

THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

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THE VOICE OF FREEDOM.

To the Manufacturers, Mechanics, and Laborers of the United States.

FELLOW CITIZENS:

We solicit your attention to the consideration of a subject, which we believe to be of vital importance; and one in which, we trust, we shall be able to show, your interest and comfort are deeply concerned.

That we may enter upon the discussion understandingly, it may not be improper to state, briefly, some few self-evident truths, assumed by political economists, and such as your own reflection will readily recognize, deducing such conclusions as we trust will commend themselves to the understanding of those who think as well as 'toil.'

1st. Wealth is said to consist in an abundant supply of food, clothing, shelter, and whatever else contributes to the comfort and enjoyment of life. Money is not wealth, strictly speaking, because it is not adapted to the purposes of food, clothing, shelter, or any of those enjoyments. It is the evidence that the community owns the holders of it. A certain amount of wealth—a kind of admission ticket, if you please, that entitles the holder to enter upon and enjoy a greater amount of wealth, provided the hand of industry has produced it, for if there was no food or clothing, &c. money could not procure them. The materials of wealth are in the first instance furnished by the benevolent hand of Creative Intelligence,—these are a fertile soil, luxuriant forests, the infinite variety of plants and animals, that grow and feed upon the surface of the earth, as well as the exhaustless mineral treasures beneath it. These being developed, fashioned and variously combined by the hand of man, constitute substantial wealth.

It follows then, that the farmer, mechanic, and laboring men who take these materials, as they come from the hand of the Creator—mould and change them into the thousands and tens of thousands of different forms, which render them not only useful but in many cases indispensable to the existence and happiness of the human race, are its benefactors, its supporters. That their profession should not be esteemed the most honorable is an essential element in the social system. 'In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread' is the indispensable law of man's physical nature, a condition of his existence as salutary and beneficial to his health and happiness, as it is unavoidable.

The man who produces nothing either by mental or corporeal labor, essential to his support, requires no less than he who labors, his food, his clothing and his shelter; and though he may be by the aid of fortuitous circumstances, or the exercise of cunning, or fraud or force, avail himself of a profession of wealth seldom enjoyed by the producers of it; he is still dependent upon them, not only for the necessities of life but his luxuries. He is still but a splendid pauper fed at a separate table, prepared by the industrious classes, who clothe, feed and shelter the whole human family.

Society has set up a false standard of respectability, 'a fine coat and a life of idleness, and we, the producers of the wealth, have too much acquiesced in its unjust decision. Respectability should consist in a virtuous and cultivated mind, and skillful and industrious hands. Upon our own shoulders rest, in a great measure, the responsibility of having erected this false standard; and we are destined at no very distant day to feel the effects of its galling yoke, unless we exercise the powers yet left at our disposal to avert them.

2d. Whatever causes operate to augment the numbers of the idle, or diminish those of the industrious classes, must necessarily increase their burdens, and degrade them in their own estimation and that of the world. The means of mental cultivation must then be sacrificed to the more pressing demands of their physical nature, and the education of their offspring neglected; until generation after generation, sinks deeper and deeper in ignorance and degradation; and the squalid wretchedness that presents itself among the operatives of many parts of monarchical Europe, be released in this country, notwithstanding all the superior advantages of which we boast, in the form of our government.

If the general diffusion of the means of procuring the necessities and comforts of life characterize a nation as prosperous and happy, and render it pre-eminent in virtue and intelligence, it behoves the friends of man—the well-wishers of the race, to guard with unceasing vigilance the liberties, rights and interests of the producing classes.

In an especial manner does it behove those classes themselves, in whose hands are placed the destinies of unborn millions, not to abuse the sacred trust—not to slumber at their post, while causes, obvious to their senses, and within their control, are continually at work, sapping the foundations of their liberty, prosperity and happiness.

To awaken attention to a point of the citadel, now assailed by the enemy, is the object of the present address.

3d. The successful prosecution of every branch of human industry, where the requisite assiduity and skill are employed, depends solely upon the existing demand for their respective products. These being consumable articles, more or less perishable in the using, are required only in proportion to the number of persons placed in a condition to procure, enjoy and consume them.

