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ANTI-SLAVERY TRACTS. No. 10.

SLAVERY AND THE NORTH.

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SLAVERY—WHAT IT DOES.

The question of slavery is undeniably, for this country at least, the great question of the age. On the right decision of it depend interests too vast to be fitly set forth in words. Here are three millions of slaves in a land calling itself free; three millions of human beings robbed of every right, and, by statute and custom, among a people self-styled Christian, held as brutes. Knowledge is forbidden, and religious worship, if allowed, is clogged with fetters; the sanctity of marriage is denied; and home and family and all the sacred names of kindred, which form the dialect of domestic love, are made unmeaning words. The soul is crushed, that the body may be safely coined into dollars. And not occasionally, by here and there a hardened villain, reckless alike of justice, law and public sentiment; fearing not God nor regarding man; but on system, and by the combined strength of the whole nation. Most men at the North, and many even at the South, admit that this is wrong,—that it is a gross injustice to the slave, a serious evil to the master, a great calamity to the country; that it belies the nation's high professions, brings deep disgrace upon its character, and exposes it to unknown perils and disasters in the time to come.

EMANCIPATION.—ITS EFFECTS.

What then ought to be done? One would think a just people need not study long upon so plain a question; that a people clear-sighted for its own welfare might soon find an answer. If slavery be wrong every way, hurtful in all its bearings, then, in the name of justice, of humanity, of self-interest even, let it be abolished at once. Give back to manhood its plundered rights: raise it up from its

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enforced debasement. Immediate emancipation for the slave; immediate abolition, for the system of slavery; is the least demand of right and of enlightened policy. By this is not meant, as some pretend to think, that the slaves should be "turned loose" for all restraint, to be vagabonds and thieves. Emancipation would break no bond of righteous law or moral obligation. On the contrary, it would ensure to law or readier obedience, by making it impartial, both in its benefits and its restraints. It would strengthen moral obligation, by showing that it is a mutual bond, henceforth to be regarded by the high no less than by the low. To emancipate, then, is not to outlaw, or cut loose from society or any of its natural relations or real duties; but it is to cease from holding men as property, and begin to treat them as men; enabling them to claim and receive the earnings of their toil; giving them a voice in the choosing of their work, their employers, their associates, abodes, and manner of life; respecting their domestic ties and rights and duties; allowing them to improve their minds with knowledge and their hearts with moral culture; and leaving them free to worship God when, where and how their consciences require.

WHO CAN OBJECT?

To what, in all this, can any one reasonably object? The master cannot justly complain of a loss of property, for what he loses was never his; but so much as the change takes from him, so much has he been wrongfully withholding from the real owner, to whom—long due—it is at last restored. Nay, if either loses, it is still the slave; for his past toils and wrongs are unrequited. He is merely to be robbed no longer; —not to have back what has been plundered from him. The state or country cannot complain of loss, for, to it, the slave was only worth what work could be forced out of him, and that is less than he will do unforced, when free. The change takes nothing from his strength or skill, but adds much to his willingness to use them. When laboring, of his own accord, with the prospect of receiving what he earns, he has a motive to be diligent and faithful, which he never had while toiling reluctantly for another's gain. Even as a

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mere working-tool, therefore, he is worth more for being free. And then, too, freedom makes him infinitely more than a mere working-tool. He is now a man, with all the priceless treasures of mind and soul, with all the growing powers and upward aspirations which belong to manhood; with ever-widening scope for his unfolding faculties, and nothing to forbid his progress toward any height, however, lofty, of human excellence. As much as brain and muscle are worth more than muscle only; as much as moral joined to mental power is a better wealth than mere brute force; in a word, as much as *men* with human skill, contrivance and invention, with reason, affection and the sense of right, are of more account than cattle yoked, and horses trained to harness; so much will the emancipation of a nation's slaves enrich the nation. Why, then, should not our slaves go free?

SLAVES NOT UNFIT FOR FREEDOM.

