surprised was I to know that William Dillwyn had two years before associated himself with five others for the purpose of enlightening the public mind on this great subject. How astonished was I to learn that a society, with many of the members of which he was intimately connected, had been formed in America. And how still more astonished was I at the encouraging inference, which instantly rushed on my mind, that he was capable of being made the great medium of connexion between the friends of abolition in both countries. These thoughts almost overpowered me. My mind was overwhelmed with the thought that I had been providentially directed to this house, that the finger

of Providence was beginning to be felt, that the day-star of African liberty was rising, and that I might probably be permitted to become a humble instrument in promoting it."

The essay was published in June 1786. It contained a much more able exposure of the evils connected with the African slave-trade than any previous work. It was welcomed by all the friends of liberty and humanity; and Clarkson soon found, by the numerous invitations he received from different families, that there were some who took a lively interest in the welfare of the despised, oppressed negro. While the essay was making its way and bringing many new friends to the cause of abolition, Clarkson was using his utmost efforts to acquire more knowledge on the subject, that he might the more effectually expose its evils.

Among the invitations he received, one was from the Rev. James Ramsey, vicar of Teston, in Kent, who had been an eye-witness to the cruelties of slavery, having resided many years in the island of St. Christopher. The vicar being a warm friend to the cause of abolition, he kindly welcomed Clarkson to his house, and communicated to him much important information on the subject; which, indeed, formed almost the sole topic of their conversation during several days that he remained at Teston. Here it was Clarkson was first introduced to the late Mrs. Han-

nah More, who from that time took the liveliest interest in the cause of abolition, and subsequently published a poem of considerable merit in its defence.

Clarkson soon discovered, in the interviews he had with the families to whom his essay had been the means of introducing him, that a desire to adopt some plan by which the evils of the slave-trade might be abolished was beginning to become prevalent; and dining one day with some friends of the cause at Sir Charles Middleton's, then comptroller of the navy, and afterwards Lord Barham, he avowed that he was ready cheerfully to relinquish all other pursuits and prospects, and to devote himself entirely to the cause of abolition. This avowal was made in the presence of several gentlemen, all of whom applauded it highly, and promised to further the great object by every means in their power. Sir Charles assured him, that as far as his influence could be exerted, in the naval department, every thing that he might require to be done, should be attended to with all possible despatch; a promise which Sir Charles failed not to perform, and which Clarkson subsequently found of great advantage.

Clarkson had not made this avowal inconsiderately; he had thought much on the subject,—had often asked himself seriously, am I prepared to make the sacrifices that will be required, to endure the hardships that will probably have to be borne,

and is there any chance that my efforts will be successful? At times he had been almost tempted to draw back, so overwhelming did the work appear; but the magnitude of the evils to be removed, the incalculable good that would be the result of his labours, should they lead, at however remote a period, to the freedom of Africa, the influence of the individuals who had promised him their support, the conscious integrity of his own motives, and the assurance he felt that Providence would prosper so benevolent a design, encouraged him to persevere.

Clarkson now entered on his work with renewed zeal. He visited every person that he could find in and around London who had been in Africa, or in the West Indian colonies, or in any situation which gave them a knowledge of the slave-trade. He boarded all the vessels that had been in the slave-trade, and inspected the wretched apartments in which they were confined during the voyage, the sight of which filled him with horror. While listening to a description of the gratings above, and of the confined, loathsome rooms below, his heart sickened at the cruelties practised by mercenary men. Renewed impetus was thus given to his zeal, and he suffered no opportunity of acquiring information on the subject to pass unimproved. He found that the further he inquired into the evils of slavery and the slave-traffic, the more re-

volting and diabolical did the system appear; and he was ready to encounter any difficulty, so that he might be the instrument of effecting its abolition.

During the whole of 1787 Clarkson laboured indefatigably, first to acquire accurate information on the subject of slavery, and then to diffuse that information in quarters where it was most likely to be influential. All his time was now employed either in writing letters of inquiry to different individuals in various parts of the country or in foreign stations, who were likely to communicate intelligence on the subject, or in visiting persons in London, to make inquiries, not only as to the treatment of the slaves, but also into their capabilities. He thus obtained specimens of their manufacture in cloth and other materials, which afforded proofs the most satisfactory of their ingenuity. That no information communicated to him by the persons he visited might escape his memory, he took care, at the close of every conference he had on the subject, to commit to writing the statements they had made.

It was gratifying to Clarkson, in the course of his labours, to meet with several gentlemen who had extensive knowledge of the slave-trade, and who took a lively interest in the cause of abolition. From General Rooke, Lieut. Dalrymple, Capt. Fiddes, Mr. Nesbitt, and the Rev. John Newton, he received much valuable information.

He had the pleasure, too, to find that some additions were now made to the number of the little association who were engaged with him in the great work.

At a meeting they held about this time, it was thought desirable that some plan should be adopted to bring the subject before parliament, as little good could be done without their sanction, and Clarkson was requested, at the suggestion of Richard Phillips, to wait upon such members of parliament resident in London as were likely to interest themselves in the cause, and, by way of introduction, to present each with a copy of his essay. Ever ready to promote the object, Clarkson immediately acted on this suggestion, and he was for a considerable time thus employed, evidently with great advantage to the cause. He went out every morning, continued his exertions and visits till a late hour in the evening, and then communicated the result to his friend Richard Phillips, with whom he remained in deep consultation what steps it would be best to take next, often till considerably past midnight.

Clarkson was courteously received by nearly all the members of parliament on whom he called. His benevolent design was applauded, and with a few exceptions each one who listened to his statements felt much for the oppressed negro; but, to his regret, most of them seemed to view the evil

as politically incurable, regarding the abolition of the slave-trade as virtually involving the extinction of our West Indian Colonies, an opinion which subsequent events have happily proved utterly groundless. Clarkson, perceiving that scarcely any support was to be expected from persons who had formed this notion, and knowing that little good could be done if the cause of abolition was unsupported by the government, had at this time many fears for the result.

The season when things wear the most unpromising aspect is not infrequently found to be the eve of improvement. It was so in this case. In the course of his calls he now visited the late William Wilberforce. This eminently distinguished statesman, who was subsequently the principal leader in the great cause of abolition, zealously devoting to it all the energies of his powerful mind, after listening to Clarkson's statement, informed him that he had several times thought seriously on the subject, and should be glad to obtain further information respecting it. He particularly wished to know whether the statements Clarkson had made could be well authenticated, and whether any respectable persons could be found who could vouch for their veracity. He made inquiries into what had been done to promote the cause of abolition, and into the characters of the individuals who were its principal supporters.

On all these points Clarkson gave him full information, and referred him to the Rev. J. Newton, to Mr. Nisbett, a highly respectable surgeon, and to some others, all of whom, having been in Africa, had themselves witnessed the cruelties of the system. To each of these persons Mr. Wilberforce applied personally, and having found their statements confirmatory of those Clarkson had made, he became, from that time, and so continued to the close of his life, the decided advocate of abolition, and, we may justly add, its great leader, till it finally triumphed over all its opponents.

Recent attempts have unhappily been made to detract from the well-merited laurels of Clarkson in this great cause. It has been falsely asserted, we should be sorry to say wilfully, though appearances are strongly in favour of such an opinion, that Clarkson, in his History of Slavery, has made many mis-statements as to the comparative merit of himself and others in the work.

These assertions have been made from a mistaken kindness to the memory of the late Mr. Wilberforce, and from an undue anxiety to extol his exertions in the cause of abolition. Were he living he would be the first to disclaim them. Invidiously to compare the degree of merit due to different coadjutors in any cause of benevolence is always unwise. The best of men are invariably the most forward to disclaim any praise for the

exertions they may make in any cause, and to ascribe all the glory of the good they may do, not to themselves, but to Him alone by whose blessing on their efforts the good has been affected. No person having the slightest knowledge of Clarkson can imagine for a moment that he would intentionally make any statement that should exalt his own at the expense of another's merit, much less that of Mr. Wilberforce, whose character and services in the cause of abolition he held in the highest esteem. It is, however, undeniable that Clarkson entered the field in the cause of abolition nearly two years before Wilberforce; and that the attention of the latter was first called to the evils of slavery by the former. That the intense and lively interest which Wilberforce afterwards took on the subject was unquestionably first roused into action by Clarkson's persevering efforts, has been proved unanswerably by the masterly Strictures which Clarkson has recently published, of which every friend to his memory ought to procure a copy.

Deeply as we regret that charges so utterly unfounded, and insinuations so unfeeling should ever have been brought against this estimable man, yet we cannot but rejoice, if, indeed, they must at any time have been made, that they were made when he himself was able to rebut them. A more satisfactory refutation of all that has been said

against him none can wish to possess. A simpler statement of the facts of the case it would be impossible to give. A nobler and more Christian vindication was never penned. Whatever motives may be ascribed to Clarkson's calumniators, no lover of truth, no friend of humanity, can do otherwise than rejoice in statements so simple and so perfectly satisfactory as are given in these Strictures. Here are no arrogant boastings. Facts are briefly and clearly stated. Priority of time is simply claimed, and this on the ground of facts that are incontrovertible.

Happily for the cause of abolition, there was no rivalship between its two great promoters; or if any, it was that of holy emulation. The question was not, who should have the most honour, but who should do the most good. All must confess the labours of both to have been most important. They felt this to be the case themselves, and hence they cordially united their efforts in the great work. It was impossible for individuals to have proceeded more harmoniously. Wilberforce invariably acknowledged Clarkson to have been his predecessor, but Clarkson never assumed any superiority on this account; and could Wilberforce now start from the tomb, no one would more deeply regret the unkind attack upon his venerable coadjutor, which occasioned him to publish, at an age when quietude is especially needed, his late Stric-

tures, nor would any be more ready to acknowledge the veracity of his unanswerable statements.

About the time that Clarkson had, with such happy effect, introduced the subject of slavery to Wilberforce, he had the pleasure to secure the aid of another influential member of parliament to the cause. This was Mr. Powis, afterwards Lord Lilford. Until Clarkson's interview with him he had thought but little on slavery; he had given the Essay a cursory reading, but conceiving its statements to be incredible, he had dismissed the subject from his attention, and on Clarkson's introduction to him he promptly acknowledged his incredulity. Finding him disposed to become friendly to the cause, Clarkson used every endeavour to remove this impression, which he did completely by the evidence he was able to adduce. The result was that Mr. Powis became a warm supporter of abolition.

At his first interview with Mr. Wilberforce, Clarkson was much pleased to observe the serious manner in which he listened to his statements. He found him inclined to take up the subject, not as a question of humanity only, but on Christian principles. His mind had recently undergone that important change which is the sure precursor of true piety, and the result of which is invariably a desire to become useful. Hence he had already become actively engaged in the formation of a

society for the suppression of vice, and hence the proposal to abolish so iniquitous a system as that of the slave-trade was sure to find in him a willing supporter. Clarkson now called regularly at least once a week upon Mr. Wilberforce to give him what additional information he had been able to obtain, which one was as anxious to receive as the other was willing to give. A hope was now cherished by Clarkson and his coadjutors that Mr. Wilberforce would consent, before long, to bring the subject before parliament. His talents, his intimacy with the first minister of state, and, above all, his Christian principles pointed him out as the most suitable man. Happily they were not long left in suspense on this point. Clarkson undertook to consult him upon it. He intended to have put the question to him at their next interview, but from motives of delicacy he feared to do so. It now occurred to him to mention the subject to Mr. Langton, who was then become a warm friend of abolition. Mr. Langton kindly promised to arrange the matter. In a day or two he invited Clarkson and Wilberforce, with Sir Charles Middleton and several others to dinner. The subject of abolition was introduced, and Mr. Langton himself delicately hinted, that if Mr. Wilberforce could be prevailed upon to introduce the subject to parliament, no one would do it with such good effect; on which Mr. Wilberforce

pledged himself that he would do so when the proper time arrived, a pledge which all were happy to hear, and which he nobly performed.

It had long been Clarkson's wish to see a committee formed to bring the evils of slavery more fully before the British nation, and to organize a society for its entire abolition. He regarded this as an object of great importance, and in conjunction with his friend Richard Phillips, his active coadjutor, he directed his attention to it with all his characteristic energy. On the 22d May, 1787, he had the happiness to see it formed. The names of the individuals composing it ought to be venerated by every friend of abolition. They were—

William Dillwyn,	George Harrison,
Samuel Hoare,	John Lloyd,
Joseph Woods,	Granville Sharp,
Thomas Clarkson,	Richard Phillips,
John Barton,	Joseph Hooper,
James Phillips,	Philip Sansum.

The first five had been members of the previous association, and the whole committee, except three, —Clarkson, Sharp, and Sansum, were members of the Society of Friends. It became now of importance that they should state precisely the object they had in view. The abolition of slavery, and the abolition of the slave-trade were two distinct things; and as the former owed its existence chiefly,

if not entirely, to the latter, it was thought desirable to select the latter. In a point likely to be disputed it is always wise to take the course that is the least open to objections. By aiming to accomplish every thing at once we are in danger of doing nothing. The committee saw that if they attempted at first the abolition of slavery, they should have enemies to encounter who would otherwise be friends, hence they determined to make the abolition of the slave-trade their specific object; and the subsequent struggle clearly proved the wisdom of this resolution. Almost their first resolution was to circulate more extensively than had yet been done, information on the subject. They published a "Summary View of the Slave Trade, and the probable Consequences of its Abolition," which was drawn up by Clarkson, besides several other powerful tracts.

It was now the particular desire of the committee to bring the subject of slavery before parliament; and having secured the active co-operation of Mr. Wilberforce, with the promised support of some others, they were the more encouraged to make this effort. But before they took this bold and decided step, it was deemed advisable to obtain the fullest information of the evils connected with slavery. They had already a mass of evidence the most valuable, but there were some points on which it was thought some additional intelligence

would be well worth seeking. To obtain this, Clarkson undertook a journey to Bristol and Liverpool, ports where it was most likely to be procured. He commenced his labours under circumstances of great discouragement. Mr. Wilberforce was now suffering under severe indisposition, and there seemed but little chance of his life being spared. On paying him the last visit before he set off, Clarkson found him in bed. Several friends, who took a lively interest in the cause of abolition were present, and the parting interview which each seemed to apprehend would be final, but which happily proved otherwise, was affecting. On preparing to leave the room Wilberforce, after conversing a few minutes in an impressive manner, on some important points relating to the cause, held out his hand, and faintly, though earnestly, wished Clarkson success.

With these gloomy apprehensions he commenced his journey, and coming in sight of Bristol, a city where he knew many individuals resided to whom the odious traffic he was attempting to abolish was a source of commercial wealth, he felt for a time dismayed at the opposition which he should be likely to encounter. The depression, however, was but momentary. Recollecting the successful efforts he had already made, and encouraged by the goodness of his cause, he dismissed his fears, and determined to persevere,

leaving the results to Him whose blessing on a work so humane he could not persuade himself would be withheld. The first individual to whom he was introduced had been largely engaged in the trade, but had recently abandoned it from conscientious motives. He deeply regretted that he ever had been implicated in the guilt of this inhuman traffic, and gladly assisted Clarkson in his benevolent object, introducing him to all in Bristol who were the friends of abolition, and affording him every facility in his work of mercy. Clarkson's labours here were most indefatigable, and so incessant as to endanger his health. He lost no opportunity of collecting information on the subject, and though the horrifying details to which he had sometimes to listen, grieved him exceedingly, yet a sense of duty prompted him to persevere. So great was his zeal, that at the close of each day's toil, though exceedingly fatigued, yet he declared that "he regretted the approach of night, which suspended his work, and welcomed the morning, which renewed it." The mass of evidence he thus procured, to prove the system to be most pernicious, (which, had it not been for his exertions would probably never have been obtained,) was of the utmost value, not only in enlightening the public mind, but in furnishing the friends of abolition with unanswerable arguments against the abominable traffic. It is almost impossible to

imagine the difficulties against which Clarkson had now to contend. The planters and African traders vigorously exerted themselves to oppose him in every possible way, not scrupling to employ the basest means to accomplish their end. They calumniated his character, impugned his motives, contradicted his statements, and threatened with expulsion from their service any who dared to furnish him with information. But notwithstanding all their efforts he had the happiness, before he had been there long, to find himself surrounded by a number of most respectable friends, who warmly interested themselves in the good cause, and through whose exertions he pursued his enquiries with much success. The editor of the local newspaper, kindly and promptly offered to insert any articles, free of charge, that were likely to do good to the cause. The Society of Friends were very active, and a committee was formed to correspond and co-operate with the committee in London. The late excellent Rev. Joseph Hughes, A.M., then tutor of the Bristol Baptist Academy, who subsequently originated that noble institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which he was for many years its able secretary and eloquent advocate, was the most active member.

Clarkson's incessant toil, for he scarcely allowed himself time to procure refreshment and rest, had at length, as all his friends had apprehended,

brought on that degree of lassitude which compelled him to seek some relaxation. He now repaired to Bridgewater, but instead of taking rest he exerted himself to form a committee for that town similar to the one at Bristol. This he was able to effect without much labour, as he found many who had long been supporters of abolition, and who took a lively interest in its success. He returned to Bristol before he had recovered his strength, and was soon compelled again to desist from his labours. He now visited Monmouth; and here the great object to which he had devoted his life, and which seemed ever present to his thoughts, was not disregarded. He formed an intimacy with an influential minister in the town, introduced to him his favourite subject, and laid before him such statements that he thence became a zealous advocate for abolition.