So true is this in regard to the mechanical branches, that no man, be he ever so skillful and industrious, could supply his own wants if no one needed; or, needing, could not procure the product of his labor. So intimately connected are demand and supply, that the latter cannot exist without the former. It is the demand or market for a certain commodity that produces, and continues its production, and thus enables the producer of it, by various exchanges to avail himself of the products of others, needful to his comfort. When this demand is great, and is caused by increased yet prudent consumption, business is said to be brisk, is good, the laborer is well rewarded, is prosperous, and realizes the maximum of enjoyment so far as it is made to depend upon a competency of this world's goods. He consumes his share, and thus contributes to the general blessing, of which he partakes.

But what is our present situation? What our

future prospects? What is the real condition, at this moment, of a large proportion of the producing classes?—of two and a half millions of our fellow laborers at the South? are they compensated for their toil? Do they enjoy the comforts of life? Are they enabled to consume their just share of wealth, the product of their own labor? Are they not degraded, and sunk almost below the sympathies of their fellow producers in this as yet more happy portion of our republic? Are not our interests in some measure identified? And is not the ignorance of the connection existing between their welfare and our own, implied by our lack of sympathy, itself a fearful harbinger of approaching degradation to ourselves?

In short, what is American slavery? What are its effects upon general industry? What upon civil and political liberty?

These are important enquiries which it is incumbent upon us to meet,—to examine and discuss fully and fearlessly.

First. The cruelty and oppression of the system.

What is the real condition of the slave as presented in the existing laws of the Southern States? made hereditary and perpetual to the last moment of his existence, and to all his descendants after him? His labor is compulsory and uncompensated, no contract is entered into, no wages paid him.—His food and his clothing, both as to quantity and quality, depend entirely on his master's discretion. He is a personal chattel, may be sold at public or private sale, and separated from his wife and family for ever—cannot hold any property—cannot be a witness against any free white man in any court of justice, however atrocious the crimes he may have committed—may be punished himself without trial at the master's discretion, whether his offence be real or imaginary. He is not allowed to resist, or defend himself when assaulted, or his wife, or his daughter, when assailed by brutal violence, under pain of death. He is entirely unprotected in his domestic relations—cannot redeem himself or change his master when cruelly treated.

What is a trifling fault in the white man, is considered highly criminal in the slave, and punishable with death. In short, the whole power of the laws is exerted to keep him in ignorance and abject dependence. These are a few, and but a few of the horrid features of slavery, as exhibited by its suffering victims.

But if we could banish from our bosoms all the kinder impulses of humanity,—if we could become callous to the wrongs—the grievous oppression of the down-trodden slave—if we could be moved by no other motives than those exclusive and selfish, still we shall find abundant reason to regard the institution of the South, as one of the greatest evils a country can suffer, not only as regards its effects upon general industry, but upon its moral and political institutions. The graphic description given by a member of Congress from Ohio, can never be successfully gairnsayed by the most zealous defenders of the patriarchal institution.

'Cross,' says he, 'the line that separates the free from the slave state, or stand upon it and look across the former, you will see, comparatively all life, all happiness, all prosperity, both public and private; but turn your eyes upon the latter and survey it, every thing material, (except a few of the wealthy proprietors) bearing the impress of poverty and dilapidation; all look as if pestilence and famine had been making their sad innovations. The anger of God and the vengeance of heaven seem to rest upon every thing which you can cast your eyes. Every prospect seems to be withered and wilted by the frown and disapprobation of avenging justice and violated humanity. In short, almost every institution, every prosperity, public and private, seems to be sickening and dying from the corroding effects of slavery.'

But we are not compelled to rely upon the statements of travellers, or of persons resident in the free States, for proofs; they are abundantly furnished by slaveholders themselves, by statesmen and men of influence and observation, who have grown up in the midst of it.