They are ignorant and stupid, it is said; a brutish race, not fit for freedom. True, —in part—and partly false. No doubt the slaves are ignorant and degraded. So any race would be, if wronged as they have been, and through so many generations. What else could be expected from men weighed down by ages of oppression, forbidden to use the key of knowledge,—letters—allowed no hope of bettering their state, nor any motive to exert their minds or to improve their morals? But it is not true that they are only fit for slavery; fit only to be kept under the very influences which now debase them. The bad effect is no good reason for continuing the cause, but rather shows the need of its immediate removal. What!—shall we enslave men, because slavery makes them base? Keep the burden on their backs because they stoop beneath its weight; the fetter on their limbs because their gait, with it, is awkward; their dungeon closely locked because its darkness dims their sight? Is this manly?—just—or wise? If holding man as property would give him wisdom, virtue, manly bearing; or put him in the way of getting them; or even fill him with a stronger wish to have them; then ignorance and dullness, vice and degradation, might with a little better face be urged as reasons for en-

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slavement. But such is not its purpose nor its tendency. Its motive is self-interest; the debasement of its subject is at once its necessary means and its sure result. While slavery lasts the slaves will be degraded. FREEDOM is the school which fits men to be free. What if the black man is inferior to the white? It does not follow that he always must be. Excel him where his chance is equal, before you boast yourself above him. Give him his liberty, and as strong a motive to exertion as you have; —a prospect of reward as sure and ample; not only wages for his toil, but respect and honor and social standing according to his worth, and see what he can then become, before you judge him to be sunk so low that freedom cannot lift him up and bless him. His powers have never yet been fairly tried, for he has always had to struggle against difficulties and discouragements which white men do not meet. When free in name, he is denied a freeman's rights and hopes and prospects, an open field of competition, and success to match his merit. Yet how nobly has he often proved his manhood? Throughout the United States, spread over the broad fields of Canada, and in many foreign countries, are thousands who are living proofs that slaves of African descent can shake off degradation with their chains, and win respect even from stubborn prejudice. Toussaint and Petion, Dumas the general and Dumas the author, Placide the Cuban poet, Wheatley, Banneker, Horton, Osborn, Jordan and Hill, are a few among the main witnesses, that neither learning, taste, nor talent, nor skill to rule, nor warlike prowess, nor eloquence, nor wisdom, is incompatible with negro blood. What these men have achieved may well suggest the question, "if such things can be done in the green tree, what may be done in the dry?" If with the hindrances of slavery and caste, the colored race has shown so many proofs of manliness, what may it not do when these checks have been removed. The slaves are very few, who, if set free and treated justly, would not take better "care of themselves" than slavery has ever taken of them. Nay, doubtless many now in bondage are higher, both in intellect and morals, than many of the whites. Some slaves and masters must ex-

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change conditions, if the inferior is to be the slave. Fix, —on your scale of mind and morals, —the point of fitness to be free; and, high or low, it will condemn the present practice. If high enough to doom all colored men to slavery, it dooms a multitude of whites; if low enough to leave the whites all free, it frees all colored men. For the lowest black is not beneath the most degraded white.

THE JUST INFERENCE.

But even if the highest blacks were lower than the lowest whites, that would not justify enslaving them. For they are men and brethren still, and have the sacred rights of manhood. The more debased they are, the stronger is their claim upon the sympathy and help of their more favored brothers. If "we who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," our brother's weakness is a poor excuse for making him our beast of burden. Instruction is the right of ignorance; kind care, of helplessness; and wholesome moral influences, of a low moral state. Slavery gives neither. They can all be better given without it. We never offer it to the degraded, ignorant, and helpless among ourselves. Nay, such an offer would be deemed an outrage on the feelings of the public, and insulting to the very vilest of our paupers; and to urge in its behalf that "they cannot take care of themselves," would be though an aggravation of the wrong. How then can we pretend to think it suited to the case of colored men, if they are helpless, ignorant, degraded?

"SLAVES CONTENTED."