A late eminent writer has truly remarked, that "the interesting narrative which Clarkson has given of his feelings and labours while employed in this work of mercy, is not to be regarded as a mere tale told by a spectator, but as a simple detail of facts related by a participator, and of all the participators confessedly the most efficient. The man whose unparalleled labours in this work of love and of peril leave on the mind of the reader the sublime doubt which of the two have been the greater final gain to the moral world,

the removal of the evils inseparable from slavery, or the proof given by Clarkson's efforts, what mighty deeds an individual may accomplish by perseverance.

On Clarkson's return to Bristol he had the happiness to hear that a gentleman, who had been for years a surgeon in a slave-ship, had recently landed there; and having, from a conviction of the cruelties inseparable from the traffic, determined to relinquish all connexion with it, he readily came forward to bear witness to the enormities he had often seen practised. The horrid details of his narrative, though the captain with whom he had sailed was a humane man, were of a character the most revolting. This gentleman became a zealous friend of abolition, and did all in his power to promote its success.

In pursuing his enquiries into the evils of slavery, Clarkson found that the inhuman traffic had been attended with serious loss of life to British seamen; and that they, as well as the negroes, were frequently treated with great severity and cruelty. Cases of wanton barbarity towards seamen were continually occurring, and the guilty delinquents escaped, because the sufferers were unable to incur the expense of a prosecution. Many flagrant instances of this kind were made known to Clarkson, and he determined, though at a heavy expense to himself, in a few cases, for the sake of example,

to bring the guilty parties to justice. Learning that an atrocious murder had been committed by the mate of a slave-ship on one of the seamen, he instantly commenced proceedings to bring the guilty perpetrator before a British tribunal; and that the ends of justice might not be frustrated for want of evidence, he sent several hundred miles, at a considerable expense, for witnesses that were in the vessel when the murder was committed.

Having collected all the information he could at Bristol, and succeeded in bringing the friends of abolition there to combine their efforts in the cause, Clarkson set out for Liverpool. He was accompanied by Mr. Falconbridge, the surgeon who had recently relinquished all connexion with the trade. On his way thither he called at Gloucester, and being apprized that much good had resulted to the cause from the advocacy of the Bristol Journal, he wisely endeavoured to secure the aid of the local press in that town. The benevolent founder of Sunday schools, the late R. Raikes, Esq., was then proprietor and editor of the Gloucester paper. That gentleman welcomed him with all the cordiality of the warmest friendship, wished him success in his great work, and cheerfully promised to give it his warmest support in the columns of his journal. At Worcester, whither Clarkson next proceeded, he was equally fortunate in procuring the aid of the local press. The mayor

of the town, who was the proprietor and editor of the paper, promptly assured him that he would never fail in his periodical to advocate the good cause. Proceeding thence to Chester he met with the same success in his application to the editor of the paper published there, who kindly promised to keep a watchful eye on the proceedings of his opponents at Bristol and Liverpool, and to defend him, should there be occasion for it, against their attacks.

On reaching Liverpool, Clarkson was introduced to some individuals who had powerfully advocated the claims of the negro to British sympathy; the most distinguished of these were the late Mr. Roscoe and Mr. Edward Rushton, who had been an officer in a slave-ship; the former, in his poem "The Wrongs of Africa," the latter in a poem, "West Indian Eclogues." Besides these Clarkson had the pleasure to find among the Society of Friends several who had interested themselves in the cause of abolition; but as they had not combined their exertions, hardly any good had been done; and so little importance was attached to their efforts by the party interested in the slave-trade, that they scarcely thought it needful to publish any counter-statements in defence of their craft. No sooner, however, was it known that the object of Clarkson's visit was the entire extinction of a trade in which so many were successfully engaged, than a violent outcry was raised against him: his motives were

impugned, and every possible means resorted to to asperse his character. Attempts were even made upon his life; indeed so formidable was the opposition raised against him, that his friends entertained serious apprehensions for his safety, and earnestly dissuaded him from continuing any longer in the town. But he was not to be intimidated: nothing could induce him to quit what he conscientiously considered to be the path of duty. He had come thither to collect evidence to show that the traffic in human flesh was both cruel and impolitic, and the goodness of his cause inspired him with undaunted courage. He was, however, several times exposed to imminent danger, and on one occasion very narrowly escaped being pushed from the pier-head by several individuals, who seemed determined to effect his destruction. But in spite of all this opposition he did not leave Liverpool till he had collected much additional information, and had induced the Friends there to combine their efforts in the cause of abolition, and to act in concert with the London committee. Owing to the opulence and influence of the opposing party, he found this an almost impossible task, but his indefatigable efforts were at length crowned with success. It is impossible, in this sketch, to narrate the particulars of his extraordinary exertions both in Bristol and Liverpool; for the merest chance of obtaining information that was likely to serve the

cause he would, at any risk, encounter difficulties and endure privations the most trying. He began his work early in the morning, and never closed it till midnight, whatever might be the state of the weather, after which he would spend one and often two hours in recording the results of his labours. Exertions thus incessant left him no time either to inform the committee of what he was doing, or to inquire into the extent of their operations. He might have obtained this information from the public papers, which at this time contained frequent interesting accounts of the progress the good cause was making; but these he was too much absorbed in his work to read. Some may imagine that in this respect he acted unwisely, and that he exposed himself to the suspicion of seeming to proceed independently of the committee; the fact, however, is, that he neither regarded himself, nor was he looked upon by the committee as their servant, but as their coadjutor. He had undertaken the journey, not at their command, but at their suggestion; and the sole reason why he did not inform them daily of his operations, was because it diverted his attention too much from the object he had in view. Others may have thought that he was unnecessarily minute in his efforts to procure information, but the studied concealment of his opponents rendered this essential. The calm intrepidity and truly Christian spirit with which he prosecuted his labours can

never be sufficiently admired. Though naturally of a warm temperament, he resolved on no occasion to speak angrily. The most determined efforts were made by the company with which he was sometimes compelled to mix to ruffle his temper, but they could never effect it. The most insulting language never wrung from him an irritating reply. Can we doubt that he was assisted from on high?

Manchester was the next scene of Clarkson's labours. He visited this populous town in the hope that he might originate a spirit of enquiry into the evils of slavery. On his arrival he was delighted to find that through the exertions of the committee in London, in circulating information, the good cause had here already made considerable progress. Urged by several friends who knew he had been educated for the church, he consented to preach a sermon on the subject in one of the churches. He selected the appropriate text, Exodus xxiii. 9, "Thou shalt not oppress a stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt," from which words he took occasion to expose the evils of slavery, proving it to be as much at variance with the precepts of Scripture as it was with the dictates of humanity. From Manchester he proceeded to Birmingham, spending one day on his way thither with Lord Scarsdale, the early friend of abolition, from whom he had the pleasure to learn that in

Derbyshire and Dorsetshire the cause was beginning to excite very general attention, and had recently been powerfully advocated in some letters published in the local papers. At Birmingham he was agreeably surprised that the cause had some very active and able supporters, and was soon likely to become one of very general interest.

He now returned to Bristol, where he was again most violently opposed. We have already stated that on his former visit he had apprehended the chief mate of a slave-ship for the murder of a seaman. He expected the trial would commence at the usual time, and would take place at Bristol, and he was anxious to know the result. He had taken the greatest pains to ascertain whether the man was guilty; and as he felt no doubt on the subject, he thought it his duty to bring him to justice. He had been at considerable expense in procuring witnesses, and felt assured he should be able to bring them forward when required. To his astonishment, however, he was now informed that the trial was to come on in a day or two, at the Old Bailey, in London. He knew not what was to be done. Some of the witnesses which he had engaged to appear were not now to be found. With the utmost despatch he forwarded such as he could obtain, but they arrived in London too late. The prisoner had been placed at the bar a few hours before they appeared in court, and as no one

appeared against him he was discharged. This was a mortifying circumstance to Clarkson, not so much on account of the delinquent's escape, for his animosity was not against the man, but against the system; and he was sure that had the witnesses been heard the exposure thus publicly made of its cruelties would have been in favour of abolition. But he bore up with his usual calmness under the disappointment, expressing with genuine Christian sympathy an earnest desire that the narrow escape of the man would be the means, under Providence, of producing in him deep contrition for his crime.

Clarkson's incessant labour and deep anxiety had now brought on another attack of illness, which confined him to his apartments, and for a time threatened serious results. Just as he had become convalescent he received a pressing invitation from Mr. Wilberforce, who still continued too much indisposed to make any vigorous efforts in the cause, to come immediately to London, to collect such evidence as it might be thought proper to lay before the privy council, as the king had recently given an order that the African slave-trade, with its effects on the colonies and on British commerce, should be early taken into consideration. This was in February 1788. Clarkson hastened to London, and on his arrival was pleased to find that the efforts of the committee to circulate infor-

mation had been followed by the desired results in London, and in most of the towns in England, as well as in those he had visited.

He was now introduced to Mr. Pitt, who was then at the head of the cabinet. The object of his interview was to show on what evidence the friends of abolition had rested their statements, and to bring the subject fully before the premier's notice. At the first interview, Mr. Pitt candidly acknowledged, that he much doubted the truth of the statements, as to the cruelties said to have been practised by the slave-owners on their slaves, conceiving that it was to the interest of every man to take care of what belonged to him; and he was equally incredulous as to the mortality of British seamen. But after patiently examining the documents, which Clarkson had prepared with great care and accuracy, he freely admitted that the astounding statements were based on well-authenticated facts, and he immediately declared himself the friend of abolition. Clarkson now showed him specimens of negro ingenuity, which he examined with much astonishment, and which he greatly admired. He was now introduced to Mr. (afterwards Lord) Grenville, and was most actively engaged in collecting such evidence as those distinguished statesmen thought it desirable should be laid before the privy council. It was the wish of the council to have the depositions of as many living witnesses

to the facts as could be procured; and Clarkson, relying on the support of some individuals who had expressed themselves friendly to the cause, imagined that he should have no difficulty on this point, but he had the mortification to find that a respectable person on whose assistance he had made himself sure, had deserted the cause and basely gone over to the aid of its opponents, just at the crisis when his help was most needed. Scarcely had Clarkson been made acquainted with this mortifying proof of human instability, than he was called to rejoice at what appeared to be a most providential interposition in behalf of the good cause. He was introduced to some highly respectable foreigners who had been in Africa, and who were willing to give their evidence before the council. Such, however, were the efforts made by the merchants interested in the trade, that contrary to the expectation of the friends of abolition, the result of the examination was much less favourable to the cause of humanity than they had anticipated. It might well have been supposed that the most superficial inquiries into the horrible system of slavery would have been sufficient to convince the most hardened, that the abolition, not only of the accursed traffic in human flesh, but of the entire system itself, was a measure that ought immediately to be granted; and had it been taken up on the principles of humanity, such must have been the result.

But it was considered, even by some who were friendly to abolition, too much as a mere political question, and there were not a few who required to be informed, that no measure can be politically just that in any degree violates the rights of humanity.

At this stage of the proceedings, the basest means were resorted to, by the party interested in the continuance of slavery, to justify their practices. Depositions the most false were boldly made. They had even the hardihood to maintain that they were prompted by humane motives to engage in the traffic. It was incredible the difficulties that had now to be encountered by the friends of abolition. None but those who have been engaged in enterprises of a similar character, can imagine the labour that has often to be sustained in carrying into effect the most benevolent purposes.

While the cabinet were pursuing their investigations, Mr. Wilberforce continued so indisposed that he could render them no assistance. Owing to this circumstance, nearly all the anxiety and toil of collecting and arranging the evidence to be brought before the council in support of abolition, had to be borne by Clarkson. The committee, in the mean time, prosecuted their labours with the happiest result. Many pamphlets and letters illustrative of the evils of slavery were printed and distributed gratuitously throughout

the country. These efforts were responded to by the presentation, from different towns and companies, of more than a hundred petitions to parliament during that session.

A general desire was now expressed, that the subject should be brought before the house; and the committee saw the necessity of this measure being promptly taken; but unhappily the health of Mr. Wilberforce, who was the most suitable person to introduce it, and who stood pledged to undertake it, was in a most precarious state. To wait till he should recover, doubtful as his recovery then seemed to be, was almost to desert the cause, and yet the committee knew not what course to pursue. At this crisis they received a message from Mr. Pitt, requesting that the charman would favour him with an interview. Mr. Sharp immediately waited upon the premier, who after a short conversation kindly promised, in the absence of Mr. Wilberforce, to bring the subject before the house. It was then resolved to send deputations to several of the most influential members, to put them in possession of the facts of the case, and to solicit their support. Clarkson was one of those who were deputed to wait on Mr. Fox, and that able statesman, after listening attentively to the communications made, promised to give the measure his cordial support. On the 9th May, 1788, the abolition of the slave-trade was first

made the subject of parliamentary discussion. Mr. Pitt introduced it; but though he was friendly to the cause, he thought it desirable to conceal his own views, in order that the subject might be fairly discussed. It was eloquently defended by Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Sir William Dolben, Mr. Whitbread, and by several others; and the motion, which, however, only went to pledge the house that the slave-trade should be investigated the ensuing sessions, was carried unanimously. It was supposed that this would have terminated the parliamentary discussion of the subject for that session, but Sir W. Dolben, a warm friend of abolition, desirous of at once abolishing some of the cruelties practised in the trade, moved on the 22d May for leave to bring in a bill that the number of slaves brought in the vessels should be in proportion to their tonnage. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitbread, and ably supported by several members, and leave was given to bring in the bill. The parties at Liverpool and Bristol now became alarmed, and resolved to oppose the measure with all their power. They got up several petitions in favour of the trade, and they so far succeeded as to obtain leave to be heard by counsel at the bar of the house in its defence. All the witnesses that had previously made depositions before the cabinet had to be examined before the house, but the very means which they thus took

to defend their cause served only the more openly to expose it. Clarkson was present at the examination of those witnesses, watching with intense anxiety what would be the result; and the entire knowledge he had acquired at Liverpool, of the principal deponents, was of great advantage in dragging from them the reluctant acknowledgment of many cruelties which they sought anxiously to conceal. At his suggestion questions were put to them which wrung from them statements as much in favour of abolition as its warmest friends could desire. The mortality of the negroes in the voyages from Africa to the colonies, owing to ships being literally crammed with them, was on their own evidence shown to be almost incredible. The debate at the close of the examination was unusually interesting, and the motion was carried by a large majority.

The bill was carried up to the lords on the 18th June, and its opponents had the audacity again to apply to be heard by counsel, though they had so signally failed in the commons. Leave was granted them, and the same witnesses were examined, but as the same searching queries were not put to them, the impression was less favourable for abolition. The debate was protracted for several days; the bill was violently opposed, and it was feared by its friends that it would have been lost for the sessions; at length, however, it was carried,

and on the last day of the sessions it received the royal assent. That a system so cruelly oppressive, so utterly indefensible, and so destructive of life should have found a single supporter among any class, much less among titled legislators, is astonishing, and can hardly be accounted for. One would have thought that the exposure of only some of its evils would have been amply sufficient to show the necessity, without further inquiry, for its immediate annihilation. It had been proved that the mortality of the negroes during the voyage, under the most favourable circumstances, was equal to forty-five, and in many cases to more than eighty out of every hundred that were transported; and to suffer the continuance of so horrible a system was contrary to every humane and Christian principle, and was a disgrace to the nation by whom it was tolerated.

During the progress of this bill through the house, his majesty's ministers continued to prosecute their inquiries into the subject, that they might be in possession of the best information respecting all its bearings. Many witnesses were examined, and among others Clarkson was required to give in his evidence. He could do this the more readily, and with the better effect, as he had taken care, in the outset of his enquiries into the system, to classify the subject. He gave his evidence as to the produce of Africa, and as to the

capabilities of the natives, confirming it by the production of such specimens as rendered his depositions on these subjects highly interesting. He next adverted to the cruelties practised on British seamen, and to the great mortality that took place among them in all the slave-ships, leaving documents for their lordships' examination in proof of his depositions. At the request of the counsel he drew up a concise statement of all the facts that had come to his knowledge, accompanied by a series of questions divided into six tables, illustrative successively of African produce, of the means employed to procure the slaves, of the methods used to convey them to the ships, of the cruelties practised upon them during the voyage, of their treatment in the colonies, and of the effect of the trade on British seamen. This statement was afterwards printed in a letter addressed to the privy council, copies of which were sent to every member of parliament. The lucid statement it gave of the subject in all its bearings could not fail to be most useful.

