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GOV. HAMMOND'S LETTERS--NO. 2.

ADDRESS TO THOMAS CLARKSON THE ENGLISH ABOLITIONIST.

Slavery in its social effects—duelling—mobs—repudiation—licentiousness—comparative expense of free and slave labor—treatment of slaves—instruction—punishments.

In a social point of view the Abolitionists pronounce slavery to be a monstrous evil. If it was so, it would be our own peculiar concern, and superfluous benevolence in them to lament over it. Seeing their bitter hostility to us, however, they might leave to cope with our own calamities. But they make war upon us out of excess of charity, and attempt to purify us by covering us with calumny. You have read and assisted to circulate a great deal about affrays, duels, and murders occurring here, and all attributed to the terrible demoralization of slavery. Not a single event of this sort takes place among us, but it is caught up by the abolitionists and paraded over the world with endless comments, variations, and exaggerations. You should not take what reaches you as a mere sample, and infer that there is a vast deal more that you never hear.—You hear all, and more than all the truth.

It is true that the point of honor is recognized throughout the slave region, and the disputes of certain classes are frequently referred for adjustment to the 'trial by combat.' It would not be appropriate for me to enter, in this letter, into a defence of the practice of duelling, nor to maintain at length that it does not tarnish the character of a people to acknowledge a standard of honor. Whatever evils may arise from them, however, they cannot be attributed to slavery, since the same notion and custom prevails both in France and England. Few of your prime ministers, of the last half century even, have escaped the contagion, I believe. The affrays, of which so much is said, and in which rifles, bowie-knives, and pistols are so prominent, occur mostly in the frontier States of the southwest. They are naturally incidental to the condition of society as it exists in many sections of these recently settled countries, and will as naturally cease in due time. Adventurers from the other States and from Europe, as desperate in character as they are in fortune, congregate in these wild regions, jostling one another and often forcing the peaceable and honest into rencontres in self-defence. Slavery has nothing to do with these things. Stability and peace are the first desires of every slaveholder, and the true tendency of the system. It could not possibly exist amid the eternal anarchy and civil broils of the ancient Spanish dominions in America. And for this very reason, domestic slavery has ceased there. So far from encouraging strife, such scenes of riot and bloodshed as have within the few years disgraced our northern cities, and as you have lately witnessed in Birmingham, and Bristol, and Wales, not only never have occurred, but I will venture to say never will occur in our slaveholding States. The only thing that can create a mob (as you might call it) here, is the appearance of an Abolitionist whom the people assemble to chastise. And this is no more of a mob, than a rally of shepherds to chase a wolf out of their pasture would be one.

But we are swindlers and repudiators!—Pennsylvania is not a slave State. A majority of the States which have failed to meet their obligations punctually are non-slaveholding; and two-thirds of the debt said to be repudiated is owned by these States. Many of the States of this Union are heavily encumbered with debt—none so hopelessly as England. Pennsylvania owes $22 for each inhabitant—England $222, counting her paupers. Nor has there been any repudiation definite and final, of a lawful debt, that I am aware of. A few States have failed to pay some instalments of interest. The extraordinary financial difficulties which occurred a few years ago account for it. Time will set all things right again. Every dollar of both principal and interest owed by any State, north or south, will be ultimately paid, *unless the abolition of slavery overwhelm us all in one common ruin.*—But have no other nations failed to pay?—When were the French assignats redeemed? How much interest did your National Bank pay on its immense circulation from 1797 to 1821, during which period that circulation was inconvertible, and for the time *repudiated*? How much of your national debt has been incurred for money borrowed to meet the interest on it, thus avoiding delinquency in detail, by insuring inevitable bankruptcy and repudiation in the end? And what sort of operation was that by which your present ministry recently expunged a handsome amount of that debt by substituting, through a process just not compulsory, one species of security for another? I am well aware that the faults of others do not excuse our own, but when failings are charged to slavery, which are shown to occur to equal extent where it does not exist, surely slavery must be acquitted of the accusation.