But the slaves do not wish for freedom, we are told. Happy in bondage, they desire no change. Prove this, and slavery needs no heavier condemnation. If it has so utterly imbruted men that they are content to be brutes, —if it has crushed out of them the very consciousness of manhood, all hope of a higher state, and even the wish to rise; it has wrought to fearful havoc on God's noblest work to be borne with any longer. Let it not blight another generation, nor sink the present still farther out of sight of manliness, and quite beyond the reach of resurrection. If for no other reason, it ought, for this alone, to

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be at once abolished. Moreover, if the slaves desire no change, they can be freed without the slightest inconvenience to their masters, for they will serve them still, of their own accord, and all the more cheerfully and faithfully, that their free choice to do so is now made certain. The master's wife, or daughter, will not have to "black his shoes;" as a distinguished statesman has foretold. Why bind *men* to the places they *choose* to stay in? Why make them chattels—beasts,—to get the service which they *wish* to render? There is no shadow of excuse for enslaving men who are willing to serve. Nor would a generous nature,—or even a simply just one,—requite a life-long; *willing* service with but the bare support of animal life; at most, the means of animal enjoyment; while mind and soul are starved, and manhood is, as far as may be, blotted out, or abuse an ignorant brother's unsuspecting trust, to cheat him of the common Father's richest gifts, and keep him blind to his incalculable loss. The more willingly he serves, the baser is the ingratitude of such a requital. This plea, then, would be worthless even if true.

NOT TRUE.

But it is false. The slaves are not content to be in bondage. Witness the pains needed to keep them there; —the laws against their leaving home without a written pass; the penalties for helping them away or harboring them while fleeing; the nightly patrols, to watch them; the blood-hounds, trained to track their flight; the high rewards often offered for their recapture; the slaveholder's anxiety for northern aid, by legislation and otherwise, to hinder their escape; the provision of the Constitution, that they shall find no refuse in the whole land, but, wherever found, shall be given up to their pursuers; the many calls made upon northern officers and magistrates to enforce it, and the many victims torn, at its behest, from hope and freedom. Witness, too, the thousands who, in spite of all these precautions, have fled to Canada, and the multitudes scattered over the free states, or lurking in southern woods and swamps, braving unnumbered perils, toils, and hardships, rather than be slaves. How can we believe that "they would not be free if they could,"—are "better off in slave-

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ry," and choose to stay there? Why! the slaveholders themselves know better. They use enslavement as a penalty, and offer freedom as the highest of rewards. Governor Giles, of Virginia, in his address to the legislature, in 1827, speaking of the punishing of free black, by selling them as slaves, says "slavery must be admitted to be *a punishment of the highest order*; and according to every just rule for the apportionment of punishment to crimes, it would seem that it ought to be applied *only to crimes of the highest order*." Several of the slave states permit emancipation "*for meritorious services*," and for no other cause. A few years ago the state of Georgia paid \$1800 to buy freedom for a slave who, by great exertion and at much personal risk, had saved the state-house from being burnt. And lately the legislature of South Carolina permitted a slave to be set free, for his valor and devotion to his master's son,—with whom he had gone to the war, and who fell fighting the Mexicans. Such instances show the slave-holder's real belief as to what the slaves like best, and what is best for them. "That our Negroes will be worse off, if emancipated," says a Committee of the Synod of Kentucky, in an address to the Presbyterians of that states, "is, we feel, but a specious pretext for lulling our own pangs of conscience, and answering the argument of the philanthropist. *None of us believe* that God has so create a whole race that it is better for them to remain in perpetual bondage."

FACTS—BRITISH WEST INDIES.

For further proof that slaves love freedom and are better off for having it, look at the British West Indies. There, as is well known, emancipation was received with a general burst of joy and gratitude, and its effect upon the slaves, was a great improvement both in outward comforts, and in mind and morals. They have more and better food and clothing and home conveniences; schools are set up for their instruction, and are well attended by the children and youth and often even by full grown men and women, the churches are thronged by crowds who had no religious teaching in the time of slavery, vice and crime are lessened, marriage is held more sacred, beneficial societies are multiplied, and other tokens of a better social state abound.