Clarkson now published his Essay on the Impolicy of the Slave-Trade. He had been many months in collecting the materials which he obtained chiefly during his journey to Bristol and Liverpool. He was always most cautious to admit no statements which he could not bring official

documents to prove. "When I published this Essay," he remarks, "I did so under the impression that I ought to make its statements as scrupulously correct as if I were called to substantiate them upon oath." Scarcely any person can imagine the labour and difficulty connected with such a subject, which, indeed, could not have been accomplished without the most patient, most diligent, and persevering inquiry. At this period it was highly important that a work of the kind should appear. The question with many seemed to be not so much one of humanity as of policy. The simple fact that no measure can be politically right which leads to the commission of oppression and cruelty, or even to the violation of humanity, seemed to be overlooked. Hence the importance that slavery should be shown, from unquestionable data, to be impolitic as well as unjust: and proofs of this the most satisfactory were given in the Essay, which proved to be singularly useful in all future enquiries on the subject. It was, in fact, the text-book on which all the subsequent examinations before parliament were made, nor did the evidence of any witness ever invalidate its statements; on the contrary, the depositions given were in many instances strikingly corroborative of their veracity, affording honourable proof of the great attention Clarkson had paid to the subject. The enemies of abolition

attempted verbally to dispute his statements, but none of them ventured to answer his book. The reason unquestionably was, because it was unanswerable.

While Clarkson was thus toiling in the good cause the committee were equally active. No less than fifty-one meetings were held from May to July. The time of meeting was at six in the evening, and such was the pressure of business which they had to transact, that it was usually eleven before they separated. In the course of little more than a year from the time they had commenced their labours they had printed and circulated near three thousand reports of parliamentary debates on slavery, and more than fifty thousand pamphlets and books. They were addressed by individuals of the highest respectability from all parts of the country; and the gratifying assurances they daily received of the growing interest felt in the good cause, encouraged them to persevere. Most of them were men of business, and had numerous calls on their attention in their own affairs; but so singularly did they devote themselves to this labour of love, that they were scarcely ever absent from the meetings. May we not be assured that Providence would more than compensate them even literally for the time they devoted to so good a cause. The result of the

committee's operations had the desired effect; the attention of the people was turned to the subject, a spirit of inquiry was excited, and active preparations were making in favour of abolition throughout the country.

"Matters had now," as Clarkson justly remarks in his invaluable History of Abolition, "become serious. The gauntlet had been thrown down and accepted: the combatants had taken their stations, and the contest was soon to be renewed and decided on the great theatre of the nation. The committee had pronounced the slave-trade to be criminal; its supporters had denied the charge. It became the one to prove, and the other to refute or to fall in the ensuing session."

The committee were now most anxious to obtain respectable witnesses, who had been in Africa, or in some situation where they had seen the operations of the system. Proofs had been given them that little importance was attached to any statements, however well they might be authenticated, unless they were corroborated by the testimony of living witnesses. Hitherto they had only been able to obtain a very limited number of individuals to give evidence in support of their statements. The number of witnesses brought by the opposing party was considerable. It had been suggested that they should despatch messengers to Africa

and to the colonies for the purpose; but this was relinquished as an undesirable step. They resolved, at length, after giving the subject their best consideration, to request Clarkson to undertake another journey for the purpose. At the time he received their request he was busily engaged on some work connected with the cause, which, indeed, engrossed his whole attention. He immediately consented to undertake the task, though he well knew it would be one of great difficulty. He was two months on this tour, during which he travelled more than sixteen hundred miles. In all the towns through which he passed where there was not an abolition committee he endeavoured to form one. He suffered nothing to escape his notice that could be turned to the advantage of the cause. At Poole, where he originated a committee, he took occasion to examine the muster-rolls of the ships employed in the Newfoundland trade. He did this to refute, which he was able to do on the clearest grounds, the assertion made by a noble lord, that the mortality of the seamen employed in this trade was equal to that of the slave-trade. He found that so far was this from being the case, that two vessels employed in the inhuman traffic destroyed more seamen than eighty in the Newfoundland shipping. From Poole Clarkson proceeded

to Plymouth, and thence passed on to Falmouth and Exeter, either forming or laying the formation of a committee in each place. As to the main object of his journey his success did not equal his desire, though it was perhaps as great as could have been expected. With immense labour, and by frequent journeying from place to place, he obtained the address of a considerable number of persons who were in possession of much valuable information on some branch of the slave-question. He deeply regretted that to many of these he could not get access; all his efforts to induce them to give him a hearing were unsuccessful. Some were alarmed by the apprehension of being summoned before the privy council to undergo examination; some were themselves in a condition that made them fear the opposing party, or they had friends and relatives interested in the continuance of the trade. Some were in the service of the government, and because from the opposition made to the measure in the house of lords, and the somewhat equivocal support given to it by the premier, they were unable to tell whether it had the sanction of ministers, they very reluctantly communicated the information of which they were in possession. Of the forty-seven persons to whom he was introduced after much toil and labour in travelling from place to place, he could only persuade nine that

would consent to an examination, should they be required before the council.

It was Clarkson's practice, on being introduced to individuals who had witnessed the working of slavery, to enter, in a pocket-journal which he had provided for the purpose, such observations as they might make in the course of the interview. He adopted this plan that all his statements might be strictly accurate. He was, however, compelled to relinquish it, for he no sooner took out his book and began to write, than many became so terrified that he could elicit from them no further information. He had now to trust his memory with the statements made by the individuals with whom he conversed. But that no fact of importance might escape unrecorded, and that he might fall into no mistake, he took care to insert in his journal, immediately after he had conversed with an individual, and before he called upon another, the substance of the information which had been imparted.

The reluctance of many who had witnessed the barbarities of slavery to exert themselves, or to assist others in any way to hasten their removal, was most painful to Clarkson's mind. "It will hardly be conceived," he says, "how much my mind was agitated and distressed on these accounts —to have travelled more than two months, to have seen many who could materially have served our

cause, and to have lost most of them, was most trying." He was grieved that on grounds so trivial individuals who were apparently worthy and humane, and who could have done much for the cause, could content themselves to remain inactive; a circumstance which, perhaps, can only be satisfactorily accounted for on the ground of the hardening nature of crime upon the human mind, not only as to those by whom it is committed, but on those who witness with pain its commission. So much are we the creatures of habit, that the feelings, even of those whom nothing could tempt to be cruel, become insensibly less pained by the frequent recurrence under their notice of barbarous deeds.

The time had now arrived for the council to renew their examination of such witnesses as the friends of abolition could procure; and at the request of the committee Clarkson returned to London, to assist in placing before the ministry such evidence as might be deemed the most suitable. In his absence the committee procured some witnesses; and Mr. Wilberforce, who had now nearly recovered his health, had also been successful in his efforts to obtain a few, so that with the nine which he had prevailed upon to come up when required, the prospect of the abolitionists was cheering, and they looked forward to the

result of the evidence which they had to submit with sanguine expectations; and as they had now the combined energies of Wilberforce and Clarkson to assist in bringing up the witnesses, they were the more encouraged to hope that, through the blessing of Providence, the object of their labours would soon be attained.

These bright prospects, however, were soon beclouded; only five witnesses had been examined when the serious attack of illness of his majesty, George the Third, unhappily occasioned a lengthened interruption to the proceedings, and apprehensions were entertained that there would not be time for the examination of the remaining witnesses, and the publication of the report to be made by the council upon the evidence obtained, in which the success of the cause chiefly rested, before that session would be too far advanced to carry the bill through the house. After five weeks interruption the examinations were again resumed; but they were proceeded with so slowly that the committee saw it would be impossible to examine all the witnesses they had obtained in time for the report to be printed. It was now thought expedient to make such a selection of the witnesses that remained unexamined as were likely to give the most valuable information; and as Clarkson had obtained possession of many facts since he had given in his former depositions, it was proposed

that he should be re-examined. He had now obtained an extensive and most valuable assortment of African productions and manufactures, which he had collected at considerable expense and great labour. Specimens of these he presented to the lords in his evidence before them. His evidence clearly demonstrated the natural fertility of the country, the ingenuity of its inhabitants, the iniquity and impolicy of the slave-traffic, and the barbarities practised by those who were engaged in it. He took care to confirm his statements by the exhibition of many of the implements of torture that were in common use.

The interruptions to the examinations occasioned by the king's illness were so frequent, that only a very limited number of the witnesses procured in favour of abolition had been examined by the middle of February. An intimation was now given to the committee that in this unfinished state of the examination the privy council were about to publish their report. Apprehensive that if they did so it would be greatly to the injury of their cause, they requested Clarkson to write a letter to them on the subject. He did so without delay, giving them the names of eighteen individuals who were ready to be examined, and urging them to inspect the muster-rolls of the ships in the Newfoundland trade, in proof that what had been said respecting the mortality of seamen in that

trade was utterly false. Their lordships reply to this letter stated, that it would be impossible to examine all the witnesses Clarkson had named, but that, if he would select a small number of such as he thought would be most proper, their depositions should be taken. He was grieved exceedingly that the labour which he and others had taken to procure witnesses should thus be made of no avail. He was at length informed by the council, that as they were so pressed for time, only two more days could be allowed for the examination of witnesses, and he was requested to select only three. While the list of these was in the council-room, a gentleman who had recently travelled in Africa, and who had come to London to offer his services in the cause of abolition, was introduced to Clarkson. He knew not now what course to take. He had sent to the council the last witness they had consented to examine, and he could hardly hope they would hear another. Conscious, however, that the evidence of this gentleman would be most important, as he had a journal made on the spot, he ventured to name the case to their lordships, entreating them to allow this gentleman to make his depositions before they closed their report. But so pressed were the council for time that they could only consent to the request, on condition that Clarkson would classify the evidence contained in Mr. Arnold's journal. This he readily

consented to do. Mr. Arnold was subsequently examined on each point, and his evidence was included in the report.

During these investigations Clarkson felt the utmost solicitude for the result. He had looked forward to the examination under the conviction that it would decide the struggle, and had spared no labour nor pains to prepare for it. The arrangement of the evidence had been left principally to him, and though he could not but feel conscious that he had done every thing to the best of his judgment, yet the important interests that were at stake, and the possibility that in some way the cause might suffer through his mismanagement, filled him with the deepest anxiety. "I know not," he says, "of any period of my life in which I suffered so much in body and mind, as from the time of resuming these public inquiries by the privy council to the time when they were closed; for I had to attend at the committee, I had to examine all the witnesses that came to London, and to make copies of their evidence. I had to take care that they should be forthcoming at the time. I had a new and extensive correspondence to keep up, for the letters received in reply to our applications for assistance were almost innumerable."

But it was the harrowing details of cruelty which these letters were constantly bringing to light,

far more than his excessive labour, that he found so painfully oppressive. Such was his sensibility that he could not read without the deepest emotions the letters forwarded to him. "The effect of these accounts," he remarks, "which I could seldom read till late in the evening, and sometimes not till midnight, in some instances overwhelmed me for a time in tears, and in others produced a vivid indignation which affected my whole frame. Recovering from these, I walked up and down the room, and made renewed, vigorous determinations of perpetual warfare against this impious traffic, imploring strength from on high, that I might be able to carry these determinations into effect. I sat down and continued my labour as long as my wearied eyes would permit me to see. Thus agitated I retired to bed; but my rest was broken by the visions that floated before me, which I could not lose sight of night or day. Thus was I continually harassed: my mind was confined for months to the same gloomy and heart-breaking subject, and my health began materially to suffer."

Some conception may be formed of Clarkson's exertions in the good cause, and of the disappointment he often had to experience while these examinations were carrying on, by the long journeys he performed to collect information from individuals who were referred to as having witnessed the horrors of slavery. These journeys he had

frequently to perform in the night, that no time might be lost; and he has often travelled thus two hundred miles in a week. But the labour of these journeys was nothing to the vexation he felt at the reluctance evinced by many to exert themselves in the cause of humanity. They professed to wish for its prosperity, and they had it in their power to serve it materially, but for some petty reason they remained inactive. "No one," says Clarkson, "can form an adequate idea of the disappointment I frequently experienced in these journeys. I have been sixty miles to visit a person, who was not only said to possess much information on the subject, but who was said to have espoused our cause. I have at length seen him. He has applauded my object; has told me that neither my own pen nor that of any man could describe fully the horrors of the slave-trade. He has exhorted me to persevere in this noble cause; but he has excused himself from publicly giving his testimony, by stating that he was the nearest relative of a rich individual who was interested in the trade, and that if he appeared against it all his expectations from him would be ruined. In the same week I visited another individual at a still greater distance. I met with similar applause. I heard him describe scenes of misery which he had witnessed, the relation of which almost made him weep. But, says he, I am a surgeon. In the spa-

cious house you see through that window lives a West-Indian. I am the medical attendant on his family. If I give my evidence publicly I shall lose his patronage, but I will give you privately all the intelligence in my power. It may well be conceived how grieved and disappointed I must have felt on returning from these visits, and more especially when the excuse arose, as it often did, from reasons far less plausible than those I have named."

Up to this period, March 1789, Clarkson had unquestionably taken by far the most active part in the cause of abolition. He had, it is true, many zealous coadjutors, but none had been so indefatigable as himself. Not only had he originated the systematic and combined efforts which were now making, and which finally issued in the extinction of slavery, but till now he had taken the lead in the cause, and was looked up to as such by all his fellow-labourers. Most of the letters received from individuals, in whatever part of the country they resided, were addressed to him; and he was recognized both as the leader and the great labourer in the cause. He, however, never claimed any superiority, nor exercised any authority over his coadjutors, but was always ready to labour in any way that his services might be thought to be most efficient. His feelings at this time, notwithstanding the vexation which the apathy

of some, the selfishness of others, and the baseness of many had occasioned him, could not have been otherwise than enviable. Looking around him at the vigorous efforts that were now making, almost simultaneously through the country, to abolish slavery, which he could not but be aware had been called into exercise principally by the blessing of God on his exertions, he must have been ready gratefully and piously to acknowledge "what hath God wrought."

The time had at length arrived when an individual, not more zealous than Clarkson, for that was impossible, but one whom Providence had raised up and eminently qualified to advocate the cause of abolition in the British senate was to take the lead in the great work. Every friend of abolition rejoiced in the recovery of Mr. Wilberforce, but not more heartily than Clarkson. He saw clearly that at this crisis such a coadjutor was especially required, and instead of feeling regret in the slightest degree at the pre-eminence Mr. Wilberforce was likely to attain, he afforded him most readily all the information in his power. Mr. Wilberforce was now anxious to redeem the pledge he had made, to bring the subject before the house, which he had been unable to do the preceding session. While Clarkson was busily occupied in arranging the evidence to be laid before the council, Wilberforce was collecting all

the information he could procure from every quarter preparatory to his exertions in the house. On the 19th of March he moved that the house should resolve itself into a committee on the 23rd April, to take the great subject into consideration. This was a signal for the commencement of hostilities by the opposing party; and never was more zeal exerted, or more vigorous efforts made in the noblest and best of causes, than were now made in defence of a system disgraceful to humanity and abhorrent to every right feeling. The abolitionists were vehemently opposed, and their benevolent objects denounced as utterly ridiculous. Their opponents had even the audacity to assert that the continuance of the odious traffic was essential, not only to the prosperity but to the very existence of the British colonies. Public meetings were held, and the boldest steps taken in defence of slavery. Mr. Pitt now presented at the bar of the house the report of the privy council, and proposed that the day for bringing forward the measure should be deferred to the 12th May. This gave both parties time to concentrate their forces. The day at length arrived, and the subject was introduced to the house by Mr. Wilberforce in a most eloquent and luminous speech, the delivery of which occupied three hours. It was ably seconded by Burke, and eloquently supported by Pitt, Fox, and several others. A stormy debate followed;

the house was several times adjourned, and at last, through the intrigue of the opposing party, it was found to be needful to defer the full consideration of the measure till the following year.

That a system of cruelty and oppression, the least investigation of which by any assembly, much less by a British Christian legislature, would, it might have been supposed, have been sufficient to have led to its utter and almost immediate extinction, should be protracted for another year, was a painful consideration. The friends of abolition were grieved at this result. Clarkson was almost overwhelmed. "The consideration," he says, "that the sufferings which I knew, perhaps almost better than any other man, to be connected with the slave-trade, should continue unmitigated for another year, almost overpowered me. I was inconsolable. I wondered how Englishmen could talk as they did on the subject; how they could bear for a moment to consider their fellow-men as an article of trade; and how they could avoid the conviction that the delay of even an hour, to the abolition of a system which occasioned so much misery, was one of the most criminal actions of their lives." The labour of this session, however, was not all lost; the good cause was steadily advancing: the eyes of the nation were more open to the horrors of slavery, and the feeble defence made by its adherents greatly aided the cause of abolition.

The slave-merchants, perceiving the course that things were taking, and finding that public opinion was strongly in favour of abolition, began now to take another mode of defence. They admitted that there were some evils connected with the working of the system, and that certain abuses had crept into it; but denied that they were inseparable from the system itself, contending that it might be advisable to regulate the trade, but to abolish it would be absurd. The ever-vigilant Clarkson, immediately after the termination of his labours in arranging the evidence for the council, resolved to expose this subterfuge. He composed an essay, in which he entered fully into the subject, showing that nothing could be done to any good purpose short of entire abolition. It had been remarked by Mr. Fox, in one of his speeches, "That to talk of regulating a system of robbery and murder was of all absurdities the greatest." Clarkson's essay fully elucidated this idea, and was published and freely circulated by the committee.

