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**A HISTORY**  
**OF**  
**SLAVERY AND SERFDOM**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

HISTORY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

Post 8vo. Price 6s.

A HISTORY  
OF  
SLAVERY AND SERFDOM

BY

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LONDON  
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1895

Y:492.1.M9

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## PREFACE

THE new spirit which has been introduced into historical inquiry in recent times consists mainly in this, that the whole continuous life of Humanity is seen to be the object with which it has to deal. The picturesque or dramatic presentation of particular events, whilst it must always have its place and value, is more and more subordinated to the study of the fundamental social movement, which it should be the ultimate aim of the historian to understand and explain.

Though a perfectly rational investigation of this movement requires the combined consideration of all its elements, and a study of the consensus which links the progress of each

social factor with that of the others, it is necessary for convenience to examine them separately, without, however, losing sight of their mutual dependence. The principal object of the following pages is to exhibit one line of development which may be traced through the history of the Western nations, and which has been scarcely inferior to any other in its effects on the destinies of our race—namely that by which the slavery of ancient times passed into the modern system of free labour. Besides a survey of this great and beneficent revolution, the work contains an account of the abusive system of colonial slavery and its universal abolition, as well as of the efforts now in progress to transmute, after the Western model, the primitive form of the institution which still exists in Oriental countries. And, in this connection, special attention is given to recent events in Africa, because, if the hunting and sale of human beings in that continent were once brought to an end, the domestic slavery

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of the Moslem nations of the East could be regarded with a certain degree of tolerance, and its cessation would be secured from causes similar to those which operated in the ancient Roman world.

In the earlier part of the volume I have endeavoured to keep myself at the historical, as distinguished from the antiquarian point of view, and abstained from entering into curious details which might be multiplied to a great extent. And nowhere have I sought to display an erudition to which, at least in some fields of the inquiry, I can lay no claim. Writing, not for scholars, but for the mass of thoughtful and cultivated men and women, I have aimed at presenting such broad views and general ideas in relation to the history of slavery as ought to form part of the mental furniture of all educated persons. At the same time, I have tried to attain the utmost possible accuracy in the statement of facts, and I shall be disappointed if I shall be found

to have fallen into any serious error in this respect. I have freely availed myself of the labours of those who have preceded me in the treatment of the whole or any portion of the subject; and a consultation of the bibliography appended to this Preface will show that I have neglected few accessible sources of knowledge. I wish to acknowledge my special obligations to two of the authors there named, who had already gone, with conscientious care, over large portions of the ground I have traversed—H. Wallon in his *L'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, and S. Sugenheim in his *Geschichte der Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft*.

Some notices, related to the general subject, which are deserving of attention, but which, if introduced into the text, would have interfered with the regular progress of the narrative, have been placed in an appendix.

It should be added that the present volume contains, in a revised form and with large addi-



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tions, the substance of the article "Slavery" in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. That article was, so far as I am aware, the first attempt in English to give a complete account of slavery and serfdom in ancient, mediæval, and modern times.

J. K. I.

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## APPENDIX

### I

#### ON THE USE OF THE WORDS "SLAVE" AND "SLAVERY"

CARELESS or rhetorical writers use the words "slave" and "slavery" in a very lax way. Thus, when protesting against the so-called "Subjection of Women," they absurdly apply those terms to the condition of the wife in the modern society of the west—designations which are inappropriate even in the case of the inmates of Indian zenanas; and they speak of the modern worker as a "wage-slave," even though he is backed by a powerful trade-union. Passion has a language of its own, and poets and orators must doubtless be permitted to denote by the word "slavery" the position of subjects of a state who labour under civil disabilities, or are excluded from the exercise of political power; but in sociological study things ought to have their right names, and those names should, as far as possible, be uniformly employed.

There is, however, when the word "slavery" is used in a purely scientific spirit, a real difficulty in fixing its exact sense. This arises from the circumstance that the features of the institution were from an early period progressively modified by private feeling and public ordinances. But the essential character of slavery may be regarded as lying in the fact that the master was owner of the person of the slave, though the rights arising from such ownership might be variously limited. The transition to serfdom took place in civic communities when the master parted with or was deprived of his property in the person of the slave, and became entitled only to his services, or a determinate portion of them. In rural life, where the march of development was slower, the corresponding stage was reached when, in accordance with the fundamental principles of feudalism, the relation between the lord and the serf, from being personal, became territorial.