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So have testified colonial governors, legislators, magistrates, planters, merchants, and visitors from abroad, some of them after careful observation, in all the principal islands, made on purpose to learn the workings of freedom. One sign of the much improved outward condition of the laboring class—no longer slaves—is the great increase of imports of such articles as they use. For instance, in Jamaica, since slavery was abolished, the yearly average importation of flour, rice, corn, and bread has considerably more than doubled; of corn-meal, butter, lard and soap, almost doubled; of pork, about trebled; of candles, and of lumber, has increased nearly one half; and of cattle, more than four-fold. If exports have lessened, one reason is, a great home consumption. The planter sends away less, for the laborer uses more, thus having not only more comforts from abroad, but also more of those produced at home. Many of the freedmen have become small landholders, and live in easy independence on their little properties. Women, to a great extent, have left field-labor, and now attend to household duties and the care of their children, formerly, of necessity, so much neglected. Self-respect and manly bearing, have, in a good degree, taken the place of that cringing servility which generally marks the slave. Thus facts refute the falsehood that Negroes are fit only to be slaves; and neither wish for freedom, nor would be bettered by it.

OVERRUN THE NORTH.

But if freed, it is said, they will overrun the North. Ah! Wouldn't leave their masters if they could; as if allowed to do as they please, they will all run off! Sound logic, truly! And as sound morality, is the inference that therefore they must still be enslaved! If they *would* come north, to hinder is to wrong them. As rightfully might the West shut out the eastern emigrant, as the North shut out the southern. But there is no danger of their coming. Free them, and the motive which brings them here is gone. Why they come now, it is for freedom. Let them have it home, and they will stay there. The climate of the South suits them better than ours, they are used to its employments, their habits are formed by and

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fitted to a southern life, there are all their attachments and associations, there the strong home-feeling binds them. There too they are needed. They do the hard work of the South, and could not be spared from its fields and shops. To employ them there at liberal wages would cost much less than to put other laborers in their places. Hence it would be for the employers' interest to keep them, and for theirs to stay. Moreover they do stay there now, when freed; although oppressive laws—which would be repealed when the abolition of slavery had removed their cause—are now in force there against free blacks.

Of the whole South, about one man in thirty-six is free colored. And more than two-thirds of these are in the northern border slave States, whence, of course, they could most easily "come north." In Virginia, they are one in twenty-five of all the people; in Maryland, nearly one in ten; in Delaware, more than one in five. Yet hardly ever does one of them remove into a free State, though slaves come often—sometimes hundreds in a year.

EFFECT ON NORTHERN LABOR.

This reasoning also proves the notion false, that emancipation at the South will lower the price of labour at the North. For, instead of sending up the southern blacks to compete with the working classes here, it would both keep them at home and draw back many who were driven hither by slavery, but would gladly return when they could do so and be free. Besides, it would much enlarge the market at the South, for the fruits of northern industry and enterprise. The southern laborers, when free and paid, would buy of us many comforts and conveniences not allowed them now;—cloths, hats, shoes, furniture, house-hold utensils, improved working-tools, a countless variety of northern manufactures, and of foreign wares, imported through the North;—the demand for which would give new activity to our shops and mills and shipping, and steadier employment, and, most likely, higher wages, to all kinds of labor here. Three million new consumers of the wares we make and sell, would add greatly to the income of the North. New shops and factories, built to meet their wants, would grow to villages and towns; and,

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employing many busy hands in every useful calling, create home markets for the farmer's produce; increase the worth of lands and houses; put life into every branch of business; and spread the benefits of the change among all classes, over the whole country. Slavery keeps from us all these benefits, and thus, in robbing southern labor, robs also northern. Yet worse; it degrades labor; coupling it, at the South, with the lowest social debasement, and thereby lessening its respectability at the North, till now it has become, in the esteem of many; a positive disgrace, and the honest sons of toil are shut out of self-styled "good society," by reason solely of their useful occupations. Hence, doubtless, is it that our hopeful youth so often flee from field or shop, into some over-crowded "profession," and suffer in proud poverty through life, or are corrupted and depraved by the manifold temptations of their unwisely chosen lot. Hence, too, the laborer, failing of the respect which is due from others, too often loses somewhat of his *self*-respect, grows careless of his character and conduct, makes little or no earnest effort to increase in worth and rise in social standing, and perhaps *becomes* at length, in many instances, as low as he is *rated*. Thus the enslavement of labor at the South, is by no means least among the causes which keep down labor at the North, and, of course, emancipation there would be no detriment, but a great advantage, to the working classes here.