During the famous debate in the Virginia Legislature, in the winter of 1832, Mr. Brodnax made the following remark:

'That slavery in Virginia is an evil, and a transcendent evil, it would be more than idle for any human being to doubt or deny. It is a mildew which has blighted every region it has touched, from the creation of the world. Illustrations from the history of other countries and other times, might be instructive and profitable, had we the time to review them; but we have evidence tending to the same conviction, nearer at hand, and accessible to daily observation, in the short histories of the different States of this Confederacy, which are impressive in their admonitions and conclusive in their character.'

During the same session, Mr. Faulkner said:

'If there be one who concurs with the gentleman from Brunswick (Mr. Gholson) in the harmless character of this institution, let me request him to compare the condition of the slaveholding portion of this commonwealth,—barren, desolate, seared as it were by the avenging hand of heaven,—with the descriptions which we have of this same country from those who first broke its virgin soil.'

'To what is this change ascribable? Alone to the withering and blasting effects of slavery. If this does not satisfy him, let me request him to extend his travels to the Northern States of this Union—and beg him to contrast the happiness and contentment which prevails throughout the country. The busy and cheerful sounds of industry, the rapid and swelling growth of their population, their means and institutions of education—their skill and proficiency in the useful arts—their enterprise and public spirit—the monuments of their commercial and manufacturing industry,—and above all, their devoted attachment to the government from which they derive their protection; with the division, discontent, indolence and poverty of the Southern country. To what sin is all this ascribable? To that vice in the organization of society, by which one-half of its inhabitants are arrayed in interest and feeling against the other half—to that unfortunate state of society in which freemen regard labor as disgraceful, and slaves shrink from it as a burden tyrannically imposed upon them—to that condition of things in which half a million of your population can feel no sympathy

with the society in the prosperity of which they are forbidden to participate, and no attachment to a government at whose hands they receive nothing but injustice.

If this should not be sufficient, and the curious and incredulous inquirer should suggest that the contrast which has been adverted to, and is so manifest, might be traced to a difference of climate, or other causes distinct from slavery itself, permit me to refer him to the two States of Kentucky and Ohio. No difference of soil—no diversity of climate—no diversity in the original settlement of those two States, can account for the remarkable disproportion in their national advancement. Separated by a river alone, they seem to have been purposely and providentially designed to exhibit in their future histories, the difference which necessarily results from a country free from, and a country afflicted with, the curse of slavery. The same may be said of the two States of Missouri and Illinois.

'Slavery, it is admitted is an evil—it is an institution which presses heavily against the best interest of the State. It banishes free labor. It exterminates the mechanic—the artisan—the manufacturer. It deprives them of occupation. It deprives them of bread. It converts the energy of a community into indolence—its power into imbecility—its efficiency into weakness. Shall society suffer, that the slaveholder may continue to gather his vintennial crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claim, compared with the great interest of the common weal? Must the country languish and die that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one? All rights subordinate to those of the slaveholder? Is not the mechanic—have not the middle classes their rights? rights incompatible with the existence of slavery?'

Henry Clay, in his address before the Colonization Society of Kentucky, has given a view of slavery, as remarkable for its completeness as its brevity.

'As a mere laborer,' says he, 'the slave feels that he toils for his master, and not for himself; that the laws do not recognize his capacity to acquire and hold property, which depends altogether upon the pleasure of his proprietor, and that all the fruits of his exertion are reaped by others.*—And again: That labor is best, in which the laborer knows that he will derive the profits of his industry, that his employment depends upon his diligence, and his reward upon his assiduity. He then has every motive to excite him to exertion and to animate him to perseverance; he knows that if he is treated badly he can exchange his employer for one who will better estimate his services; and that whatever he earns is his, to be distributed by himself as he pleases, amongst his wife and children, and friends, or enjoyed by himself.'

Much more might be quoted to the same point did our limits permit.

Secondly. The bearings of Slavery upon Northern Industry.

It has been estimated by political economists and practical men, that the average consumption of that class of operatives denominated journeymen and laborers in the free States, will amount, including the disbursements for their families, to at least three hundred dollars per annum.