The friends of abolition now became apprehensive lest the bold but false statements made by their opponents, that the slaves themselves were highly delighted with their voyage to the colonies should produce indifference to the cause in the public mind. It occurred to Clarkson that the best means to prevent this would be to collect evidence to prove that the grief of the poor Afri-

cans at being dragged from their homes was excessive. He mentioned the subject to the committee, offering at the same time to visit those parts where additional information was likely to be obtained, if they thought it desirable. The suggestion was considered judicious, and Clarkson set off on his journey without delay; but he had not proceeded far before he was requested to return. Mr. Wilberforce, who now took the lead in all the proceedings, thought that the state of affairs in France at that time were such, that if a judicious application were made to the ruling parties, they might be induced to class the slave-trade with the abuses in their government, which they had determined to remove, and he well knew that if this could be effected it would materially serve the cause in England.

The journey was proposed to Clarkson, and as he was ever ready to aid the cause in any way in which his services might be required, he consented to undertake it. France was then in a state of political anarchy, and he was advised not to risk the exposure of himself there as the open advocate of abolition, but to travel in another name. He resolved, however, to cast himself on the protection of Providence, and to prosecute his labours fearlessly and openly. On his arrival in Paris he was introduced to several distinguished characters, and among the rest to the Marquis de la Fayette,

whom he found to be a warm friend of abolition, and who had been seeking to carry it into effect on an estate he held in the colonies. Clarkson had free access to M. Necker, then at the head of the government, who expressed himself friendly to the cause. Things at first wore an encouraging aspect; many meetings of the committee of the friends of negroes, as it was termed, were held, at all of which Clarkson was present, and sanguine hopes were entertained that some decidedly favourable step would be taken; but the confused state of affairs, and the violent opposition at length raised against the measure by the interested party, disappointed all these hopes. Letters were despatched by the French committee to the president of the National Assembly, entreating him to take the abolition of the slave-trade into serious consideration, but no reply was ever received. Either they were intercepted through the opposition of the opposing party, or their consideration was deferred till they were overlooked in the multiplicity of affairs that demanded the president's attention.

During Clarkson's stay in Paris the most malicious reports were spread respecting him; several anonymous letters were sent him, threatening him with destruction. He was said to have been expelled the committee in London for the wild schemes he proposed. It was even asserted that he was sent as a spy from the British government; and had it not been for the protection given him,

and the interest exerted in his behalf by the Marquis de la Fayette, he would have been placed in most critical circumstances. His opponents probably imagined that they should by this means excite his fears and hasten his departure; but he was not thus to be driven from the post of duty. He persevered in his efforts, notwithstanding all these threats. He circulated among the French nobility and clergy a number of pamphlets, which at his request the committee in London had forwarded to him. He obtained an interview with the leading members of the National Assembly, all of whom paid him the most respectful attention, and spoke in the most friendly terms of abolition. Mirabeau had made it the subject of his inquiry, with the intention of speedily introducing it to the assembly, and handing Clarkson the outlines of his intended speech on the occasion, he requested him to look it over at his leisure, and to put down in writing, for his guidance, all the information he could on the subject. In compliance with this request, Clarkson wrote a letter of from sixteen to twenty pages to this eloquent man every alternate day for more than a month, being determined, whatever labour it might cost him, to put the Comte in possession of the entire facts of the case. No beneficial results followed these exertions. The violent opposition of the colonists, who, on learning that the chief minister of state was in favour of abolition, wrote to him on the subject, entreating

him to reflect on the step he was contemplating, or he would ruin all France; and the extreme irritability of the public mind at that crisis rendered all his labours abortive. His journey, however, was not useless. He had excited the attention of the great men in France to the subject, and the impression he had made on their minds was evinced by the regret they expressed at his departure, and by their cordial wishes that complete success might speedily crown the efforts of himself and his friends in England. The Abbe Siezes accompanied him to his hotel, and at parting presented him with a copy of his works, remarking feelingly, "I am highly pleased to have been acquainted with the friend of *man*." At his last interview with the Marquis de la Fayette, that nobleman expressed an earnest desire that the abolition of the slave-trade might yet be carried in England. "I hope," said he, "that the day is not far distant when two great nations, hitherto distinguished chiefly for their hostility towards each other, will unite in so sublime a work, and will follow up their union by a measure still more lovely, the preservation of eternal peace."

During Clarkson's stay in Paris a deputation from the coloured population of St. Domingo arrived. They were themselves men of colour, but were intelligent, polite, and respectable. They had been deputed to wait on the National Assem-

bly, and to sue for deliverance from the oppression of the whites on the island, desiring at the same time to have an equal share with them in the civil government; a most reasonable request, the coloured population being as three to one to the white. On conversing with them Clarkson found that they were keen, clever men, and in no way disposed to be factious, but were anxious to obtain by constitutional means their rights. They declared themselves to be friendly to abolition, giving it as their opinion, that the slave-trade was the parent of all colonial distress. Had their request been granted, which would have been the case but for the determined opposition made to it by the French colonists, they would have returned perfectly satisfied, and the insurrection in that island, which followed soon after, the results of which were terrific, would probably have been averted. Their parting interview with Clarkson was interesting. They began then to perceive that the redress they had come in pursuit of was not likely to be granted, and they were warm in their expressions of resentment. Clarkson earnestly recommended to them moderation and forbearance, entreating them to wait with patience, as their petition must ultimately be granted. Their reply was memorable: "The task you set us," said they, "is most difficult; but we much fear that neither the conduct of the white colonists nor of the National Assembly can much

longer be borne." "One of them," says Clarkson, "gave me a trinket to keep in remembrance of him, stating, as he presented it, that he should never forget the individual who had so deeply interested himself in his much-loved mother country, Africa."

Clarkson had been in France six months, when he was requested to return to assist in procuring evidence for the approaching parliamentary examination. On leaving Paris he felt vexed that he had spent so long a time to so little purpose. He well knew that during all that time he had devoted his entire attention to the cause; but he felt disappointed, because he saw that so little good was likely to result from his exertions. On his return to London he found the committee were still vigorously pursuing their labours. The examination of the witnesses against abolition had commenced, but so tardily did they proceed, that if they continued at the same rate, it was impossible to tell when they would come to a decision.

Mr. Wilberforce, who keenly watched his opponents, now perceived that their object was to protract the proceedings to the longest period possible, in the hope, probably, that if the matter could be deferred, the strongly excited feelings of the public would subside. Determined, if possible, to prevent this, he moved, that instead of the evi-

dence being heard before a committee of the whole house, an open committee should be appointed for the purpose, to hear the witnesses up-stairs, which should continue its sittings whether the house adjourned or not. This was strongly objected to by the opposing party, but was carried without a division.

Clarkson, who had just arrived from France, and to whom the labour of procuring and arranging the witnesses to be examined in favour of abolition had been left, became apprehensive lest he should not be able to procure them by the time they were wanted. He immediately wrote to all those whom he had previously intended to bring before the privy council, but who had not been permitted to give in their evidence. Eight of them were not to be found, and one had died. Looking over the letters which had been sent him during his absence from England, he had the pleasure to find several which contained references to individuals who could assist the cause. He immediately set out to apply personally to each of these, though they lived at places very remote from each other. In three weeks he travelled a thousand miles; but out of seventeen persons to whom he had been referred, he could only prevail upon three to give in their evidence. On his return to London he found that it had become matter of great importance to ascertain how the slaves were ob-

tained in Africa in such large numbers. The planters and merchants stated that they had been purchased at fairs, in a manner nearly resembling that in which cattle are bought in England: but the formidable preparation known to be made when they were to be brought to the ships went far to falsify this statement, and the friends of abolition had strong reasons to believe that great numbers of them were kidnapped or taken by force from their friends. This was positively denied by the planters, who had the audacity indignantly to repel the accusation, though they well knew it was true. It became now a matter of great importance to ascertain the truth on this subject. This was attended with the utmost difficulty, as the navigation of the small vessels that conveyed the negroes to the ships was performed almost entirely by the natives, Europeans being very rarely permitted to sail in these vessels. It thus appeared almost impossible to bring any direct evidence as to this important point. Clarkson made it the subject of inquiry in the circle of his acquaintance, and he had the satisfaction to be informed, by a friend who took a lively interest in the cause, that he had conversed with a sailor a year ago who had been up the African rivers, and who well knew the plan pursued in procuring slaves. The gentleman stated that he had spent some time with him at an inn, and could describe

his person, but neither knew his name nor where he resided—he took him to belong to some ship in the navy.

Aware how important the evidence of this man would be, Clarkson resolved instantly, if it were possible, to find him out. The undertaking appeared almost hopeless. He had no clue to afford him the least guidance. All he knew of the man was from the personal description his friend had given him, which must have been very imperfect, as he had only been in his company about half an hour. Whether he was in England at all, or whether he was living or dead, could not be ascertained; still Clarkson was resolved to commence the search. Remembering the promise of assistance Sir Charles Middleton had kindly given him, he applied for permission to examine the men on board all the ships of war in the several ports throughout England, which was immediately granted. On setting out, so little chance did there seem to be of success, that he had almost resolved to relinquish the task; but on maturely reconsidering the subject, he determined to proceed, well knowing that if he could but succeed the result to the cause would more than compensate him for all his toil. He successively boarded all the ships belonging to the navy at Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham, and Sheerness, but found not the man of whom he was in pursuit, though he obtained some addi-

tional information on the subject of slavery which was never absent from his thoughts. From Chatham he proceeded to Portsmouth, and examined all the vessels there, but still without success. "Matters," he says, "now began to look disheartening. There was but one port left, Plymouth, and that was distant more than two hundred miles, but thither I determined to go. The first day after my arrival I boarded forty ships, but found no one who had been on the coast of Africa, or even in the slave-trade. Things were now drawing to a close, my spirits began to droop, and I was restless and uneasy during the night. I entered my boat the next morning, agitated alternately by hope and fear, and the fifty-seventh vessel I had boarded in this harbour was the Melampus frigate. On examining the men I found a sailor who had been two voyages to Africa, and to my inexpressible joy I soon perceived that he was the person to whom I had been referred. I found, too, that he had been present on several occasions when the natives had been forcibly torn from their homes, and that he was able and willing to give his evidence to this effect before the committee." Delighted with his success Clarkson hastened to London, accompanied by the man, of whose character he had received from the captain satisfactory testimonials. On his arrival in town he had the satisfaction to find, that as the examina-

tion of the witnesses against abolition had not yet terminated, all the witnesses he had procured, amounting to a respectable number, would be in time to give in their evidence.

A circumstance now occurred which, for a time, seemed likely to render all Clarkson's labour in procuring these witnesses abortive. The opponents of abolition had entertained the unreasonable and most absurd opinion that only their own witnesses would be examined by the committee. On what they could have grounded their opinion it is difficult to say, but certainly not on any principles of equity. They were probably conscious that even their own witnesses, cross-examined as they had been most skilfully by Mr. Wilberforce and by Mr. Smith, had shown their cause to be utterly indefensible. They had now sent in their last witness, and at the close of his evidence Mr. Wilberforce moved, greatly to their consternation, that the witnesses should now be heard whom the friends of abolition were able to bring. This was violently opposed by the interested party. An amendment was made, that no more witnesses should be heard in the case. An animated debate followed. The amendment was negatived, and the examination of the witnesses, which had been brought up for the cause, was proceeded with. To the surprise of the abolitionists, and more especially of Clarkson, when only three witnesses had

given in their depositions, an individual who, on Clarkson's first visit to Liverpool, had rendered him the greatest assistance, professing to be strongly in favour of the good cause, but who afterwards basely turned round and became a witness before the privy council against it, now presented himself as a witness on the other side. This he did not from any wish to serve the cause, but to save his own reputation, and to throw the onus of his inconsistency upon Clarkson, or upon those who acted with him. Clarkson's conduct in this affair, and the manner in which he adverts to it, exhibit his character in the most amiable light. "How short-sighted," he remarks, "are they who do wrong. By thus coming forward this man fixed the stain of inconsistency the more indelibly upon himself, for he thus imposed upon me the cruel necessity of being examined against him, which was the more afflicting to me, because I was to be called upon not to state facts relative to the trade, but to destroy his character as a witness in its support. Glad should I have been to have declined this painful interference, but no one would hear of a refusal. The Bishop of London, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Wilberforce considered my appearance as an imperative obligation to the cause of the oppressed. Suffice it to say, that I was examined, that the individual referred to was present on the occasion, and that after this he seemed to

have such a view of his own degradation, that he could never more face the abolitionists, or act with his wonted energy in the defence of their opponents."

The examination of the witnesses was continued until more than twenty in favour of abolition had given in their evidence. Their depositions had proved unanswerably that every branch of the trade was most iniquitous, and that to continue it longer was only to perpetuate crime and misery. But the claims of avarice still stifled those of humanity. The low condition in life of some of the witnesses in favour of abolition was objected to, though none of them were disreputable; as if the truth could not be spoken by any but the wealthy. The ruin of the colonies, if the trade was abolished, was pronounced as certain. No less than seventy millions, it was boldly asserted, ought to be paid to indemnify the planters, and this session closed as unsuccessfully for the good cause as that of the preceding year.

In the mean time, however, the cause was rapidly advancing out of the house. The committee laboured indefatigably to excite in the minds of the people an interest in its behalf. Every possible expedient was resorted to that was likely to bring the subject more prominently before the public. They published and circulated extensively a plate representing the different sections of a slave-ship, which contributed greatly to

expose the system. The false statements published by the planters were fairly met and clearly refuted. Nor were the exertions in the cause confined to the committee. The cause of the negro was nobly defended by many eminent writers. Cowper composed and sent to a friend in London an inimitable ballad, entitled "The Negro's Complaint." Many thousands of these were printed and circulated by the committee throughout the country. An impression on fine paper was sent in franks to all the committee's correspondents. These admirable lines were afterwards set to music. They were sung by the common ballad-singers throughout the streets, and were soon classed even among the pieces for the piano-forte. So popular, indeed, was the cause of abolition now become, that many articles of manufacture bore upon them some ingenious device in its favour. Such being the state of public opinion, it may well be supposed that the apathy of parliament would excite surprise and dissatisfaction.

The committee, and all who had taken an active part in the cause, regretted much that hitherto their labours had been followed with so little success. But still they did not think it right to spend their time in unavailing sorrow. They were conscious that the object they were pursuing was good, and that the system they were opposing appeared the more odious the more it was exposed.

Hence they wisely resolved to renew their efforts, assuring themselves that the cause they were supporting must ultimately prevail. But the question was, what course would it be best to pursue? Clarkson thought it would be well to follow out the plan upon which they had hitherto acted; and he offered to undertake another journey to procure witnesses to be examined in favour of abolition when the house again met. This was approved by Mr. Wilberforce and by the committee; and in the beginning of November, 1798, he again set out on his arduous task, taking with him a paper on which Mr. Wilberforce had written for his use a number of queries to be put to the individuals whom he might examine. "On this occasion," he says, "I prayed earnestly that I might have strength for the journey, that I might perform it in the most effectual manner, and that I might be duly impressed while pursuing it with the stimulating thought, that on my endeavours the best hope of millions might possibly rest."

Clarkson had references to respectable individuals in different parts of England who were known to have a personal knowledge of the trade, and to be able greatly to serve the cause by their depositions. He had, however, the mortification in not a few cases to be even refused admittance to persons, after he had travelled hundreds of miles to see them. In other instances there was a studied

reserve on all questions of importance. It was with the greatest difficulty that many could be prevailed upon to converse freely on the subject. No adequate conception can be formed of his labour during this journey. He confesses it to have been the most vexatious he had yet undertaken. Four months was he thus incessantly engaged, exposed constantly to the whims and caprices of those who were really beneath his notice. He travelled, as he tells us, almost over the whole island, intersecting it by journeys backwards and forwards, by night and by day. He was grieved exceedingly at the selfishness of many who were accounted respectable persons. After travelling near seven thousand miles he returned to London, and was able to name twenty additional witnesses, whom he had prevailed upon to come forward and give in their evidence, when required.

The severe scrutiny to which the witnesses for abolition were known to be exposed makes it less surprising than it would otherwise appear, that so many respectable individuals, who wished well to the cause, could not be prevailed upon to come forward in its support. The idea of appearing before the house was sufficient of itself to deter many; but this was nothing to the publicity which they knew would be given to their evidence, and

to the contempt with which they were sure to be treated by the opposing party.