RIGHT TO INTERFERE.—SELF-DEFENCE.

"But we of the North," it is often said, "have not right to meddle with slavery; then why talk about it here? It is for the South alone to decide whether it shall be abolished, and, if so, when and how." Granted;--that each State has the sole right to legislate on the subject, within its own limits. But this is far from proving northern anti-slavery action to be wrong, or northern inaction, touching slavery, to be right. It is our right and duty to defend ourselves against the aggressions of the slave-power. These have been notoriously many and gross. It has trampled on our right of petition and free speech; demolished our free presses; plundered our mails and burnt their contents; imprisoned and enslaved north-

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ern colored freemen, and outraged the persons of northern citizens, both white and colored; insulted northern States by offering indignities to the representatives of their sovereignty; virtually annulled that provision of the Constitution which guaranties, to the citizens of each State, "all the privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States;" and, in instances and ways unnumbered, in its treatment of the North, done violence to every dictate of justice, every principle of law, human or divine. It has usurped, by far the greater share of all political preferments, power and profits; controlled the action of the government in all its branches; wasted the nation's blood and treasure in wars for its advantage; and always shaped the most important measures of public policy with a single eye to the promotion of its own interests, at whatever sacrifice of northern rights or the general welfare. Against the longer continuance of this state of things we may and ought to labor earnestly.

OPPOSE THE SPREAD OF SLAVERY.

Again; it is our right and duty to oppose the farther spread of slavery over the national domain. For the increase of slave States since the Union was formed, the North is justly answerable, in common with the South. Of the seventeen new States, which should all have been held sacred to freedom, we have yielded nine to slavery. In getting one of these, the slave power plunged us into murderous and costly war, and now it not only claims all it can use of the acquisitions of that war, but, by the Nebraska bill, has opened its way to a vast domain itself had guaranteed to freedom forever. It grasps at Cuba, too, and Hayti, nor ever rests while aught is unwon which can be turned to its account. And if we still, as heretofore, hold on with it in its career of robbery and blood, we must expect to share the ruin in which it is sure to end. If the North has a right to shun that fate, it has, no less, a right to use the needful means; —resistance to spread of slavery on the nation's territory.

NORTH SUPPORTS SLAVERY.

Yet again; it is the right and duty of the North to cease supporting slavery. We have no right to help wrong-

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doing. Even on the objector's own ground, that our duty is to leave it wholly to the South, we may no more interfere for the system than against it. But we do interfere for it, so long as we allow a representation for slave property in Congress; bind ourselves to give up runaway slaves to their masters, and, at the bidding of the South, to crush all attempts to win freedom, as our father did, by force; array the laws and constitutions of the northern States against the freedom of the slave or the rights of the free colored men; give the fellowship of our churches to slaveholders, while denying it to the doers of less flagrant wrongs; and in our social intercourse, and through all the various expressions of our public sentiment, treat slaveholding as an offense, or as a very light one. All this the North is doing now. Through Church and State and the social circle, through press and pulpit and theological seminary, it is allied with slavery. The system is not southern only; it is national. Till this alliance with it is dissolved, the North is guilty with the South. We may and must dissolve it. If we cannot abolish slavery, we can, at least, and ought ourselves to cease slaveholding, even if need be, at the cost of separation from a slaveholding Union.

MORAL INFLUENCE.—POWER OF TRUTH.

And finally, it is our right and duty to exert our moral influence against slavery at the South, and—though we cannot legislate upon it there,—to change the public sentiment which governs legislation; so that they who have the power may also have the *will* to take from injustice the support of law, from manhood's brow the brand of chattelism, from American democracy its foul reproach, and from our country its darkest guilt and deadliest curse and greatest danger. The faithful utterance of anti-slavery truth in earnest love and untiring perseverance, will win at last this glorious result, as surely as God's promise is inviolate, that his word shall not return unto him void, but shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it.

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