The annual expense for food and clothing of the slaves in the South, we have been assured by extensive slaveholders, did not exceed an average of 12 dollars—we have seen estimates made for field hands that did not exceed 11 dollars; we will, however, take a higher sum than either of them, suppose we say 15 dollars. What would be the effect upon our industry if the 2,800,000 slaves were restored to their natural rights, employed as free laborers, and adequately compensated? Is there any good reason to believe, that with their increasing capacity to enjoy the comforts and conveniences of life, the annual consumption of their families would fall very far short of that allotted to Northern laborers? But suppose that not more than one-half of them should rise to the condition of efficient producers and consequently consumers, and allowing an average of 4 persons to a family, we have still left, as shown by the use of a few figures, an increased consumption, and consequently home market for our products, amounting to upwards of one million per annum. It is scarcely possible to conceive the immense impulse that such an event as their emancipation would give to every branch of industry, excepting, perhaps, the manufacture of whips and handcuffs, and other implements of coercion and restraint, disgraceful in any country and under any government, excepting republican America. The South is the natural market of the North, and would require under such circumstances, a power double that of its present labor-saving machinery and productive industry to supply.

Again: The slaveholding States with an extent of territory nearly double to that of the non-slaveholding, exhibit a population of but half their numbers. With a soil originally more productive, and equally susceptible of improvement—a climate for the most part equally salubrious—extensive water power, and other facilities for manufacturing purposes—numerous seaports and inducements for the profitable investment of capital. What an extensive field of enterprise would thus be opened to the industry and ingenuity of our citizens. Labor could not but be esteemed honorable—its demand greatly increased and adequately remunerated. The Southern States, instead of falling short in the aggregate amount of their productive industry that of Massachusetts alone,—instead of presenting the appalling contrast acknowledged and deprecated as the legitimate offspring of slavery, by all their best men, would lend their efficient aid in filling up the measure of our country's glory, and present the spectacle of a whole people, numerous, happy, and prosperous beyond example in the histories of ancient or modern time.

So far from emancipation producing an efflux of laborers detrimental to the North, as has been

* A singular exhibition of the extent to which this idea is carried, was furnished me by a friend. A slave who was overtaken, trudging along over a rough road, barefooted, and carrying a pair of shoes in his hands, was thus accosted by a passenger: "Why, you fool, why don't you wear your shoes instead of carrying them?" "Not quite such a fool, naider—de shoes my own, my feet's my master's," was the reply.

sometimes pretended by the advocates of slavery; a reverse action will be the inevitable consequence, for many reasons; a few only of them is all that our limits will allow.

1. Labor, like any commodity produced by it, naturally flows to that point, where it is most demanded or will procure the highest market. At this moment almost every branch of mechanical business, commands much higher wages in the Southern than in the Northern States, and but for the obstacles placed in their way by an institution that degrades them to the level of slaves, mechanics and laborers would emigrate thither. If such a demand can exist under the present dilapidated condition of her agriculture and the depressed state of arts and manufactures, as exhibited in a meagre population of eighteen to a square mile; what would it not become, when by a rapid and natural increase, her population should approximate to that of some of the New England States.

All the laborers they have, and more than all, would be required to develop a tythe of the resources which emancipation would place at the disposal of her planters and capitalists. Witness the result in the British West Indies.

2. "They are there. And the trouble, expense, distance to be travelled, time necessary for the journey, &c. would forever dissuade the main body from migration to the North.

3. There is far more room for them in the slaveholding portions of the United States than in the non-slaveholding. In the former there is one third more territory and one third less population than in the latter.

4. The climate of the South is congenial to them, that of the North uncongenial.

5. There is far less prejudice against the colored man there than at the North.

6. They are remarkable for their local attachments. This is one of their peculiarities everywhere—wherever they are to be found, their aversion to a change of residence, especially to a distant removal, is proverbial. All travellers in Africa unite in this testimony. Edward's History of the West Indies—Walsh's Sketches of Brazil—Matheson's Notices of Jamaica—Dr. Dickson's 'Mitigation of Slavery'—Sturge and Harvey's 'West Indies in 1837'—Thomson and Kimball's 'Six months in Antigua, Barbados and Jamaica,' abound with testimony to this trait.