It is roundly asserted, that we are not so well educated nor so religious here as elsewhere. I will not go into tedious statistical statements on these subjects. Nor have I, to tell truth, much confidence in the details of what are commonly set forth as statistics. As to education, you will probably admit that slaveholders should have more leisure for mental culture than most people. And I believe it is charged against them that they are peculiarly fond of power, and ambitious of honors. If this be so, as all the power and honors of this country are won mainly by intellectual superiority, it might be fairly presumed that slaveholders would not be neglectful of education.—In proof of the accuracy of this presumption I point you to the facts, that our presidential chair has been occupied for forty-four out of fifty-six years by slaveholders; that another has been recently elected to fill it for four years more, over an opponent who was a slaveholder also, and that in the federal offices and both houses of Congress, considerably more than a due proportion of those acknowledged to stand in the first rank, are from the south. In this arena the intellects of the free and slave States meet in full and fair competition. Nature must have been unusually bountiful to us, or we have been at least reasonably assiduous in the cultivation of such gifts as she has bestowed—unless indeed you refer our superiority to moral qualities, which I am sure *you* will not. More wealthy we are not; nor would mere wealth avail in such rivalry.

The piety of the south is unobtrusive.—We think it proves but little, though it is a confident thing for a man to claim that he stands higher in the estimation of his Creator, and is less a sinner, than his neighbor. If vociferation is to carry the question of religion, the North and probably the Scotch have it. Our sects are few, harmonious, pretty much united among themselves, and pursue their vocations in humble peace. In fact, our professors of religion seem to think—whether correctly or not—that it is their duty "to do good in secret" and to carry their holy comforts to the heart of each individual, without reference to class *or color*, for his special enjoyment, and not with a view to exhibit their zeal before the world. So far as numbers are concerned, I believe our clergymen, when called on to make a showing, have never had occasion to blush, if comparisons were drawn between the free and slave States. And although our presses do not team with controversial pamphlets, nor our pulpits shake with excommunicating thunders, the daily walk of our religious communicants furnishes apparently as little food for gossip as is to be found in most other regions. It may be regarded as a mark of our want of excitability—though that is a quality accredited to us in an eminent degree—that few of the remarkable religious *Isms* of the present day have taken root among us. We have been so irreverent as to laugh at Mormonism and Millerism, which have created such commotions farther north; and modern prophets have no honor in our country. Shakers, Rappists, Dunkers, Socialists, Fourrierists, and the like, keep themselves afar off. Even Puseyism has not yet moved us. You may attribute this to our domestic slavery if you choose. I believe you would do so justly. There is no material here for such characters to operate upon.

But your grand charge is that licentiousness in intercourse between the sexes is a prominent trait in our social system, and that it necessarily arises from slavery. This is a favorite theme with the Abolitionists, male and female. Folios have been written on it. It is a common observation, that there is no subject on which ladies of eminent virtue so much delight to dwell, and on which in especial learned old maids, like Miss Martineau linger with such an insatiable relish. They expose it in the slave States with the most minute observation and endless iteration. Miss Martineau, with peculiar gust, relates a series of scandalous stories which would have made Boccacio jealous of her pen, but which are so ridiculously false as to leave no doubt that some wicked wag, knowing she would write a book has furnished her materials—a game too often played on tourists in this country. The constant recurrence to this topic, and their bitterness in regard to it cannot fail to suggest to even the most charitable mind, that

"Such rage without betrays the fires within."

Nor are their immaculate coadjutors of the other sex, though perhaps less specific in their charges less violent in their denunciations. But recently in your island a clergyman has, at a public meeting, stigmatized the whole slave region as a "brothel." Are these people who thus cast stones beings "without sin?" Or do they only

"Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to."

Alas that David and Solomon should be allowed to repose in peace—that Leo should be almost canonized, and Luther more than sainted—that in our own day courtezans should be formally licensed in Paris, and tenements in London rented for years to women of the town for the benefit of the church with the knowledge of the bishop—and the poor slave States of America alone pounced upon and offered up as a holocaust on the altar of Immaculateness to atone for the abuse of natural instinct by all mankind; and if not actually consumed, at least exposed, anathematized, and held up to scorn, by those who

"write
Or with a Rival's or an Eunich's spite."