Parliament re-assembled in February, 1791, and Mr. Wilberforce took an opportunity on an early day to move that a committee be appointed to examine those witnesses in favour of abolishing the slave-trade who had not given in their evidence. This was strenuously opposed by several members, but was ultimately carried; the committee was then appointed, and the examination proceeded. By the month of April the evidence on both sides, which filled three folio volumes, was printed, and laid before the house. It was now thought desirable by the abolitionists that the whole should be carefully abridged, that the real facts of the case might be seen without the trouble of wading through this mass of statements. That the abridgment might be faithful, it was to pass successively under the revision of several competent persons. When completed it was printed at the expense of the abolitionists, and a copy presented to every member of the house. It was impossible to read it without perceiving that the evidence given for abolition was most satisfactory. A weaker defence than that produced by the opposite party could not have been made. Had the decision of the case been determined by the common principles of right and wrong, the vile traffic would

have been at once utterly abolished; but strange as it must ever appear, there was still a strong feeling in the parliament against it; for when it was brought before the house, on the 18th April, 1791, in a most able speech, though it was again supported by all the most eloquent members, it was lost by a considerable majority. A striking proof that the interest of the planters must then have been most powerful, and a painful illustration how difficult it is to carry any measure in favour of humanity against the rival claims of self-interest. It must, however, be admitted, that the public events of the day were unfavourable to abolition rather than otherwise. France was then a scene of anarchy and blood. Accounts were daily received from thence the most astonishing and disastrous. An unusual excitement prevailed throughout England; impious publications were industriously circulated; a spirit of disaffection and revolt had displayed itself in the colonies; the foundations of society seemed to be shaken to their centre, and infidelity scowled fearfully upon the nations. At this crisis news of an insurrection in St. Domingo and in Demerara was received. A public meeting of the planters was called. The abolitionists were boldly said to have been the cause of all this evil; and it is not, perhaps, surprising that, in a state of affairs so critical, many worthy individuals should be so alarmed as to believe such statements, and should hence have withheld their support from

abolition. But after taking into consideration every extenuating circumstance, the vote of the house on this occasion can never appear otherwise than most singular. The evidence laid before it was in every way so perfectly in favour of abolition, and exposed so clearly the horrid barbarities inseparable from the negro-traffic, that nothing could justify its continuance. It is impossible to read the debate on this important occasion, which well deserves attention for the eloquent speeches made, without being astonished at the result, and admitting the propriety of the severe remarks made by Fox, "that if the house, knowing what the trade was by the evidence which had been produced, did not by their vote mark to all mankind their abhorrence of a practice so savage, so enormous, so repugnant to all law, human and divine, they would consign their character to eternal infamy."

The decision of the house was hailed with triumph by the merchants and planters, who vainly imagined it would finally settle the question, leaving them to pursue uninterruptedly their iniquitous traffic. But the abolitionists, though much grieved at the unsuccessful result of their former labours, were not wholly dispirited. A meeting of the committee was called, at which votes of thanks were given to all the members in the house who had supported the cause; and resolutions were passed to prosecute their labours with increasing zeal. This meeting Clarkson de-

scribes as "the most impressive he had ever attended. The face of each member bespoke the feelings of his heart. Little was said previously to the opening of the business; and after it was opened, it was conducted with a kind of solemn dignity which became the occasion." The plan it was thought advisable to pursue was to continue to lay before the public the whole state of the case. A report was printed and sent to all the committees in the country, urging them steadily to persevere in the good cause. Clarkson was requested to arrange and abridge the evidence laid before the house. He completed it with as little delay as possible. It was printed by order of the committee, and copies of it were forwarded to almost every town in the kingdom. To excite a spirit of more diligent inquiry into the contents of this volume, and to urge the people zealously and perseveringly to co-operate with the committee in their efforts till they had effected their object, Clarkson now undertook, with the committee's concurrence, another journey throughout England. His labours on this occasion were unremitting and most arduous. He travelled from town to town, pursuing his journey by night and by day, till he had visited almost every place in England and Wales, and it was his intention to have persevered in his course till he had passed through Scotland, but the failure of his health compelled him to

write to the committee, requesting them to appoint some suitable persons to visit the Scottish towns. He had the happiness to find that in many districts the circulation of the abridged report, and of the society's publications generally, had produced the desired result.

The people began now to exert themselves in favour of abolition in a manner worthy of the cause. Pamphlets had been published recommending entire abstinence from the use of every article that was the product of slave-labour. The use of sugar was hence discontinued in many families. In places where no exertions had been made in favour of abolition Clarkson introduced the subject, almost invariably with the happiest result; and where something had been done in the cause, he encouraged its friends to persevere, assuring them that it was only by a vigorous and national effort that they could ever hope for success. In this journey he travelled six thousand miles; and the spirited manner in which the public now took up the subject proved that his labours had been most useful. Not only were anti-slavery committees formed in almost every town in the kingdom, but public meetings in its favour began now to be held: more than three hundred petitions, respectably and numerously signed, were sent to parliament the ensuing session. Churchmen and dissenters of all grades were united in

this noble cause, and there has seldom been so unanimous an expression of public opinion in support of any measure. "Of the enthusiasm of the nation at this moment," writes Clarkson, "none can form an opinion but they who witnessed it. There was never, perhaps, a season when so much virtuous feeling pervaded all ranks. Great pains were taken by interested parties to prevent public meetings, but they were of no avail. The current ran with that rapidity and force that nothing could withstand." The liverymen of London had respectfully intimated to the common-council that they wished a public meeting to be called on the subject. They waited patiently till the time had nearly arrived when the question was again to be brought before the house, and on perceiving that nothing was likely to be done by the proper authorities, they summoned a public meeting in the common-hall. The notice given was necessarily short, but the attendance was most numerous, and the petition, though violently opposed, was carried by a large majority. It was signed with the utmost despatch by nearly all the respectable men in the city, and was presented to the house the same day, not an hour before Mr. Wilberforce again brought the subject before parliament, which he did in an admirable speech on the 2nd April, 1792. An animated debate ensued. All the ablest speakers supported the cause, but though it was

backed by more than three hundred petitions, all most numerously and respectably signed, with only four petitions in favour of the trade, and these from parties immediately interested in its continuance, yet, strange to say, but little ground was gained during this session. Such was the power of the opposing party in the house, that at the close of the debate only eighty-seven votes were recorded in favour of the abolition of the trade; the majority against it was two hundred and thirty-four; but on the motion being put for gradual abolition there was a majority in its favour of one hundred and twenty-five.

The subject was again brought before the house on the 23rd April, and after several lengthened debates upon it, the period fixed for the abolition of the trade was 1796. It came before the house of peers on the 8th May, when it was resolved, that before their lordships could come to a decision upon it, witnesses must be examined on the subject, and this precluded the possibility of its settlement that session.

The abolition-committee were much dissatisfied at the state in which matters now stood. It was impossible to tell what would be the fate of the bill in the house of peers. It might be thrown out, leaving the evil entirely unremedied; or, if not, the period for abolition might be protracted, as, indeed, there were strong reasons to think it

would be, to a greater number of years than had been agreed to by the commons. Hence they determined, after mature consideration, to persevere in their efforts for total abolition. To communicate this decision to the different societies throughout the country, and to procure witnesses in favour of the cause, preparatory to the examination to be made before the lords, Clarkson was requested to undertake another journey throughout England, and Dr. Dickson was deputed to perform the same labour in Scotland. The labours of his last journey had left Clarkson in a very enfeebled state, from the effects of which he had not then recovered; but as he was unwilling to relinquish the work, he again visited nearly every town in England and Wales, urging the friends of the cause never to relax in their exertions till the odious traffic was utterly abolished. His labours were followed with the desired effect. Many who had felt inclined to concur in the measure of future abolition, became warm advocates for the immediate discontinuance of a trade that had been proved, by evidence the most convincing, to be unjust.

In February, 1793, Mr. Wilberforce again brought the subject before the house, but his motion was lost by a majority of sixty. In May he moved the house that British merchants should be prohibited from supplying foreigners with slaves; but though the motion was most ably supported, and was

allowed to pass the first and second reading, yet it was ultimately thrown out by a majority of near forty. In the house of peers the abolitionists were fiercely attacked, their motives were impugned, and their whole conduct denounced as absurd and hypocritical.

Things now looked most discouraging, for although the voice of the nation was in favour of abolition, yet it seemed to be losing ground in parliament. The only course to be pursued now was to procure additional proofs of its necessity, preparatory to some future efforts. The house had not finally rejected it, but had determined to hear further evidence on the point, to procure which Clarkson undertook another harassing journey, though his health was in so feeble a state as to be scarcely able to endure the fatigue. He set off in September, 1793, and continued travelling till the ensuing February, when parliament assembled. They had not sat long when Mr. Wilberforce again brought the subject before the house. His motion was to abolish entirely that part of the trade by which British merchants supplied foreigners with slaves. After considerable opposition this was at length carried; but it was rejected by the lords on the alleged ground that the examinations of witnesses on the general question had not been concluded.

Gloomy as the prospects of the abolitionists had appeared at the close of the preceding session, they

were now much more so; a dark cloud hung over them, nor could they discern the faintest glimmer of light to cheer them in the distant horizon. The motion might be again made by Mr. Wilberforce for the abolition of the foreign part of the trade, but what hope was there that it would be carried after it had been rejected by the lords? The committee, and all who had taken an active part in the cause, were now much depressed. They could only console themselves with the consciousness of having used their best endeavours, while they indulged a hope that, in the movements of Providence, some change would occur to favour the accomplishment of their long-sought object.

Clarkson had for a considerable time been sinking under his labours, the exhausting effects of which had at length so completely enervated his system, that he was obliged, as he says, though most reluctantly, to be borne out of the field where he had placed the honour and glory of his life. That such should have been the result, then, is far less surprising than that it should not have taken place before. His physical and mental powers must have been unusually great, or he could never have performed such immense labour, amidst such severe excitement. "For seven years," he says, "I had a correspondence to maintain with four hundred persons. I had some work or other annually to write for the cause. During this time I

had travelled more than thirty-five thousand miles in search of evidence, performing a great part of these journeys in the night. All this time my mind had been incessantly on the stretch upon one subject only, for I had no leisure to attend to my own concerns. The various instances of barbarity that had frequently come under my notice had vexed, harassed, and afflicted me. The wounds thus inflicted had been deepened by the cruel disappointment I had so often experienced by the reiterated refusal of persons to give their testimony after I had travelled hundreds of miles in quest of them." A greater display of moral, say rather of Christian heroism, than was given by Clarkson in his unparalleled labours in this good cause, the world never witnessed. From the time when he commenced the composition of his Essay his whole soul seemed to be bound up in the work. All the cruelties of the system seemed to be ever present to his mind, and he forgot himself in his sympathy for the oppressed Africans. Had the piercing, heart-rending cries of the negroes when they were dragged from their home, or their doleful moans while crammed in the suffocating holds, during their passage, or their deep lamentations while smarting under the lash of the planter's whip been continually within his hearing, or had the scenes of all their misery been ever present to his view, it would have been impossible for him to have pursued his labours with

greater intensity. There never was, and we feel assured there never can be, an instance of more entire devotedness of soul to one great object. So intense was his zeal that it had now actually produced an entire prostration of his powers. "As far as myself was concerned," he says, "all exertion was over; my memory and my hearing failed me; dizziness seized my head, a confused singing in my ears followed me continually; I could scarcely walk, and the least exertion in conversation brought on excessive perspiration."

While suffering under extreme lassitude, the mind often seems to lose the power to exert its sympathies for the anguish of others. Wrapt up in its own anguish, it becomes indifferent to the distress of its fellows. But Clarkson's sympathy, even when brought down to the gates of the grave, predominated over every other feeling. The lively interest he expressed on behalf of some witnesses who had been prevailed upon by him to give in their evidence in favour of abolition, and who were now brought to great difficulties by the persecution of their opponents, strongly corroborates this. After enumerating his own sufferings, he remarks, "But the severest stroke of all was that inflicted by the persecution carried on by our opponents, against some individuals who had been witnesses against them, whose dependent condition in life made it easy to oppress. As I had been the means

of bringing them forward on these occasions, they came to me in their distress as the author of their misery, and I felt that to have refused them relief would have been most ungrateful." Clarkson's mind was relieved of this burden by the noble generosity of the late Mr. Whitbread. That distinguished statesman had always supported abolition, and was one of those friends who had urged Clarkson instantly to retire from the scene of his labours as the only means of preserving his life. In an interview he had with him for this purpose he found Clarkson in deep sorrow, and on inquiring into the cause was informed, that application had just been made to him for assistance, from a person whom he had persuaded to become a witness in favour of abolition, and who was now, by the persecution of his opponents, left without the means of supporting his family. "What is to be done in cases like these?" enquired Clarkson, feelingly. "The idea of retiring to recruit my enfeebled powers, leaving these men unrelieved, is to me insupportable." "Leave that affair to me," said Whitbread, "and I will see to it." A promise which this noble-minded man scrupulously performed.

At the time when Clarkson was compelled to relinquish his work, which was in the autumn of 1794, the cause of abolition seemed to be in a more hopeless state than at any former period,

To the astonishment of the nation, and we may add, of the world, victory had hitherto crowned the efforts of its opponents. Looking back at the immense efforts which had been made to abolish a traffic from which the unperverted mind of every one must have instinctively recoiled, it appears, and must ever appear unaccountable, that such should have been the result. That from mere selfish principles, and to add to their hoards of ill-gotten gold, men could so far disgrace themselves as to defend with the utmost pertinacity a system the most iniquitous that can be conceived, and far more atrocious than the sun ever beheld, is an affecting proof how completely selfishness is bound up in our very nature, how stultifying are its effects upon the heart, and with what extreme difficulty it is eradicated.

Hopeless, however, as the struggle now appeared, yet the committee determined to persevere in their labours. They deeply regretted the loss of Clarkson's assistance, but they were not without some grounds of encouragement. The health of Mr. Wilberforce was preserved, and his zeal in the cause was unabated. They were assured that their cause must ultimately be successful, however protracted might be the contest. Hence they continued steadily to keep it before the public; but it was not until 1807, twelve years after the retirement of Clarkson, and twenty years from the

time it was first introduced to the house, that this odious traffic was utterly abolished. In 1795 and the four successive years, Mr. Wilberforce brought the subject before the house, with very little variation of success. In each instance it was rejected by a considerable majority, and as it seemed on the whole rather to lose than to gain ground in the house, though the voice of the people was still decidedly in its favour, it was thought advisable not again to make it the subject of parliamentary discussion, till some political change occurred that would afford at least a prospect of success. No motion on the subject was therefore made in the house for the four succeeding years from 1799, except that Mr. Wilberforce took occasion annually to move for certain papers respecting various branches of the trade, when he never failed to remark, that so far was he from having become indifferent to its abolition, as some might suppose, that the more he inquired into it the more indefensible did it appear, and the more strongly was he convinced of its direful results, both morally and politically.

At the time that Clarkson was compelled to relinquish his labours, Mr. Wilberforce, well knowing that he had expended a considerable sum in the cause, with a kindness that will ever reflect honour upon his memory, formed the generous design to raise a sum, by private subscriptions among

his friends, to reimburse his esteemed coadjutor in some measure for his loss. With his characteristic delicacy he sought to do this in a way the least likely to wound Clarkson's feelings. That his biographers should have represented this work of love as otherwise than delightful to his generous heart is, to say the least of it, most singular, and is utterly at variance with all his statements on the subject. Their feelings, we would fain hope, cannot be so dissimilar to those of their revered parent as their notion would lead us to suspect. From the moment it first entered his mind to the time when he had completed it, we cannot conceive of any thing that would have afforded him more pleasure. His original intention was to have raised the sum he had fixed upon, £.1,500, privately among his opulent friends, and then to have purchased an annuity upon Clarkson's life, instructing the secretary of the office where the purchase was made to write to Clarkson, that such an annuity stood in their books in his name, and requesting him to say when and to whom it should be paid. Thus unobtrusively, and with all this delicacy of feeling, did this excellent man seek to accomplish his generous design. History does not record an act of friendship towards an esteemed coadjutor better designed, or emanating from better motives; and to select a subject more worthy of it would be impossible. It is much to be regretted

that any thing should have occurred to prevent Mr. Wilberforce from completing his intention. How the derangement of the plan happened we cannot tell, probably it was owing to the indiscretion of some individual in making it known to Clarkson when it was first projected; on which, in the simplicity of his heart, but perhaps without due consideration, he wrote to Mr. Wilberforce, influenced solely by the desire to diminish the labour which he knew such an undertaking must necessarily have occasioned to any one, and more especially to one whose engagements were so numerous as were those of Mr. Wilberforce. Had he been apprized of what his friend was really aiming at, his prudence would no doubt have dictated the propriety of his remaining silent. That Mr. Wilberforce might have felt for a moment a little chagrin at having his plan of secrecy thus baffled, is more than probable: every virtuous mind, in the same circumstances, would have felt the same. He could not, however, attach any blame to Clarkson for writing, but to the injudicious friend who had betrayed his confidence.