We shall err if we look too exclusively to the language of law as defining the status of the serf. In agricultural still more than in urban life, there were many discrepancies between juristic logic and social usage; and these extended to the further transition from serfdom to liberty, so that, whilst the villeins were still, in legal theory, little better than slaves, they could act in almost every respect as freemen.

## II

## SLAVERY AMONG THE HEBREWS

The wars of the Hebrews in the earlier stages of the national life were marked by special severity, not to say atrocity. The object aimed at was not the subjugation of the native races of Palestine, but their extermination, which, however, was not completely attained (2 Chron. ix. 7, 8). It has been pointed out (p. 8 of the present volume) that Fetichism tended to the habitual massacre of prisoners, because, from its purely local character, it could not create any spiritual bond between the victor and the vanquished. Now, the "monolatry," as Kuenen calls it, of the primitive Hebrews—that is, their exclusive devotion to Jahveh, conceived as the celestial patron of their tribe and the unrelenting enemy of the gods of the surrounding races,—had the same sort of isolating effect, and naturally led to the sacrifice of the votaries of those other hostile deities. But the spirit of true monotheism, when that system has been gradually developed and duly prepared by normal antecedents, regards defeated enemies as really, though sometimes unconsciously, subjects of one and the same divinity with the conqueror, and thus establishes a sense of community which leads to mercy. And, in proportion as the Hebrews rose



from their original tribal religion towards a genuine monotheism, the universal bond of humanity was more deeply felt, and their warfare was conducted in a less sanguinary manner. The same influence mitigated the harsher lineaments of the institution of slavery, so that, in the mature period of Jewish history, the relation of master and slave, so far as it continued to exist, was remarkably pure and humane.<sup>1</sup>

"In the Old Testament," says Ewald,<sup>2</sup> "slavery makes its appearance abruptly in the history of Abraham,<sup>3</sup> as a fully-developed institution, without any earlier mention of it, except its prediction by Noah at the commencement of the history of the present human race" (Gen. ix. 25, 27).

Its sources of supply were the same as in other early communities, viz.: 1. War, which, however, from the character already mentioned of the principal national conflicts, never yielded any great number of

<sup>1</sup> We may observe, however, as was to be expected, in many writers an inclination to treat the institution of slavery amongst the Hebrews with special tenderness, which leads them to extend to some of its characteristics an indulgence which they refuse to the corresponding traits of other ancient systems, and to suppress or minimise such humane features as those other systems present.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiquities of Israel*, Eng. transl. by Solly, p. 211.

<sup>3</sup> We must be on our guard against accepting the biblical accounts of patriarchal habits and institutions as describing, in all respects, accurately the early times to which they refer; they were doubtless largely coloured by later customs and ideas. I do not here enter into the question of the age and authority of the several portions of the Pentateuch, or of the different elements comprised in the so-called Mosaic law.

male slaves; 2. Man-stealing (Exodus xxi. 16; Deut. xxiv. 7); 3. Purchase, which, according to Genesis chap. xvii. was already practised in the time of Abraham, and by which the Hebrews were permitted to acquire foreigners, but not fellow-countrymen, as slaves (Levit. xxiv. 44); 4. Legal constraint, when, in consequence of debt, a person whose other means had failed, was compelled to pay with the person of his children, his wife, or even himself (2 Kings iv. 1); 5. Birth—and those “born in the house” were often the most trusted and valuable members of the class, charged with important household duties, and sometimes even adopted and made the heirs of their masters (Genesis xv. 3).

All slaves, whether of the Hebrew race or not, were to be circumcised, and so admitted into the community of Jahveh; they accordingly enjoyed the rest of the Sabbath and participated in the feast of the passover. The master who struck a slave (male or female), if he (or she) died from the effects of the maltreatment, was to be punished, though the penalty is not defined; but if the slave continued alive for a day after the assault, the master went free on the score that the slave was “his money.” If the slave was seriously injured, he was manumitted by law. All slaves, it was generally directed, should be treated with humanity; and the people were reminded that their forefathers had themselves been bondmen in Egypt (Deut. v. 16, and xvi. 14). But

the law drew a broad line of distinction between the members of the chosen race and those of the surrounding nations.