But I do not intend to admit that this charge is just or true. Without meaning to profess uncommon modesty, I will say that I wish this topic sould be avoided. I am of opinion, and I doubt not every right-minded man will concur, that the public exposure and discussion of this vice, even to rebuke, invariably does more harm than good; and that if it cannot be checked by instilling pure and virtuous sentiments, it is far worse than useless to attempt to do it by exhibiting its deformities. I may not however pass it over; nor ought I feel any delicacy in examining a question to which the slaveholder is invited and challenged by clergymen and virgins. So far from allowing, then, that licentiousness pervades this region. I broadly assert, and I refer to the records of the courts, to the public press, and to the knowledge of all who have ever lived here, that among our white population, there are fewer cases of divorce, separation, crim con, seduction, rape, and bastardy, than among any other five millions of people on the civilized earth. And this fact I believe will be conceded by the abolitionists of this country themselves. I am almost willing to refer it to them and submit to their decision on it. I would not hesitate to do so if I thought them capable of an impartial judgment on any matter where slavery is in question. But it is said that the licentiousness consists in the constant intercourse between white males and colored females. One of your heavy charges against us has been that we regard and treat these people as brutes; you now charge us with habitually taking them to our bosoms. I will not comment on the inconsistency of these accusations. I will not deny that some intercourse of the sort does take place. Its character and extent, however, are grossly and atrociously exaggerated. No authority divine or human has yet been found sufficient to arrest all such irregularities among men. But it is a known fact, that they are perpetrated here for the most part in the cities. Very few mulattoes are reared on our plantations. In the cities a large proportion of the inhabitants do not own slaves. A still larger proportion are natives of the North or foreigners. They should share, and justly, too, an equal part in this sin with the slaveholders. Facts cannot be ascertained, or I doubt not it would appear that they are the chief offenders. If the truth be otherwise, that persons from abroad have stronger prejudices against the African race than we have. Be this as it may, it is well known that this intercourse is regarded in our society as highly disreputable. If carried on habitually it seriously affects a man's standing, so far as it is known; and he who takes a colored mistress—with rare and extraordinary exceptions—loses caste at once. You will say that *one* exception should damn our whole country. How much less criminal is it to take a white mistress! In your eyes it should be at least an equal offence. Yet look around you at home, from the cottage to the throne, and count how many mistresses are kept in unblushing notoriety, without any loss of caste. Such cases are almost unknown here, and down even to the lowest walks of life it is almost invariably fatal to a man's position and prospects to keep a mistress openly, whether white or black. What Miss Martineau relates of a young man's purchasing a colored concubine from a lady and avowing his designs, is too absurd even for contradiction. No person would dare to allude to such a subject in such a manner to any decent female in this country. If he did, he would be *Lynched*—doubtless with your approbation.

After all, however, the number of the mixed breed in proportion to that of the black is infinitely small, and out of the towns next to nothing. And when it is considered that the African race has been among us for two hundred years, and that those of the mixed breed continually intermarry—often rearing large families—it is a decided proof of our continence that so few comparatively are to be found. Our misfortunes are two fold. From the prolific propagation of these mongrels among themselves, we are liable to be charged by tourists with delinquencies where none have been committed, while where one has been, it cannot be concealed. Color marks indelibly the offence, and reveals it to every eye. Conceive that, even in your virtuous and polished country, if every bastard through all the circles of your social system was thus branded by Nature and known to all, what shocking developments might there not be? How little indignation might your saints have to spare for the licentiousness of the slave region. But I think I may justly conclude, after all the scandalous charges which tea-table gossip and long-gowned hypocrisy have brought against the slaveholders, that a people whose men are proverbially brave, intellectual, and hospitable, and whose women are unaffectedly chaste, devoted to domestic life and happy in it, can neither be degraded nor demoralized, whatever their institution may be.—My decided opinion is, that our system of slavery contributes largely to the development and culture of these high and noble qualities.