The sum raised for Clarkson, by the kind exertions of his friends, was much less than he had expended, as Mr. Wilberforce well knew, or he would not have given it his support; and whatever might have been Clarkson's property, he would have been fully justified in receiving it. The money had

been expended in the prosecution of individuals who had committed punishable offences while employed in the slave-trade, and whom he thought it his duty to bring to justice. He might, it is true, had he, as he says, possessed a heart of stone, and could he have listened to the relation of cruelties unmoved, have refused to interfere in these cases, a course which a cold, calculating individual would have taken; but then much of the evidence against the iniquitous system would unquestionably have been lost. And had he disregarded the oppression and cruelty practised on his fellow-countrymen, while professedly employed in the prevention of similar crimes toward the African race, what consistency would there have been in his conduct? He had relinquished his prospects in the church, which was no mean sacrifice; he had for years devoted his entire attention to the cause of abolition; the vigour of his days had been spent in it, his health was broken down; all this he had done gratuitously, without a farthing's remuneration in any shape;—was it otherwise than just that he should be reimbursed for the money he had expended? There was no individual who like him had made the cause the sole object of his life, devoting to it his entire attention; and had he been allowed a liberal salary for his services, it would only have been just. But he never entertained a wish to be thus rewarded—the reward he sought

was of a higher nature. It was, however, a sacrifice sufficiently noble to make, thus gratuitously to serve the cause without being expected to expend such a large portion of his property. Had the biographers of Wilberforce possessed even a moderate share of their parent's delicacy, they would either have suppressed all mention of this subject; or had they adverted to it, as illustrative of any trait in their father's character, (to which no objection could be made,) it would have been in a far different spirit than that in which they seem to have recorded it. The indignant terms in which Clarkson, in his late Strictures, has animadverted upon this and some other parts of their otherwise excellent work, are not more severe than they are just. It was impossible that Clarkson's mind should feel otherwise than hurt by the manner in which they speak of him, almost invariably. Had the work been composed in haste, and had no pains been taken to prevent the possibility of a misstatement, though even then it must have been seen that they were culpably inattentive to obvious facts, yet the whole affair might have been overlooked. But the lengthened period that was suffered to elapse from the death of their excellent parent to the time when the Life was published, shows that the greatest care has been taken to give what they wish to have considered as their father's opinion of his contemporaries. Why the

appearance of their work was delayed so long is best known to themselves. We cannot, we will not undertake to affirm that it was deferred in the hope that Clarkson, whose labours and character it was intended to misrepresent would have been removed hence to his eternal reward before its publication. Happily for his memory, if such were the motive, it has been defeated. All who revere his name, as every friend of abolition must, will rejoice that he has been spared to pen his late excellent Strictures, and to receive unequivocal testimony that the public duly appreciates his labours.

The union of Ireland being concluded in 1804, it was thought desirable, as the Irish representatives were most of them known to be the friends of abolition, that the subject should be again introduced to parliament. Mr. Wilberforce accordingly moved for leave to bring in a bill for the abolition of the slave-trade, and though the motion was opposed, it was carried by a large majority. But the bill, though it was brought in and carried through the commons by such a majority as led its supporters to hope it would pass in the upper house, was nevertheless virtually lost, by its discussion being deferred till the ensuing session. In 1808 Mr. Wilberforce again brought the subject before the house, but not with the same success. A violent opposition was raised against it, and though the speeches in its favour were most pow-

erful, yet it was thrown out, chiefly owing to the absence of several members who had invariably supported it, but who had felt certain that there would have been a large majority in its favour. This was a mortifying circumstance to the committee, who, however, were glad to perceive that their prospects were on the whole brightening; and as they could now calculate upon a majority in the lower, if not in the upper house, they determined with renewed vigour to prepare for the ensuing session. The frequent disappointments which they had experienced made them anxious to provide against any cause of delay that might be expected to arise; and as they imagined that when the bill came before the lords, evidence would be again required to be adduced, they resolved that an attempt should be made to procure witnesses to be in readiness, if called for. Clarkson had now, after an absence of nine years, joined the committee, and as this department of labour had always been performed by him, he again undertook it. This was the most pleasant and the most successful journey he had performed. He was cheered to find, that though many of those who had formerly borne witness in favour of abolition had been removed by death, yet he had little difficulty now in procuring others. He returned from his tour about Christmas 1805, and awaited with no small anxiety

the arrival of the time when the subject should be again brought before the legislature. In the following January, when parliament were on the eve of assembling, an event occurred which excited in the minds of the abolitionists many apprehensions that those hopes of speedy success which they had fondly cherished would prove utterly groundless. This was the death of Mr. Pitt, who had always been a warm friend to abolition, and had given it the cordial and constant support of his great talents. The loss of such a friend, at such a time, it was feared would be fatal to the cause, for that session at least. But all the apprehensions speedily gave place to feelings of an opposite character. The Grenville and Fox administration, which succeeded that of Mr. Pitt, was soon discovered to be in favour of the measure, and though it was not carried during that session, yet the resolutions that were then adopted gave to it its death blow, and no doubt was entertained but that it would be entirely abolished in the ensuing session.

But before the arrival of that period they had to mourn over the loss of another of its noble champions, Mr. Fox, who but a few weeks before had made one of the most eloquent speeches in its favour that was ever delivered; in the course of which he declared, that if he had done no other good during the years that he had

sat in that house, which were between thirty and forty, than assist in carrying this measure into effect, of so much importance did he consider it, that he should retire satisfied that he had not lived in vain. Had he lived he would unquestionably have given this measure, the passing of which he had truly said would be to the glory of any administration, the utmost support of his talents and influence. On his death-bed he declared that the peace of Europe and the abolition of the slave-trade were two great things which he wished to see accomplished; of the two, he said the latter he thought was the most important. The death of two such champions for the cause as Pitt and Fox cast a gloom over the minds of the abolitionists. But though they felt some momentary misgivings, yet looking to a higher than any human power, they could not imagine that Providence, which had so signally appeared for them of late, would disappoint their present cheering expectations.

The memorable session of 1807 at length arrived. Lord Grenville, contrary to the usual practice, first introduced the subject to the upper house. Its enemies opposed it with all their power. Four counsellors were heard against it. The debate was protracted for many hours; but happily there was a large majority in favour of total abolition. The same opposition was made to it in the commons, it was, however, defended with great energy and effect by

many members, and particularly by the present Earl Grey, then Lord Howick, and was passed by a very large majority. But even at this stage of its progress, when victory had all but crowned the mighty and long-continued efforts of its friends, there was, says Clarkson, "an awful fear throughout the kingdom, lest the bill should not receive the royal assent, before the Grenville ministry would be dissolved, which was hourly expected. Happily, however, the commission for the royal assent to the bill was obtained in time, and but just in time, to be executed before the dissolution took place. At half-past eleven on the morning of the 25th of March, 1807, letters were received by each member of the cabinet requesting them to deliver up the seals of office. The Lord Chancellor, having just then been informed that his majesty had ordered his consent to be given to this bill by commission, proceeded immediately to pass it in the usual way. "And just as the clock struck twelve," says Clarkson, "while the sun was shining in its meridian splendour, as if to witness the august act, and to sanction it by its glorious beams, the magna charta of Africa was completed." Thus terminated, after twenty years' struggle, the contest which Clarkson had begun, and which, as he well says, "was the most glorious that was ever carried on in any age or country." But to whom did he wish the merit

of it to be ascribed? Unquestionably not to himself, though no individual had laboured so much to promote it; nor did he wish it to be ascribed to any, or even to the united efforts of all his coadjutors, though he fully appreciated their services. The glory of it, he knew, belonged to a higher power; and at the close of his History he piously enjoins every one who rejoiced at the victory obtained, to pour out his heart in grateful acknowledgments to God, who had in his great goodness and mercy at length crowned the efforts of his servants with the desired success.

On a retrospective view of the great struggle, even though we take into consideration the power and influence of the opposing party, yet it must ever appear astonishing that to abolish a system so enormously iniquitous and so utterly indefensible, exertions so prodigious should have been required. It gives us an affecting proof of the tenacity with which men will seek to keep possession of any thing that becomes to them a source of wealth; while it holds out encouragement to all who are engaged in works of benevolence and mercy to persevere in their course, whatever difficulties they may have to encounter, under the full conviction that Heaven will ultimately smile upon their endeavours.

The glorious news of the abolition was received by the nation with every demonstration of joy.

Literary talent of every degree was exerted in its celebration. Sermons, pamphlets, and poems, many of them of great merit, were published on the occasion. A general desire was now felt for a well written and faithful history of the struggle; and as none were so well acquainted with it in all its bearings as Clarkson, he was requested to undertake it. The subject had been named to him many times before, by his friends, but he could not be persuaded to listen to the proposal. His invariable excuse was, that it would compel him to write too much of himself, that it could not fail to appear as if he were sounding his own praise. On receiving, however, an urgent and respectful request from several members of the committee, and from Mr. Wilberforce, he yielded to their entreaties, and in the course of a few months the work was completed. It was published in two volumes, and contains a full and faithful detail of the abolition contest, till victory crowned the efforts of its friends. It would have been more interesting had its details been less minute, but it will ever be deemed a valuable history, containing a strikingly correct account of the exertions made in the achievement of abolition, apportioning to the several individuals who served the cause, with scarcely a single exception, their due degree of merit, and adverting to his own labours always in a way the most unassuming, and never mentioning himself but when it

was really necessary. So correct, indeed, were the statements, that all Clarkson's coadjutors were highly pleased with the work, nor did any of them in any way call in question its veracity. Mr. Wilberforce, it is true, did express regret that the services of one active friend had been overlooked; but he declared himself perfectly satisfied with the statements made as to the part he had taken in the cause, and ever recommended the work as a faithful history. It remained for his biographers, thirty years after the publication of the work, to discover that "it contains (as they have had the temerity to assert) an entirely erroneous idea of the abolition struggle." They have even had the effrontery to affirm that the exaggerated estimate which Clarkson formed of his services, led him into numberless misstatements, an assertion which, in his recently published Strictures, he has triumphantly refuted, and which every reader of the history, so simple and so obviously true are its statements, will acknowledge to be utterly groundless. Instead of exposing himself to the charge of exaggerating his own services, we are sure that none could peruse the volumes without feelings of surprise mingled with admiration, that he should have taken so active a part in the great cause, and yet have said so little of himself in its history.

It is painfully obvious that the charge brought

against Clarkson by the biographers of Wilberforce, may much more justly be brought against them, for the estimate they form of the services of their late excellent and most deservedly beloved parent. Had they read the 12th chapter of Clarkson's History, which contains only a few pages, they must have seen that no individual could have taken greater pains to avoid the charge which they have so unfeelingly, and so unjustly brought against him, but which was never even hinted at before. The Christian estimate which Clarkson formed of the relative merit of each labourer in the cause of abolition, deserves the highest commendation. "I have been fearful," he says, "from the time that I begun to introduce myself as one of the forerunners in this great cause, that I might appear to have put myself into a situation too prominent, so as to have incurred the charge of ostentation. But if there should be some who, in consequence of what they read in this History should think thus unfavourably of me, I know not how I can avoid their censure, except by showing them in what light I have always viewed myself in connexion with the committee to which I have the honour to belong. I have uniformly considered our committee as we usually consider the human body, that is, as made up of a head and various members, which have

different offices to perform. And I may truly say, that no committee was ever composed of persons whose various talents better fitted them for their work. Viewing the subject thus, it will follow that if one has done more than another, yet no one has any reason to boast. All the members were necessary in their several departments. For what could I have done had I derived no assistance from the committee? What could Mr. Wilberforce have done in parliament if I had not collected that great body of evidence to which there was such a constant appeal? and what could the committee have done without the parliamentary aid of Mr. Wilberforce? Bnt surely no one ought to be accused of vanity till he has assumed to himself extraordinary merit; and the view which I have always taken of my own exertions is, that whatever good may have resulted from them, has been derived solely from the Author of all good. I disclaim all praise for any part I have taken in this great cause, and am desirous, above all things, to attribute my best endeavours to His influence, who gave me a heart to feel, courage to begin the work, and perseverance to proceed in it; and with the deepest feelings of gratitude and humility, I desire to thank Him for having permitted me to become useful in any degree to my fellow-creatures."

Statements more directly contrary to the extra-

ordinary charge brought against Clarkson in the recently published Life of his esteemed coadjutor, it would be impossible to make. It is most painful that a work in all other respects so judiciously compiled, should be disgraced by an attack so completely at variance with the pure spirit of piety and benevolence which runs through the volumes. The intention of the biographers was evidently to give a greater prominence to the efforts of their parent, in the abolition of the slave-trade, than Clarkson had given. They have imagined that their parent's exertions are underrated; that less is said of the value of his services than ought to have been said; and they are not spoken of in terms sufficiently commendatory. But that they should have entertained such an opinion is most surprising, as every one must acknowledge who reads the following tribute to the worth of Mr. Wilberforce inserted in Clarkson's History, which is as beautiful as it is just, and which we extract to show that the recent attack made on this venerable philanthropist was entirely unprovoked and uncalled for. "I feel myself bound," says he, "in justice, to deliver it as my opinion that, knowing as I have done, so many members of both houses of our legislature, for all of whom I have a sincere respect, there was never yet one who appeared to me to be so properly qualified in all re-

spects for the management of the great cause of abolition as Mr. Wilberforce. His connexions, but more particularly his acquaintance with the first minister of state, were of more service than they who are but little acquainted with political movements can well appreciate. His habits also of diligent and persevering enquiry made him master of all the knowledge that was requisite for conducting it. His talents, both in and out of parliament, made him a powerful advocate in its favour. His character gave an appropriate lustre to the cause, making it look yet more lovely, and enticing others to its support. But most of all the motives on which he undertook it ensured its progress; for his exertions did not originate in views of selfishness or of party, or of popular applause, but in an awful sense of his duty as a Christian. It was this that gave him alacrity and courage in his pursuit. It was this which made him continue in his elavated situation as a legislator, though it was unfavourable to his health. It was this which made him incorporate the great object of abolition among the pursuits of his life, so that it was daily in his thoughts. It was this which, when year after year of unsuccessful exertion returned, occasioned him to be yet fresh and vigorous in spirit, and to persevere till the day of triumph." Such was Clarkson's recorded opinion of Wilberforce thirty years

ago. Is this the language that would be employed by an individual who had formed an exaggerated estimate of his own services, and a disparaging one of his coadjutors ?

After the publication of his History Clarkson composed and published a pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the Necessity of Abolishing Slavery." Neither he nor his coadjutors had ever regarded the abolition of the trade as a final measure. Their ultimate object had ever been the entire extinction of slavery itself, which in this publication he proved to be the source of innumerable evils, and as impolitic as it was unjust. But the Essay did not produce that powerful impression to which, from its merits and the importance of the subject, it was justly entitled. The people then seemed disinclined to agitate the question further, and the majority of those who had interested themselves in the abolition of the slave-trade seemed to think that, without any further legal enactment, slavery would, as the inevitable result of the victory they had gained, gradually cease to exist; an opinion which subsequent events proved to be utterly groundless.

Clarkson now devoted his attention to literary pursuits, and as his labours in the cause of abolition had brought him into frequent and close intimacy with many members of the Society of

Friends, he composed a history of that rather singular but interesting and most benevolent people. The work was entitled, "A Portraiture of Quakerism," and was published in three volumes octavo. It went through several editions, and is creditable to the author's research. It was decidedly the best work on the subject that was then extant. His next publication was the Life of William Penn, the celebrated founder of Pennsylvania, in whose life Clarkson could not fail to feel a lively interest, as Penn had been strongly opposed to slavery.