The Hebrew slave was to be set free after a servitude of six full years, leaving behind him, however, the wife whom his master might have given him during that period, and any children she had borne him. If he was married when he was enslaved (as a debtor), then they both went free. When a slave did not desire to avail himself of this opportunity of manumission, but preferred binding himself to his master for good, the two went together to the nearest sanctuary of Jahveh, where they ratified this agreement by a symbolical transaction under the superintendence of the priest, the latter holding the slave's ear against the door or doorpost of the sanctuary, whilst the master bored it through with an awl. The presence of the priest guaranteed that the slave did in fact voluntarily surrender the freedom to which he was entitled. A female slave, whom her father had sold in consequence of poverty, was similarly to be set free in the seventh year. If the master had made her his concubine and publicly recognised her as such, he could not, if he afterwards repudiated her, sell her; if he had made her his son's concubine, he was obliged to treat her as a daughter. If he kept her to himself, but took another with her, he must give her all the prerogative of a half-wife—"food, raiment, and duty of marriage"; otherwise, he must set her free.

The liberation of Hebrew slaves after six years of service, Ewald thinks, became obsolete at a tolerably early date. In Deuteronomy we find the seven years rule, and also a precept to send the slave away not empty-handed, but with a small portion to enable him to begin his free life (Deut. xv. 13, 19).

After the return from the captivity, slavery, though not legally abolished, seems to have existed only in great and wealthy houses. There had been for some time growing up a new relation of the nature of clientship, the dependant being no longer the property of his patron, but attached to his household and bound to render him certain services, in return for which he received protection: this relation was hereditary.

### III

#### SLAVERY IN ANCIENT EGYPT, ASSYRIA, PERSIA, AND CHINA

The following pages contain the substance of the scanty notices which are available with respect to slaves in these ancient nations.

*Egypt.*—Slavery existed in ancient Egypt, arising from the same sources as in other early communities. The wars of the kings afforded the principal supply; the monuments contain frequent representations of

nation. Slavery existed, though only on a small scale, except, apparently, in the public or the imperial domains. Its sources were the same as in other ancient communities. It was sometimes a legal penalty, especially for political revolt. The sale of children by their parents was permitted, being perhaps a modification of the earlier practice of exposure. War supplied not many members of the class; with a dense industrial population bordering on nomad races, China lost more captives than she gained. The right of the master to the slave, and the obligation of the latter, were hereditary and perpetual, but the features of the institution were peculiarly mild. Both the manners of the people and the laws protected the life and person of the slave. His family often existed within the family of his owner, almost on terms of equality. Female slaves in domestic service were little below the inferior wives, who, like them, were purchased and were subject to the principal wife; and male slaves often enjoyed much credit, confidence, and influence with their masters. The institution never had much extension relatively to the whole population. Free labour was universal in the country, and supplied each family with most articles without the necessity of domestic production; and filial duty, which held the highest place among the moralities enjoined by public opinion, imposed on children a personal service to their parents which in general dispensed

with the assistance of slaves as well as of hired attendants.<sup>1</sup>

## IV

## SLAVERY IN ANCIENT AND MODERN INDIA

In the *Institutes of Menu* we read (Burnell and Hopkins' translation), viii. 415 :—

“ A man made a captive in war, a slave who serves for food, one born in the house, one bought, one given, one formerly belonging to the owner's father, and one serving out a fine (or a debt),” these are the seven kinds of slaves. It is added (416) that a slave can have no property; the wealth he earns is acquired for him to whom he (the slave) belongs. A slave was not admissible to give evidence (viii. 66, 70), except in the case of failure of competent witnesses. A master must not quarrel with his slaves (iv. 181, 185), but bear offence without heat.