We insert from the latter work, a few testimonies of ex-slaveholders in Antigua. 'The negroes are not disposed to leave the estates on which they have lived, unless they are forced away by bad treatment.'—H. Armstrong, Esq.

'Nothing but bad treatment on the part of the planters has ever caused the negroes to leave the estates on which they were accustomed to live.'—S. Bourne, Esq.

'The negroes are remarkably attached to their home.'—James Howell, Esq.

'The negroes are peculiar for their attachment to their homes.'—S. Barnard, Esq.

'Love of home is very remarkable in the negroes. It is a passion with them.'—Dr. Daniell, Member of the Council.

An aged planter said: 'They have very strong local attachments. They love their little hut, and will endure almost any hardship before they will desert that spot.'

Messrs. Thome and Kimball say: 'Such are the sentiments of West India planters; expressed in the majority of cases, spontaneously, and mostly in illustration of other statements. We did not hear a word that implied an opposite sentiment. One gentleman observed that it was a very common saying, with the negroes—'Me never leave my bornin' ground.'—i. e. birth place.'

7. The slaves rarely run away from mild masters now. When they become their own masters and are protected by just laws, why should they leave their native region to roam among strangers in an uncongenial clime?

8. Slaves, when emancipated in the South, stay there unless driven out.

There were, in 1830, 44,000 more free colored people in the slave states than in the free states; and this notwithstanding all the barbarous laws of the slave states, made expressly to oppress and drive them out. From 1820 to 1830, the free colored population of the slave states increased 35.1 per cent, while the colored population of the free states increased only 19.1 per cent, but little more than half as fast, and this in spite of expulsion laws, and notwithstanding the removal by the Colonization Society of 1008 from the slave states, and only 155 from the free states.

The utter aversion of the slaves, when free, to migrate from the State, was asserted by General Brodnax, an advocate of colonization, in his speech in the Virginia Legislature, in 1832, in favor of a bill for the forcible removal of free colored people. He said: 'It is idle to talk about not resorting to FORCE. * * * ALL OF US LOOK TO FORCE, OF SOME KIND.' Another member, Mr. Fisher said: 'If we wait until the free negroes consent to leave the State, we shall wait till time is no more.'

If they are reluctant to leave now, while slaveholding laws crush them to the dust, will they be more disposed to leave when slavery is abolished, and with it that bloody code against the free colored people which slavery made necessary?

Further. When the slaves are emancipated, the present masters would choose to employ them as hired laborers in preference to any other class.

They have always been accustomed to them.—Many of the slaveholders in the West Indies, engaged at the passage of the Emancipation Act, and in hot haste to verify their own predictions of ruin, imported white laborers to supply the places of their emancipated slaves. But a brief experiment left off their zeal; meanwhile the importation came to a stand, their wrath got cold enough to swallow; and instead of paying a hundred per cent premium for the reputation of prophets, and after all having their labor and losing their cash for their pains, they turned their foreign laborers adrift, and were glad to hire those to whom they had always been accustomed.

2. The slaves are acquainted with all kinds of plantation labor. The raising of the Southern staples, preparations of the soil, getting in the crops, modes of cultivation, curing for market, with the times and seasons of all, the causes affecting them, &c. Any other class of laborers

would have all these things to learn, and it would take some years fully to get the run of them.—Thus, for a time, at least, they would be much less profitable laborers than those who had been all their lives engaged in this kind of labor.

Concluded next week.

Our Foreign Negotiations:

Our readers will, perhaps, recollect the fact that certain American vessels laden with slaves for the southern market were several years since wrecked on their passage to New Orleans. The crews and cargoes were saved and carried into some of the British West India Islands, where, in conformity to the British laws, which like those of Massachusetts, do not acknowledge men as things, the cargoes were set free and suffered to dispose of themselves according to their own pleasure.