The literary pursuits of Clarkson did not, however, divert his attention from the great cause in which he had laboured so indefatigably. He collected all the information he could as to the extent to which the slave-trade was still carried on by other nations, intending the first opportunity that offered to bring the subject before their respective governments, that they might be the sooner induced to follow the example of England. The political affairs of Europe were for many years extremely unfavourable to such a project, and it was not till 1818 that an auspicious opening occurred. Peace was then about to shed its blessings on the nations. The Emperor of Russia, and many individuals of the highest distinction, were at Paris, whither Clarkson repaired, without

loss of time, to press upon their attention the subject of abolition. He drew up an address to the sovereigns, and wrote a letter to the Emperor of Russia, requesting the favour of an interview, which was readily granted. Learning that a meeting of the European sovereigns was to take place at Aix la Chapelle, for the amicable settlement of European affairs, he proceeded thither, and was again introduced to the Emperor of Russia, his interview with whom he thus describes, in a letter to a friend: —"It was about nine o'clock when I was shown into the Emperor's apartment. I found him alone; he met me at the door, and shaking me by the hand, said, 'I had the pleasure of making your acquaintance at Paris.' He then led me a little way into the room, and leaving me there, went forward, and with his own hand brought me a chair, and desired me to sit down. This being done, he went for another chair, and sat himself down very near to me. I began the conversation by stating that as I supposed the approaching congress of the sovereigns might possibly be the last that would be held for the settlement of European affairs, I had availed myself of the kind permission he gave me at Paris, of applying to him on behalf of the oppressed Africans, being unwilling to lose the best opportunity I might have of rendering him serviceable to that cause. The

Emperor replied, that he had read both my letter and my address to the sovereigns, and that what I had asked him and the other sovereigns to do was only reasonable. Here I repeated the two important propositions I had made in my address—First, the necessity of bringing the time fixed by the Portuguese for continuing the trade (which was not to expire till 1825, and then only conditionally) down to 1820, the time which the Spanish nation had fixed: and second, when the two terms should have expired, which I expressed a hope would be in 1820, then to make any further continuance of the trade piracy. I entreated him not to be deceived by any other propositions, assuring him that both Mr. Wilberforce and myself, besides others who had devoted their time to the subject, were certain that no other measure would be effectual. The Emperor then said, very feelingly, 'By the providence of God I and my kingdom have been saved from a merciless tyranny, and I should but ill repay the blessing were I not to do every thing in my power to protect the poor Africans against their oppressors.' He then asked if he could do any thing further for the cause, on which I said, I should be greatly obliged if he would himself personally present one of the addresses to the Emperor of Austria, and another to the king of Prussia. He asked me why I had not presented

them before. I replied, that I had not the honour of knowing either of those sovereigns as I knew him, nor any of their ministers, and that I was fearful if I trusted the address to their ministers it might not be presented, or if it were, it might be laid aside and not read; but if he would condescend to present them I was sure that proper attention would be paid to them, and that coming from him would attach importance to their contents. Upon this the Emperor promised, in a manner the most affable and kind, that he would perform the task I had assigned him. I then showed him some articles of African manufacture, which I had brought as a present. He inspected them minutely, and was much gratified, remarking, that they exhibited not only genius but taste, and that he had never seen neater work in Petersburgh or in London. I showed him a dagger, as a specimen of their work in iron, which he minutely examined, and inquired if the point was poisoned. I said it was not. He immediately replied, 'My poor Tartars do such things?' The next article he noticed was a beautiful specimen of their work in cotton, which I had brought, which drew from him the observation, 'Manchester, I think, is your great place for this sort of manufacture; do you think they could make a better piece of cotton?' I replied, that I did not recollect ever

having seen a better piece of workmanship. The Emperor then asked, if these articles were made by the Africans in their own country without European assistance; I replied, that they were the product of their own unassisted ingenuity. 'Then,' said he, 'you astonish me. You have given me a new idea of the state of these poor people. The works you have shown me are not the works of brutes, but of men, endued with rational and intellectual powers, and capable of being brought to as high a degree of proficiency as other men;' adding, 'that Africa ought to have a fair chance of raising herself in the scale of the civilized world.' It was this cruel traffic alone, I replied, which had been her principal preventative, and it was only astonishing to me that under its impeding influence the natives had attained such a degree of perfection. The Emperor then said he had been highly gratified, and if I would leave the articles he would return them the next day. I replied that I had brought them for his acceptance, and begged he would do me the favour to keep them, as it would always afford me great pleasure to know that he had in his possession what would continually remind him of the poor Africans. He at first hesitated, and inquired if I had duplicates, but on my pressing him to take them, and assuring him, that though I had

not what could be called duplicates, yet I had similar specimens. He kindly accepted them, saying, I am much obliged to you for so valuable a present."

Clarkson returned to England shortly after he had had this interview, not a little pleased with the prospect that before long the slave-trade would be universally abolished; but still he saw, as did all his coadjutors, that though they had great cause for gratitude in the good which, through the Divine blessing, they had been able to effect, yet they had at present but little ground to exult; for notwithstanding all that had been done there was still much to do. The accounts received from the colonies confirmed the statements which Clarkson had made in his able pamphlet on "The Necessity of Abolishing Slavery." The sufferings of the captive negroes were still unalleviated; they were held in the most degrading bondage, and treated with the utmost cruelty. They were overworked and ill fed, and every means were employed to brutalize and stultify their minds. The abolition of the slave-trade had not done them the slightest good. Years had passed away, and there was no appearance of that gradual abolition of slavery which it was confidently asserted would, without any further legal enactment, certainly follow. Clarkson had, in his able pamphlet, exposed the

folly of supposing that such would be the result. He had likewise proved slavery to be at variance alike with Christianity and with the laws of England; that its effects were most pernicious, morally and physically, to the owners as well as to the slaves; that emancipation was safe and practicable, and would be beneficial to both parties; and that liberty was essential to accountability, being the birthright of every intelligent being, in whatever country or condition he might be born. Similar statements had been made in several other able pamphlets, published at different times by various authors, but still the nation seemed to be in a great measure indifferent to the subject. Nor was it till 1823, sixteen years after the slave-trade had been abolished, that any active steps were taken to promote the abolition of West India negro slavery.

In March, 1823, the Anti-slavery Society was formed. Clarkson and Wilberforce, and some others who had taken an active part in abolition, were among its vice-presidents. The first thing they did was to circulate authentic information on the subject as extensively as they could. They did this by the publication of various tracts and pamphlets, descriptive of British colonial slavery. These were drawn up in a simple yet interesting style, and contained most powerful appeals to the

sympathies of the nation in behalf of the suffering negro. They were eagerly read by all classes, and the nation seemed to be suddenly roused from its insensibility, so that before the ensuing May more than two hundred petitions from various parts of the country were presented to parliament, praying that some measure might be taken to abolish slavery in the British colonies.

Most of the speeches delivered at the meetings held in different towns were powerful and striking, and as these were printed, the subject was brought fully before the public, and became one of deep and unusual interest. At a meeting held in Leicester, the late Rev. Robert Hall delivered an eloquent address, in which, after giving a vivid picture of West-Indian slavery as it then existed, he clearly proved how utterly hopeless it was to expect any amelioration to the oppressed negroes from the planters. He urged the necessity of some vigorous national effort utterly to abolish slavery from the British colonies. "We cannot," says he, "remain silent and inactive without forgetting who we are, and what we have done; that we are the country which, after a tedious struggle with a host of prejudices arrayed in support of opulent oppression, have overthrown the slave-trade, torn it up by its roots, and branded in the eyes of all nations the sale of human flesh as the

most atrocious of crimes. We must forget that we are the countrymen of Grenville Sharp, who by incredible exertions succeeded at length in purifying the British soil from this foulest pollution, and rendered it for ever hospitable for a slave to breathe its air. We must sever ourselves from all alliance of spirit with a Clarkson and a Wilberforce, who looked forward to the final emancipation of the negro race as the consummation of their labours, and were sustained in their arduous contest by the joy which that prospect inspired. We must lose sight of a still more awful consideration, and forget our great Original, who made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth."

On the 16th May, 1823, Mr. Buxton, in an animated and lucid speech brought the subject before parliament. It was on the whole well received by the house, and Mr. Canning, who was then at the head of the government, moved an amendment, varying but little from the motion of Mr. Buxton, which speedily passed both houses of parliament. The abolitionists rejoiced in this success, and fondly hoped that intelligence of a far different character would soon be received from the colonies; but unhappily they were disappointed. It had been provided that the execution of the bill should be left to the colonial authorities, and it

hence proved, as it was feared it would prove, entirely useless. The plans of instruction and amelioration to the negroes, with the correction of those abuses which parliament had determined upon, were entirely disregarded by the colonial authorities, and the bill became a mere dead letter. Of this the anti-slavery committee took care to inform the public, by means of the seasonable pamphlets and tracts which they constantly published. In their second annual report they adverted to it largely and feelingly, regretted the loss they were likely to sustain by the retirement from public life of Mr. Wilberforce, which occurred about that time. They took occasion, however, gratefully to acknowledge the obligations which the friends of abolition owed him for his long, useful, and persevering labours in the cause, expressing a hope, which was happily realized, that he might be spared to witness the entire extinction of slavery.

In June, 1825, the society commenced the issue of regular monthly publications, and in the following December they held a public meeting in London, again to petition parliament to take into consideration the subject of negro slavery, and to adopt more effective means for its abolition. Their example was followed by the country, and nearly six hundred and fifty petitions, all most respectably and

numerously signed, were presented the next session. The presentation of these petitions, and the discussions on the subject of colonial misgovernment, which were not unfrequent, often brought the subject of slavery before parliament; but still no further steps were taken during this session, except that one effort was made in the house of peers, to prevent any West-Indian proprietor from holding office in the colonial government; but although this measure was indispensable to the carrying into effect the parliamentary decisions, yet it was withdrawn, probably because his majesty's ministers had it in contemplation to propose some similar measure. They appeared, on the whole, rather friendly than otherwise to abolition, but they wished it to be carried entirely on their own plan, and were averse to the employment of other agents than the regularly constituted colonial authorities. But the impossibility of its being carried into effect by them became daily more apparent. The accounts received from the colonies were most unsatisfactory. The most studied inattention was paid to the parliamentary injunctions, and the most determined opposition made to the introduction of any measure that diminished the rigours of slavery. Practices the most cruel were boldly defended and declared to be indispensable. Such conduct pursued by persons, many of whom were respectable, can only

be accounted for on the admission that there is something degrading, hardening, and stupifying, inseparable from the circumstance of one man's possessing property in another. It was now certain that slavery could never be ameliorated by the masters of slaves; their laws could never reach the evil; the remedy could only be effectually applied by the government of a free people. All the information received from the colonies confirmed this opinion, and the society having waited patiently five years from its formation, in the hope that something would be done by government for the oppressed negroes, now thought it time again to press the matter upon their attention. Accordingly, in March 1828, Mr., now Lord Brougham, mentioned the subject in the house, and inquired of the colonial secretary, Mr. Huskisson, whether any measures had been adopted in the colonies to prevent the necessity of parliamentary interference, intimating that if such had not been the case he should shortly bring forward a motion on the subject. The reply given was, that many improvements had been made; and here the matter ended for this session.

In the mean time the public were daily becoming more interested in the subject. It was brought before them in almost every variety of form. The Rev. B. Godwin, classical tutor of Bedford academy, delivered and published an historical course

of lectures upon it, which attracted great attention. A most numerous and highly respectable meeting of the Anti-slavery Society was held in London, May 3rd, 1829, to petition parliament, at which the Duke of Gloucester presided. The meeting was addressed by Messrs. Brougham, Wilberforce, Denman, Buxton, and by several other distinguished individuals, and never were speeches more interesting. The country again followed the example of the society. Petitions poured into the house from all quarters.

One of the most oppressive hardships of slavery was, that by colonial laws the evidence of a slave was never admitted to be taken. In May, 1829, Mr. Brougham introduced this important subject to parliament, when it was intimated that ministers intended to bring in a bill for the reform of colonial legislation in the next session, in which the admissibility of slave evidence was to be included.

On the 15th May, 1830, the anti-slavery society in London held its seventh anniversary. Clarkson and Wilberforce, and all the old friends of the cause whose health would permit them, were present. It was a memorable meeting, and was far the most numerously attended of any that had ever been held. It seemed to be a determined effort on the part of the abolitionists, that though they had hitherto been unsuccessful they were resolved to persevere, in the assured prospect

of ultimate triumph. The parts taken by Clarkson and Wilberforce were such as became them, and the manner in which they expressed their feelings show in what light they regarded each other. Clarkson first addressed the meeting. "Ladies and gentlemen," said he, "I rise to make a proposition, which I am sure will be agreeable to you all;—that my old friend and fellow-labourer be called to the chair. I may say that this chair is his natural and proper right in this assembly. He is entitled to it as the great leader in our cause, as one who has always been foremost in its support. I hope he may live to fill it again and again, should a protracted continuance of our exertions be necessary, and that under his auspices we may carry it to a speedy and happy issue." On taking the chair Mr. Wilberforce observed,—"Ladies and gentlemen, I shall only now remark upon what you have just decided, that I could have been called to this chair by no person more dear to me than by my valued friend and fellow-labourer, Thomas Clarkson. I say labourer, for I wish to be known by no other name in this great cause. The purpose for which we are met is great and urgent, but when I see by whom I am surrounded, and when I again meet my friend Clarkson in this cause, I cannot but look back on those happy days when we began our labours together, or rather when we worked together, for he began before

me." Our object in introducing the addresses of these two veterans in the abolition contest, is to show the view which each took of the other's services, and especially to prove that Wilberforce frankly and publicly acknowledged Clarkson to have been in the field of labour before him. How singularly inconsistent is it that his biographers should attempt to invalidate their father's publicly declared testimony.

At this great meeting a petition to parliament was agreed upon, urging the importance of immediate abolition, that Britain might be freed from the guilt and ignominy of so iniquitous a system. This petition was presented to the house of commons by Mr. Brougham, who a few days afterwards made a motion for the immediate mitigation and final abolition of British colonial slavery; but on a division he was out-voted. Petitions were now again literally poured into the house from all parts of the country, but nothing further was done this session. Things at this time looked most discouraging. The energies of the nation had been exerted with but little effect. Notwithstanding all the ameliorating laws that had been passed, the rigours of slavery were still cruelly oppressive. The colonists became daily more violent in their opposition; they almost dared to assume a menacing attitude to the mother country; they opposed with greater bitterness than ever the efforts made to

instruct the negroes; they even proceeded to acts of violence towards the unoffending missionaries, and they seemed determined to grasp their prey to the last moment. But the time was at hand when the chain of the negro was to be snapped asunder; their cry and the united cry of Britain had reached the ear of Heaven; and the mighty contest in which they had so long been engaged was soon to terminate in a glorious victory.

The death of George the Fourth, and the accession to the throne of William the Fourth, led to the dissolution of parliament, and to a change of the ministry, most favourable to the cause of abolition. The people everywhere endeavoured to secure the return of such representatives as were known to be in favour of abolition, and the prospects of the abolitionists were now most cheering. The enthusiasm of the country in the cause was beyond all precedent. Considerably more than five thousand petitions in its favour were presented during the session of 1831. The abolitionists now took the boldest ground, insisting upon immediate and entire abolition. Pamphlets were constantly issuing from the press showing the utter inutility of all other measures. Among these Jeremie's Essays on Colonial Slavery produced a powerful impression. The annual meeting of the society in London, in May 1831, was crowded to excess, and

the resolutions were in favour of immediate and total abolition.

The West-Indian proprietors resident in England were panic-stricken at this turn in affairs. To counteract the progress of public opinion, they published and circulated through the country a manifesto, declaring abolition to be inevitably ruinous to the slaves, as well as to their owners, boldly contradicting the well-authenticated instances that had been published of the manner in which the slaves were still treated, and falsely asserting that so much was their condition now improved, that they were perfectly contented and happy. These assertions were believed by a few, but by the great majority of the nation they were treated with their merited contempt. The colonial authorities, as soon as the news from England reached them of the change in the government, were maddened with rage. They now determined to wring from the oppressed negroes the utmost degree of labour they could exact, and to treat them with the most rigorous severity. Their plan was wickedly and wantonly to goad them into disobedience by their unreasonable exactions, and then to make their revolt a pretext for their unfitness for emancipation. They had pursued this plan in several instances successfully, and they now resorted to it again. The negroes had been

from time immemorial allowed three or four days' holiday at Christmas. These days they employed according to their taste. Some in mirthful sports, some in the improvement of any little cottage or land they might have, and some in meetings for religious worship, social or public, among their own community. It was this year determined that they should only have two days' holiday. To this abridgment of their liberty they were by no means inclined to submit. The third day came, and they refused to work. This was enough; it was all their wicked oppressors, who thirsted for their blood, wanted; and although even this refusal was confined to a few estates, the militia were instantly called out, and without one word of remonstrance, much less of entreaty, the defenceless and innocent negroes (comparatively, at least) were fired upon, driven from their homes into the woods, pursued thither, and treated with the most wanton cruelty, and many of them murdered. But this did not satiate the fiendish malice of these wretches. Accustomed to look upon the slaves as mere beasts of burden, they had long been exasperated at the influence obtained by the missionaries sent out by the different religious societies in England, to instruct, to comfort, and to lead these poor outcasts into the way of peace. They saw a marked change produced on the mind and on the conduct of the negroes, by the instru-

mentality of these holy but despised men. They saw (the fact was too obvious to be concealed) the elevating effect which the simple elements of Christianity had upon the negroes, mentally and morally. They stood aghast at the change. It came with a condemning power to their consciences, which they could not resist, and of which they were determined to rid themselves. They could only effect this by destroying the missionaries, and demolishing their chapels. For this monstrous piece of cruelty and wickedness they had not even the shadow of a pretext. But they were resolved to find one. To the astonishment of every one they now accused the missionaries with being the cause of this revolt, of which they were themselves the sole authors. The accusation was no sooner preferred than they were immediately deemed to be guilty. They were instantly arrested, dragged from their homes, and treated with the most wanton cruelty, as if they had been the vilest criminals. The bitterest imprecations were uttered against them; they were insulted in the grossest possible manner, and with the fury of tigers their enemies thirsted for their blood. Nor did these atrocious deeds satiate their malice: they demolished the chapels in which the poor despised negro had worshipped the God of heaven; they burnt or pulled down the missionaries' houses; and under the pretext of quelling a riot among the negroes,

but of which they were themselves the sole instigators, they spread devastation and ruin to a fearful extent. The estimated amount of damage done exceeded a million and a quarter, exclusive of the property destroyed, which belonged to the missionaries. These were the actions, and this was the conduct of Englishmen, of men who called themselves Christians, who had been educated in a Christian country. O slavery, into what monsters dost thou transform thy votaries!

Such was the state of things in Jamaica in January 1832, and such it continued for many months afterwards. The Baptist missionaries were the first attacked, and suffered the most; but an utter aversion was manifested to all. On this disastrous news reaching England the utmost concern was evinced by all parties. The colonial authorities ascribed the revolt to the political influence of the missionaries over the negroes, and intimated that nothing short of their removal from the island could save it from ruin. They did this in the hope that they should again protract the emancipation of the slave. But how short-sighted is man! The very means they took to retard, served to facilitate the good cause. They forgot against whom they were contending, that it was not against man, but the God of heaven, who judgeth righteously, and whose prerogative it is to

educe good out of evil, and to cause the wrath of man to praise him.