The duty of the Súdra (or member of the lowest of the four Indian castes) is, according to Menu, to serve the other classes, chiefly the Brahmans; but, in case of want of subsistence and inability to procure employment from that class, to serve a Kshatriya or even an opulent Vais'ya. The degraded state of

<sup>1</sup> See Wallon's *Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, vol. i. pp. 21-59; and compare his article on China with the source from which it is derived, namely, the memoir by Biot in the *Journal Asiatique* for March 1837, 3rd series, t. iii.

the Súdras appears in many legal provisions respecting them. But they were not slaves; they chose the persons to whom they would offer service, and claimed adequate compensation. They could exercise trades on their own account; their right to property was admitted, and they could even accumulate wealth. There is nothing to lead to the belief that they were slaves of the State. "Their condition," says Elphinstone, "was much better than that of the public slaves under some ancient republics, and indeed the villeins of the Middle Ages, or any other servile class with which we are acquainted."<sup>1</sup>

The same author, writing in 1839, says: "Domestic slavery in a mild form is almost universal. The slaves are home-born, or children sold by their parents during famine, and sometimes children kidnapped by Banjáras, a tribe of wandering herdsmen, who gain their subsistence by conveying grain and merchandise from one part of the country to another. . . . Domestic slaves are treated exactly like servants,

<sup>1</sup> "Arrian mentions with admiration (*Ind.* cap. x.) that every Indian is free. With them as with the Lacedæmonians, he says, no native can be a slave; but, unlike the Lacedæmonians, they keep no other people in servitude. Strabo, who doubts the absence of slavery as applying to all India, confines his examples of the contrary to domestic slaves, and appears to have no suspicion of the existence of a servile class. It is possible that the mild form in which slavery appeared among the Súdras may have deceived the Greeks, accustomed to so different a system at home; but it is more probable that the remains of the servile condition of the Súdras which subsisted in Menu's time may have disappeared entirely before that of Alexander." (Elphinstone, *History of India*, p. 261, 5th ed. by E. B. Cowell.)

except that they are more regarded as belonging to the family. I doubt if they are ever sold, and they attract little observation, as there is nothing apparent to distinguish them from freemen." But female children who are kidnapped are often sold for vile purposes, and are "in other cases exposed to the passions of their masters and the jealous cruelty of their mistresses." Slaves, he adds, are in some parts of India found not only in the houses of the great and rich, but "in the families of cultivators, where they are treated exactly like the other members." Among the ancient Hindus there were no slaves attached to the soil. In some forest tracts there are such slaves, but attached in so loose a way that they are entitled to wages, and, in fact, are under little restraint. They are found in Malabar and the extreme south, also in Bengal and Behar and certain hilly tracts. But "their proportion to the people of India is insignificant, and in most parts of that country the very name of prædial slavery is unknown."

The way in which the English Government has dealt with slavery in India is stated in the following extract from a letter of Mr. Justice Scott, of Bombay, printed in the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* for March 1885 :—

"The general law as regards slavery in India is contained in a brief Act of four sections, passed in 1843. The first section prohibits the sale of any



person, or of the right to his compulsory labour. The second prohibits the enforcement of any rights arising out of alleged property in a person as a slave. The third forbids any claim to take possession of property on the ground that the actual owner of it is a slave. The fourth declares any act which would be penal if done to a freeman, equally penal if done to a person alleged to be in a state of slavery."

Any kidnapping for the purposes of slavery is punished with ten years transportation; the buying or disposing of any person as a slave, with seven years imprisonment; and habitual slave-dealing, with transportation for life. Judge Scott states that some slave-traffic still, in 1855, went on in the native states of India.

## V

### SLAVERY UNDER THE BARBARY CORSAIRS

The Barbary States first became really formidable to Europe in consequence of the conquests of the two pirates Horuc (more properly Urūj) and Hayradin (Kheyr-ed-din) Barbarossa. The former possessed himself of Algiers in 1517, and was succeeded by his brother Hayradin, who ceded his dominions to the Porte, and was thereupon appointed Beglerbeg of Algiers, and afterwards Captain-General of the Ottoman navy. He and his successors swept the