Ever since the occurrence of the first of these cases, which happened in 1831, the Federal Government at Washington has been so urgent in its zeal and labor to recover from the British Government these liberated slaves, as to have lost sight of all other interests and questions whatever. The matter has been followed up with great spirit and pertinacity. Immediately after the loss of the first vessel, the Comet, instructions were sent from Washington to our minister, to demand of the British Government, the value of the cargo. In 1832, another despatch was forwarded on the subject. The instructions were again renewed in 1833; the Secretary of State remarking that this case 'must be brought to a conclusion—the doctrine that would justify the liberation of our slaves, is dangerous to a large section of our country to be tolerated.'

In 1834, fresh instructions were sent, and a demand ordered to be made for the value of the slaves in the *Encumium*.

In 1835, similar instructions were sent relative to the *Enterprise*.

In 1836, the instructions were renewed; the Secretary observing to Mr. Stevenson, 'In the present state of our diplomatic relations with the Government of his Britannic Majesty, the most immediately pressing of the matters with which the United States' legation at London is now charged, is the claim of certain American citizens against Great Britain for a number of slaves, the cargoes of three vessels wrecked in the British Islands in the Atlantic.'

We beg leave to call the attention of the citizens of New England, and of the Northern States generally, to these last quoted instructions of the Secretary of State to our minister near the British Court. 'In the present state,' he says of our diplomatic relations with Great Britain, 'the most immediately pressing—mark that, the most immediately pressing—of the matters with which the United States' legation at London is now charged, is the claim of certain American citizens for certain slaves, &c.' The claim of the State of Maine for ten thousand square miles of her territory, and for divers of her citizens arrested and imprisoned by the authorities of New Brunswick,—this claim, involving the question of the integrity of our territories; the rights and jurisdiction of a sovereign State of the Union, to say nothing of the interest of Massachusetts, as well as of Maine, in the property of the disputed territory,—this great claim, which has lately threatened to involve the countries in a ruinous and destructive war, is pronounced by Mr. Secretary Forsyth in his instructions to Mr. Ambassador Stevenson, to be quite a secondary matter in comparison with that most immediately pressing affair, of 'a number of slaves, the cargoes of three vessels wrecked in the British Islands in the Atlantic!'

This most immediately pressing matter was accordingly pressed by Mr. Stevenson 'with great urgency, and finding that the British government had no inclination to act the part of tip staves and drivers to the American slave traders, Mr. Stevenson at length proceeded so far as to intimate the probability of a war, if these demands were not acceded to. In a letter to Lord Palmerston of December 1st, 1836, he expresses a hope that the British Government would 'not longer consent to postpone the decision of a subject which had been for so many years under its consideration; and the effect of which can be none other than to throw not only additional impediments in the way of an adjustment, and increase those feelings of dissatisfaction and irritation which have already been excited; but by possibility tend to disturb and weaken the kind and amicable relations which now so happily subsist between the two countries; and on the preservation of which essentially depends the interests and happiness of both.'

We find that this correspondence is exciting no small degree of interest at the South. The Charleston (S. C.) Mercury says: 'We have never read any thing more calculated to excite the indignation of every Southern reader, and of every American who feels for the honor of his country, than the letters of Lord Palmerston.' He scarcely consents to argue for the right of his Government to refuse compensation; an argument which if he had attempted, must have been in the teeth of decisions of the most eminent judicial authorities of his own country; but he virtually claims for his Government the right to abrogate the law of nations! He consents to make compensation in the cases of the *Encumium* and *Comet*, because they put into British ports, before the British Government had changed the law of nations, by passing her Emancipation Bill; though he dissents from the terms of settlement on which Mr. Stevenson insists; but in the case of the *Enterprise*, which happened to lose the protection of international law, by coming within the reach of British hospitality, after Great Britain, the author of the Slave Trade, had in a fit of humanity and morality thought proper to reform her West India Colonies, Lord Palmerston, in the name of his Government refuses compensation altogether.—He takes the ground that slaves cannot now and hereafter be recognized as property in any part of the British dominions, and this whether they be in the hands of citizens of a friendly power, or of British subjects. He thus assumes for his Government the right to determine the tenure by which we hold our property, to determine what shall be or not, property in this country.'

It is necessary to abolish slavery for the sake of our jurisprudence, and our christian character.