The accounts from the missionaries to their friends in England gave a correct view of the case. These were circulated throughout the country, and the result was an increasing desire for immediate abolition. At the annual meeting of the society held in Exeter Hall, it was determined no longer to ask for gradual, but for immediate and total abolition. At the anniversaries of the different missionary societies held in London that year the same sentiment was eloquently maintained. That indefatigable and most useful Baptist missionary, Mr. Knibb, who was the first that had been arrested, and whose escape from his persecutors was almost miraculous, declared boldly and fearlessly that he was sure the society's missionary stations could no longer exist in Jamaica without the entire and immediate abolition of slavery.

On the 24th May, 1832, Mr. Buxton again brought the subject before parliament, and though his motion was lost, it was evident that the good cause was on the whole gaining ground. Select committees of both houses were now appointed to inquire into the affair at Jamaica, and into the propriety and practicability of abolition. Both these reports were published, and the evidence was entirely in favour of emancipation. The important

political change that was then taking place in England in the passing of the Reform Bill did not in any degree, as it was feared it might, diminish the interest which the people took in the cause of abolition. The public mind was rivetted to the subject, and in electing the first reformed parliament most of the candidates were required to give a pledge that they would support abolition, before they could obtain the votes of their constituents. The publications of the Anti-slavery Society, and the various other means employed to keep the people from becoming indifferent to the subject had the desired effect; and the reports, circulars, and tracts published by the different missionary societies very greatly aided the cause. There were individuals too, who, though not connected with any society, employed their pens in the good cause. Mr. Whiteley, a gentleman who had been some months in Jamaica, employed as a clerk on one of the estates, returned home disgusted with the cruelties he had witnessed, and published a tract called "Three Months in Jamaica," the affecting statements of which deeply impressed the public mind.

At length the session of 1833 arrived, and the first reformed parliament assembled. The Anti-slavery Society in London held their meeting this year a month earlier than usual. The great room at Exeter Hall was crowded to excess. Lord

Suffield took the chair. The speeches were most eloquent and interesting, and the resolutions were to the effect that immediate emancipation was safe and practicable, and was a debt which had long been due to the oppressed negroes. A few days afterwards another meeting was held in the same hall, at which were present delegates from the principal towns in the united kingdom. Samuel Gurney, Esq., took the chair. A resolution was passed unanimously that slavery must and should be exterminated, and a memorial to that effect, signed by all the delegates, was drawn up and presented the next day to Earl Grey. The government bill for emancipation was introduced to the house by Mr. Stanley, on the 14th May. It underwent various modifications, and did not finally pass both houses till the 20th August. On the 26th it received the royal assent. It provided that slavery should cease to exist in the British colonies on the 1st August, 1834, and though it permitted some of its evils to be protracted to a more remote period, yet in a great degree it abolished slavery. Taking advantage, however, of the well-intended, but, perhaps, ill-judged apprenticeship system with which it was clogged, it has again, though perhaps in a somewhat milder form, dared to show its horrific features; but owing to the praiseworthy exertions of British Christians, it was, on the 1st of August of the present year, entirely exterminated.

The negro is now free. He no longer wears the galling chain. His sabbaths are his own. He can worship his God according to the dictates of his conscience. What a mighty victory over the powers of darkness has been obtained! To whom shall the praise be ascribed? To Clarkson? To Wilberforce? to any, or to all the illustrious individuals who devoted to it all the energies of their minds? No! the praise belongs not to man, but to THE LORD OF HOSTS.

Who can think without astonishment at the mighty effort that was required, not of an individual, nor of a community only, but of a powerful, opulent Christian nation, to abolish the most iniquitous system the sun ever beheld! Who can look back at the remote period when Clarkson commenced his labours, and not feel amazed that more than half a century should transpire before the achievement of this work of mercy! When Clarkson, in 1785, sat down on the turf by the mill in Hertfordshire, disconsolate at the thought of the magnitude of the evil, and of the difficulties connected with its removal, he could have formed no conception that the contest would have been so arduous and so protracted. Had he in the outset of his career been able to see the formidable array of enemies which he would have to encounter, he must have relinquished the work in despair. Let the success of Clarkson's efforts be recorded as an

everlasting encouragement to every Christian philanthropist to persevere, assured that whether his efforts be to promote the spiritual or the temporal good of mankind, success will ultimately, in spite of all opponents, crown his exertions.

The venerable Wilberforce closed his most useful life in July of this year, one month before the Abolition Bill had finally passed. On being informed a little before his death what were the provisions of the bill, and the prospect there was of its passing, he joyfully exclaimed, "Oh! to have lived to see the day when my country is willing to give twenty millions to get rid of slavery!" With the assured prospect before him that the poor negroes would soon be for ever free, this holy man died in peace. His hope was fixed on the only sure foundation, the mighty Redeemer. On the merits of His death he reposed his confidence, and not on any works of his own, and his peaceful spirit entered into the joy of his Lord. Talents are too often found associated with a certain degree of austerity which renders their possessor unamiable, and makes him an object of fear rather than of respect. Such men are admired, but never loved. A more affectionate, interesting, and truly amiable man than Wilberforce it would be impossible to find. His conversation and his entire deportment was cheerful, without being trifling, and serious without being morose. The more he

was known, the more he was sure to be loved. His political independence exposed him sometimes to the suspicion of duplicity, yet no man was ever more sincere or candid. His mind was not to be shackled by the petty interests of party. His great aim was to do what he conscientiously believed to be right. He lived not to himself, nor for himself, but to do good to mankind. His attachment to his church, though warm, was not bigoted. In one word, he was a Christian; and as such he consecrated himself to the glory of God. It can never enough be regretted that the remarks of his biographers, respecting his connexion with Clarkson, should afford room for even the shadow of a suspicion that his private opinion of that estimable man differed materially from the one he had always avowed, both privately and publicly; and yet no reader of these volumes can rise from their perusal without the painful conviction either that such was really the case, and that Wilberforce did secretly dislike Clarkson as his rival in the abolition cause, or that it is the surmised opinion of his biographers. It would be a foul libel to the memory of Wilberforce to admit that even the slightest tinge of such feelings existed in his mind towards his friend. His whole conduct towards Clarkson falsifies such an opinion. In a letter to him only three months before his decease, he addressed him as his dear old friend; tells him that he was unaf-

fectedly vexed at the idea of having seemed to treat him unkindly by not earlier replying to some letter Clarkson had written to him; assures him that he could most confidently deny the charge of unkindness; that all his intentions and feelings were of a directly opposite character; sympathizes with him in the affliction under which he was then suffering; suggests to him many consoling reflections; expresses the most anxious desires that the operation to which his friend was about to submit might be successful; desires earnestly to be informed of the result; and concludes by subscribing himself, "ever affectionately yours." Could he now peruse his Life by his sons, how indignantly would he repel the foul blot on his memory which a belief in the statements they have made conveys! To the confusion of his biographers he would declare, —I was most sincere in my attachment to my esteemed friend and coadjutor, Thomas Clarkson. He preceded me in the great work. We laboured harmoniously together. God has crowned our labours with success. To Him, to Him, not to us, be the praise.

For several years towards the close of the abolition struggle the state of Clarkson's health prevented him from taking any part in the labours. A cataract had formed in both his eyes, and when the glorious news reached him that slavery was abolished he was almost totally blind; but he

rejoiced exceedingly that he had lived to hear that a complete victory had been obtained. To any individual the loss of sight is a great calamity. To an active mind like Clarkson's it must have been most painful. But he bore it with Christian submission; he complained not, but humbly acquiesced in the will of God; and when the time came for the operation he bore it with fortitude. It was performed successfully by that eminent oculist John Tyrrell, Esq., surgeon to the Eye Infirmary, London, a gentleman of most amiable and unassuming habits, whose advice in all cases of the kind is more to be depended upon than any other man's, and who deservedly stands at the head of his profession.

Clarkson had no sooner regained his sight than he sought to employ it in the best of causes—the communication of religious knowledge. In 1836 he published, in a thin octavo volume, "Researches, Antediluvian, Patriarchal, and Historical." His object in this volume, as he states in the preface, is to give a history of God's interference with men for their spiritual welfare, and of its effects, in one unbroken chain, from the days of Adam to the time when Christianity was established by Constantine. A more interesting subject of contemplation for a matured Christian it would be impossible to select. To enquire, not with querulous curiosity, and merely to indulge in vain conjectures, but

with that calm sobriety of mind which should ever distinguish the Christian, into the way in which God first communicated his mind to his creatures, the abuse which man made of these communications, the means which God took to perpetuate the blessings of his mercy and grace in the wondrous scheme of redemption, their gradual developement in successive ages and under successive dispensations, and their assured final accomplishment, must ever be a most delightful subject to the Christian philosopher. But this subject would require, to do it justice, (who, indeed, could do this?) a more extended work than Clarkson's. As far as he pursued the inquiry he has done so with considerable ability, and the work has been favourably noticed by the reviewers, and we think must have had an extensive sale.

Since the passing of the Emancipation Bill, Clarkson has had the pleasure to receive many most gratifying testimonials, public and private, of the manner in which his labours in the great cause have been appreciated.

In December, 1833, the principal inhabitants of Wisbech, his native town, earnestly requested him to sit to some eminent painter for his portrait, to be preserved in the town as a token of the esteem in which they held him for his energy in the cause of humanity, and to afford to future times a pleasing memento of his persevering exertions in

the cause of abolition. Testimonials of an equally gratifying character he has been frequently receiving, even up to a very recent date. An interesting address was presented to him a few weeks since, from the principal inhabitants of Ipswich and its vicinity; and since then the common council of London have voted him the freedom of the city, and resolved that his bust shall be placed in the council chamber. To all such marks of respect his reply has been in substance, though varying in phraseology, the same as he gave to the address from Wisbech: "That I was the first to take up the abolition of colonial slavery, or the individual who originated it, is indeed true; but I take no merit to myself on that account, being assured that those feelings which pointed out to me the path I was to pursue must have sprung from a Holy source; and that I was able to labour for forty-eight years in this noble cause is equally true; but every one must be sensible that no individual could by himself have completed so vast a work. What could I have done without Mr. Wilberforce as a parliamentary leader? and what could both of us have done without the aid of the ever-to-be-honoured committee? and what could these have done without the co-operation of the British nation? and what would these have done had they not been lovers of liberty and Christians? The victory is, in fact, if we

wish to know who gained it—the triumph of Christianity over barbarism."

Could any man form a more Christian estimate of his services? Is there even the most distant approximation to estimate unduly his own exertions? Would it be possible to employ language less liable to the charge of arrogant boasting. He says not one word in commendation of himself. He does not tell us that the merit of this performance and of that achievement belongs to him. He says not, I have laboured much more than any other individual in the great cause, have devoted myself more entirely to it, have made greater sacrifices in it, and have had to encounter greater difficulties. All this he might truly have said; but he classes himself with his coadjutors, speaks as if the services of all had been in fact of equal value, claiming only for himself the circumstance of having been first in the field (which he was, indisputably); and then ascribes the whole not to human effort, but to the power of Christianity. Such was unquestionably the case. What was it that prepared the negroes for the reception of liberty? It was Christianity brought to their minds and hearts by the instrumentality of the despised missionaries. It is our deliberate opinion that the planters themselves, the very individuals who so fiercely and cruelly perse-

cuted the messengers of truth, owe their existence to the preserving influence of Christianity, in the lessons of forbearance she taught the poor negroes. She has, indeed, a far more glorious victory to achieve; nor can the Christian feel the slightest doubt of her ultimate success. She has extinguished slavery from Britain and from Britain's colonies; and, ere long, she will drive it out of its last lurking places, and extinguish it from the world. Nor is this all. The entire abolition of a vassalage less visible, but far more disastrous in its results than West Indian slavery ever was even in its worst form—the captivity of the mind and affections to sin, in which fallen man is enchained—it remains for her to achieve. Her great Author must sway his mild, peaceful, lovely sceptre over all. His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom. His dominion shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. Of the increase of his government there shall be no end. Societies belonging to different religious communities are already in active operation, and their exertions have been crowned with the greatest success. But they must not relax in their efforts, for the work they have to perform is scarcely begun. Like Clarkson, they must labour and toil, and perseveringly pursue their course in spite of all opposition, resting their confidence in the same mighty arm that sustained him, and keeping their

eye steadily fixed on the same guiding hand which led him; and as victory crowned his labours with success, it will assuredly crown theirs. Unassisted human agency could never accomplish the work, but with God nothing is impossible. His word is gone forth, and shall not return, that he will make bare his holy arm in the sight of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see his salvation.

To the friends of Clarkson it has been a source of the greatest pleasure that his life has been spared to witness not only the passing of the bill for the abolition of slavery, but the completion of the victory, so far, at least, as it respects England and her colonies. He has survived the period when the shackles of the British slave have been knocked off, and his heart must have been gladdened to hear of the peaceful and grateful manner in which the poor degraded outcasts have received their liberty. The beautiful lines of Wordsworth, composed on the passing of the bill for the abolition of the slave-trade, are even more appropriate now:

"Clarkson! It was an obstinate hill to clime;
How toilsome—nay, how dire—it was, by thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly;
But thou, who starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard thy constant voice its charge repeat,
Which out of thy young heart's oracular seat
First roused thee. O true yoke-fellow of time,

Duty's intrepid liege-man, see, the palm
Is won, and by all nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained writing is for ever torn;
Thou henceforth will have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness, thy zeal shall find,
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind."*

In a letter to Lord Brougham, dated July 20th of the present year, and published in Clarkson's recent Strictures, the venerable philanthropist thus expresses his feelings in reference to the news that had then been received from the colonies, and to the exertions of his lordship in the cause: —"You, my lord, have done noble service to the cause; you carried a bill for making those who engaged in the slave-trade guilty of felony—the first time it was branded as a crime—and you have been one of the greatest instruments in procuring the abolition of slavery. By the exertion of your eloquence in the house of lords, and at various meetings in the metropolis, you contributed to produce a feeling throughout the kingdom in behalf of the oppressed slaves which was

* In the recently published volume, which brings together all the beautiful sonnets of Wordsworth, the poet has appended a note to the above, in which he alludes to the attempt to deny to Clarkson the priority of exertion in the cause of freedom; and generously adds, that in case Clarkson should not take up the matter, he (the poet) would himself make public the ground of evidence upon which Clarkson's claim rests.

too commanding to be resisted either at home or in our colonies, and the consequence has been that one island after another, throwing aside the prejudices of ages, has come into the holy union for emancipation. These blessed movements have succeeded each other so rapidly, that in the course of one session of parliament three-fourths of the slave-population in our numerous colonies have been declared free, to the astonishment even of those friends who were the most sanguine. What may we not hope for after this? May not America be induced to follow our example? Can France long resist it? Will any of the foreign states be unmoved by it? But I leave to your lordship's more capacious mind to figure to yourself these prospects, and to draw from them the delight they are capable of affording. I hope you may live to see them fully realized, and that your old age may be cheered and gladdened by them as mine is by what has already been accomplished."

Thus delightfully and peacefully, notwithstanding some severe domestic bereavements, would Clarkson's sun have set, but for the recently published attack upon his character. Most painful has it been to his friends, that in his seventy-ninth year he whose veracity none could justly impeach, and whose moral virtues was only equalled by his own indefatigable labours, should have been dragged forth from that privacy essential to the

comfort of advanced age, to publish a work in his own defence. Speaking of his recent Strictures, he says, "It is the only book which I have written with feelings of unmingled pain, for it is the only one that I have written in defence of myself; and against whom is it written? Not against slave-merchants, nor against the agents of West-India planters, but against the sons of the great leader of the abolition cause; against the sons of our common head—of Mr. Wilberforce himself."

It has greatly alleviated Clarkson's mind that he did not provoke this unpleasant discussion. On the contrary, he took every possible precaution to prevent it, as his Strictures most clearly show. He might have treated the attack with silent contempt, and left it to be rebutted by the evidence easily to be adduced from his own works; but we are glad that he nobly came forward in his own defence, though it was at the expense to himself of much painful feeling. The future biographer and historian will now see in a light too clear to be misunderstood, the parts which Clarkson and Wilberforce took in the achievement of abolition. Both will be held in everlasting remembrance, and in everlasting esteem; Clarkson as the originator of a systematic and national effort to abolish slavery, Wilberforce as the great leader in the contest, and both will ever be venerated as indefatigable labourers in the same good and glorious cause.

It is hoped that having nobly vindicated himself from the accusation brought against him, Clarkson will yet be spared many years, lengthened as his life now is, to enjoy his well-earned laurels. He is too deeply imbedded in the affections, not of his countrymen only, but of the world, to be cast into the shade by his detractors. To the latest period of his life he will be loved and revered, and his name will be embalmed on the memory of Britons with that of the immortal HOWARD, and of his esteemed coadjutor WILBERFORCE, while creation shall last.

THE END.

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