seas, defeated Christian armaments, captured argosies, and levied contributions on the Mediterranean coasts. Barbarossa made himself master of Tunis, and, though it was recovered by Charles V. in 1535, this success did not diminish in any considerable degree the power of the pirates. An expedition of Charles V. against Algiers in 1541 miserably failed. Sinān Pasha took Tripoli, which had been entrusted to the Knights of St. John, and Ochiali recaptured Tunis. The noble defence of Malta under La Valette gave a serious check to the Turks, but it was only on the day of Lepanto (1571) that their maritime preponderance finally disappeared. From this time the Barbary Corsairs became mere plunderers. Algiers and Tunis were for three centuries the centres of expeditions in which they infested the Mediterranean, and, to some extent, the Atlantic, pillaged the coasts of Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Naples, and Spain, sacking towns and villages, and carrying off men, women, and children into captivity. The Western Powers, partly through pre-occupation, partly from mutual jealousy, tolerated their outrages, and even paid them tribute. After several feeble and fruitless efforts to abate the nuisance, the first marked success was won by the American naval officers Preble and Decatur. In 1816 the presence of Lord Exmouth obtained from the Beys of Tunis and Tripoli the abolition of Christian slavery, and, similar demands having been made in vain at Algiers, he attacked the place, destroyed the

fleet, and reduced the fortifications to ruins, and concluded a treaty by which prisoners of war were for the future to be exchanged, and not enslaved. But the pirate power did not cease from its outrages until its final annihilation by the French in 1830—a result for which we may be grateful, whilst disapproving the permanent occupation of the country in spite of the promise of evacuation, the policy long pursued towards the Arabs and Kabyles, and the high-handed seizure of Tunis.

Some notion of the number of Christians working as slaves either in the galleys of the pirates or on shore, may be gathered from the following facts: On the taking of Tunis by Charles V., 20,000 were freed from bondage either by his arms or by his compact with the ruler whom he restored.<sup>1</sup> We are told in *Don Quixote* that an immediate result of the battle of Lepanto was the liberation of 15,000 slaves. "In 1634, Father Dan found 25,000 Christian slaves in the city of Algiers and roundabout."<sup>2</sup> In 1816 the number was greatly reduced, Lord Exmouth set at liberty only 1642, who were then all the slaves in Algiers.

When captives were brought to the city they were sold by auction, the members of families being separated; they were heavily chained and thrown into the large bagnios or into dungeons in private

<sup>1</sup> Robertson's *Charles the Fifth*, bk. v., *sub fin.*

<sup>2</sup> S. Lane Poole's *Barbary Corsairs*, p. 235 (from Le Père Dan's *Histoire de Barbarie et de ses Corsaires*, 1649).

houses, and kept to hard labour, such as cleaning, carrying, and quarrying stone. They were at times treated with great cruelty; but this does not appear to have been frequent—their chief sufferings were not physical, but moral. They had holidays, and hours free of work, and sometimes saved enough to buy their freedom.

Every one knows that the author of *Don Quixote* was for years a captive in Algiers. He was on his way, in 1575, from Italy, where he had been serving in the Spanish army, to visit his native country, when the galley in which he sailed was taken by Moorish corsairs, and he and all the other Christians on board were carried as prisoners to Algiers. He was there one of the numerous slaves of the corsair captain, Deli Memi, an Arnaut renegade, who treated him very harshly with the object of compelling him to appeal to his friends for his ransom. Cervantes during his captivity behaved with noble constancy and magnanimity. He formed several plans of escape, the last of which would probably have been successful but for the treachery of one of those who were to have obtained their freedom by means of it. He was, in the end, in 1586, ransomed by contributions from his family, supplemented by a sum advanced by the public functionary for the redemption of Spanish captives, residing at Algiers. It has been sometimes supposed that he relates the story of his own slavery in the person of the Captive in *Don Quixote*. This

appears to be an error ; but his experiences supplied him with that familiar knowledge of Algerine affairs and manners which appears in this tale and also in the *Española Inglesa*, one of his *Novelas Ejemplares*.

It ought in justice not to be forgotten, though it is seldom noticed, that there were Christian as well as Turkish or Barbary corsairs, and Moslem slaves in the hands of Christians as well as Christians in the hands of Musulmans. The oars of Doria's vessels, as well as those of Dragut's, were impelled by the hands of slaves ; when Francis I. dismissed Hayradin from Toulon, he handed over to him 400 Mohammedans who had been galley slaves.

## VI

### REDEMPTION OF CAPTIVES

It was, from an early period, the effort of the Catholic priesthood, and of the wealthy faithful under their influence, to redeem Christian captives held by the unbelieving Northern races, by Saracens, Moors, and other "infidels." The following notices will give some idea of what was done in this direction :—

Epiphanius, bishop of Pavia, was employed by Theodoric (*d.* 526 A.D.) "to rescue from slavery those who had been sold or had fled into slavery beyond the Alps. Gundobald the Burgundian and his chief-

tains melted at the persuasive words of Epiphanius, who entered Pavia at the head of 6000 bond slaves rescued by his influence."<sup>1</sup>

"The redemption of slaves was one of the objects for which the canons allowed the alienation of their [the churchmen's] lands."

Gregory the Great (*d.* 604 A.D.) "sanctioned that great triumph of the spirit over the form of religion by authorising not merely the alienation of the wealth of the clergy, but even the sale of the consecrated vessels from the altar for the redemption of captives."<sup>2</sup> (In this he followed the example of S. Ambrose.) In Ep. vi. 35, Gregory writes, "Et sacrorum canonum et legalia statuta permittunt ministeria Ecclesie pro captivorum esse redemptione reddenda."

Bathildis, queen of Clovis II. of Neustria (seventh century), having been herself a captive, set apart vast sums for the redemption of captives.<sup>3</sup>

S. Eloy, afterwards Bishop of Noyon (seventh century), was active in the work of redemption at his own expense. "When he heard of a sale of slaves, he set off immediately, and bought as many as 20 or 30, or even 50 or 100, at a time. When he had got them, the next business was to carry them before the king and set them at full liberty with all the forms of law."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Milman, *Latin Christianity* (1855), i. p. 295.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 91, and i. 444.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. p. 221.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Maitland, *Dark Ages*, p. 88, from the *Life of S. Eloy* by S. Owen, Archbishop of Rouen, in D'Achery's *Spicilegium*, ii. p. 76.

The father of Joannes Damascenus (eighth century) devoted all his great wealth to the redemption of Christian slaves.<sup>1</sup>

At a later period, two religious orders were founded for the special object of the redemption of Christians held in captivity by infidels—that of the Trinitarians, and that of Notre Dame de la Merci. The former of these was established in 1198 by Pope Innocent the Third, at the instance of S. John de Matha and S. Felix de Valois, for the ransom of captives taken by Moors and Saracens. De Matha was the first General of the Order, and the mother house was at Cerfroy near Meaux in France. The order spread rapidly, and extended to Italy, Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, the British Islands, and even to America. In the eighteenth century they numbered nearly 300 houses; but now, the necessity for the order having ceased, it has become nearly extinct.<sup>2</sup> About the middle of the seventeenth century it was stated that in France more than 30,000 prisoners had been redeemed, in Castile and Leon more than 11,000. The members of this order were known in France as *Mathurins*.

The Order of Notre Dame de la Merci was founded, in consequence of visions said to have been seen in

<sup>1</sup> Milman, ii. p. 164.

<sup>2</sup> Montalembert, indeed, says (Introduction to his *Histoire de Ste. Elis. de Hongrie*, 1837), "Jusqu'à nos jours ces deux congrégations ont continué leur pacifique et périlleuse croisade." But their crusade must long since have ceased to deserve the latter of these epithets.

1218, at the instance of S. Pierre Nolasque, by virtue of a power possessed by the King of Aragon of establishing new orders without seeking the intervention of the Pope. In its first creation it was a military order. Its mother house was at Barcelona. It received in 1230 the confirmation of Pope Gregory the Ninth. There were branch houses of the order in France, and it had a great extension in America. Amongst its members S. Raymond Nonnat and S. Pierre Paschal were pre-eminent for devotion and self-sacrifice.

## VII

### SLAVERY AS AN INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM

According to Adam Smith,<sup>1</sup> "it appears from the experience of all ages and nations, that the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves." This supposed fact he explains from the consideration that the fund destined for replacing or repairing the wear and tear of the slave is commonly managed by a negligent master or a careless overseer, and therefore with little regard to economy, whilst that of the free man will be administered by himself, and therefore with the strict frugality and parsimony which naturally characterise the expenditure of the poor. Again, the slave cannot be

<sup>1</sup> *Wealth of Nations*, book I. chap. viii., and book III. chap. ii.



expected to work as diligently as the freeman. There is no expectation of personal gain to stimulate his industry ; he will be more likely to evade, when he can, the tasks imposed upon him. It was, in general, pride and love of power in the master that led to the employment of slaves. But the system could be maintained only where the nature of the cultivation afforded it, and in the British sugar and tobacco plantations the profits were such as to make it possible, whilst the raising of corn crops would not admit of it.

J. E. Cairnes, in his valuable work entitled *The Slave Power*, has examined at length the conditions necessary for the success of slavery as an industrial system. He was led to study this question by the fact that slavery, having originally existed in all the English colonies in America, in the more northerly of these had declined and become spontaneously extinct, whilst in the southern states it had risen to great importance and shaped the entire social system in conformity with its requirements.

After rejecting as insufficient the explanations of this fact founded on the difference of social position and habits of the respective founders of the northern and southern settlements, on the influence of climate, and on the indolence of the negro, Cairnes goes on to state the conditions on which the success of a slave régime really depends.

The single economic advantage which slavery

possesses is, that the master, having absolute command of his workmen, and disposing of the whole fruit of their labour, can organise that labour in the most perfect way, can classify and distribute it at will, and concentrate it on any given point, while the cost of it can never rise above the maintenance of the worker. On the other hand, the labour of the slave is subject to the threefold disadvantage, that (1) it is given reluctantly and hence requires constant supervision; (2) is unskilful, and therefore he can only be trusted with the coarsest implements and employed in the rudest forms of work ; and (3) wants versatility, so that he is incapable of variety of production, and must be confined for life to the raising of a single crop.

Now the nature of the northern soils and climate prescribed the cultivation of cereals, and in this no skilful combination of labour is needful, and, the workers being dispersed over a large surface, adequate superintendence could not easily be brought to bear. Hence the slave system was not adapted to the requirements of the north, and was replaced by that of peasant proprietors, who, with their families, did in general the whole work of their farms. They had the necessary intelligence and resource for the varied processes in which they were employed, and their diligence was sufficiently stimulated by the sense of personal interest.

But for the profitable management of slave labour, judicious classification, economical distribution, and

direction' by one commanding mind of the whole labour force are indispensable. Strict superintendence, too, is essential, and, with a view to this, the concentration of large numbers of workers in a limited space. The growth of tobacco and cotton required these conditions to be fulfilled, and accordingly, where the soil and climate favoured these products, slave cultivation became the rule and maintained itself. The high fertility of the southern soils dispensed with superior skill in the labourers, and with the use of the more advanced appliances of industry. And when, in the absence of rotation, the land was exhausted, there were ample virgin soils available for the extension of the system, and the unceasing exertions of the owners were directed to keeping open and enlarging the area of their peculiar form of cultivation.

† Cairnes thus sums up the results of his investigation. "The successful maintenance of slavery, as a system of industry, requires the following conditions : 1st, Abundance of fertile soil ; and 2nd, a crop the cultivation of which demands combination and organisation of labour on an extensive scale, and admits of its concentration. It is owing to the presence of these conditions that slavery has maintained itself<sup>1</sup> in the Southern States of America, and to their absence that it has disappeared from the Northern States."

<sup>1</sup> Cairnes wrote in 1862.

It should be remembered that the expansion of the cotton industry in the south to large dimensions was very rapid, following on the progress of mechanical invention. "Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton-gin (1793)," says Professor W. Wilson,<sup>1</sup> "enabled even the unskilful slave to cleanse a thousand pounds of cotton of its seeds in a single day, instead of five or six pounds, as formerly. At once, almost at a single bound, the south became the chief cotton field of the world. In 1792, the year before Whitney's invention, the export of cotton from the United States amounted to only 138,328 pounds; by 1804 it had swelled to 38,118,041; and at the time of the first struggle touching the extension of slavery (the Missouri compromise), it had risen to 127,860,152, and its value from seven and a half to more than twenty-two millions of dollars." This immensely strengthened the institution of slavery; it had previously been supported by habit and a fear of the consequences of emancipation; now it "seemed X nothing less than the indispensable economic instrument of southern society."

<sup>1</sup> *Division and Reunion (1829-1889)*

THE END

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