In a commercial point of view—which I will not omit—slavery presents some difficulties. As a general rule, I agree it must be admitted, that free labor is cheaper than slave labor. It is a fallacy to suppose that ours is *unpaid labor*. The slave himself must be paid for, and thus his labor is all purchased at once, and for no trifling sum. His price was in the first place paid mostly to your countrymen, and assisted in building up some of those colossal English fortunes since illustrated by patents of nobility, and splendid piles of architecture, stained and cemented, if you like the expression, with the blood of kidnapped innocents;—but loaded with no heavier curse than abolition and its begotten fanatacisms have brought upon your land—some of them fulfilled, some yet to be. But besides the first cost of the slave, he must be fed and well clothed, if not for humanity's sake, that he may do good work, retain health and life, and rear a family to supply his place. When old or sick, he is a clear expense, and so is the helpless portion of his family. No poor law provides for him when unable to work, or bring up his children for our service when we need them. These are all heavy charges on slave labor. Hence, in all countries where the denseness of the population has reduced it to a matter of perfect certainty that labor can be obtained whenever wanted, and the laborer be forced by sheer necessity to hire for the small pittance that will keep soul and body together and rags upon his back while in actual employment, dependent at all other times on alms or poor rates; in all such countries it is found cheaper to pay this pittance than to clothe, feed, nurse, support through childhood and pension in old age, a race of slaves. Indeed the advantage is so great as speedily to compensate for the loss of the value of the slaves. And I have no hesitation in saying that if I could cultivate my lands on these terms I would, without a word, resign my slaves, provided they could be properly disposed of. But the question is, whether free or slave labor is cheapest to us in this country at this time, situated as we are. And it is decided at once by the fact that we cannot avail ourselves of any other than slave labor. We neither have nor can we procure other labor to any extent, or on anything like the terms mentioned. We must therefore content ourselves with our dear labor, under the consoling reflection that what is lost to us, is gained to humanity; and that inasmuch as our slave costs us more than your free man costs you, by so much is he better off. You will promptly say emancipate your slaves, and then you will have free labor on suitable terms. That might be if there were five hundred where there is now one; and the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, was as densely populated as your island. But until that comes to pass no labor can be procured in America on the terms you have it.

While I thus freely admit that to the individual proprietor slave labor is dearer than free, I do not mean to admit it as equally clear that it is dearer to the community and to the State. Though it is certain that the slave is a far greater consumer than your laborer the year round, yet your pauper system is costly and wasteful. Supported by your community at large, it is not administered by your hired agents with that interested care and economy—not to speak of humanity—which mark the management of ours by each proprietor for his non-effectives, and is both more expensive to those who pay, and less beneficial to those who receive its bounties. Besides this, slavery is rapidly filling up our country with a hardy and healthy race peculiarly adapted to our climate and productions, and conferring signal political and social advantages on us as a people, to which I have already referred.

I have yet to reply to the main ground on which you and your coadjutors rely for the overthrow of our system of slavery.—Failing in all your attempts to prove that it is sinful in its nature, immoral in its effects, a political evil, and profitless to those who maintain it, you appeal to the sympathies of mankind, and attempt to rouse the world against us by the most shocking charges of tyranny and cruelty. You begin by a vehement denunciation of "the irresponsible power of one man over his fellow men."—The question of the responsibility of power is a vast one. It is the great political question of modern times. Whole nations divide off upon it and establish different fundamental systems of government. That "responsibility," which to one set of millions seems amply sufficient to check the government to the support of which they devote their lives and fortunes, appears to another set of millions a mere mockery of restraint. And accordingly as the opinions of these millions differ, they honor each other with the epithets of "serfs" or "anarchists." It is ridiculous to introduce such an idea as this into the discussion of mere domestic institution. But since you have introduced it, I deny that the power of the slaveholder in America is "irresponsible." He is responsible to God. He is responsible to the world—a responsibility which Abolitionists do not intend to allow him to evade—and in acknowledgment of which I write you this letter. He is responsible to the community in which he lives, and to the laws under which he enjoys his civil rights. Those laws do not permit him to kill, to maim, or to punish beyond certain limits, or to overtask, or to refuse to feed and clothe his slave. In short, they forbid him to be tyrannical or cruel. If any of these laws have grown obsolete, it is because they are so seldom violated that they are forgotten. You have disinterred one of them from a compilation by some Judge Stroud, of Philadelphia, to stigmatise its inadequate penalties for killing, maiming, &c. Your object appears to be—you can have no other—to produce the impression that it must be often violated on account of its insufficiency. You say as much, and that it marks our estimate of the slave. You forget to state that this law was enacted by *Englishmen*, and only indicates *their* opinion of the reparation due to these offences. Ours is proved by the fact, though perhaps unknown to Judge Stroud or yourself, that we have essentially altered this law; and the murder of a slave has for many years been punishable with death in this State. And so it is, I believe, in most or all the slave States. You seem well aware, however, that laws have been recently passed in all these States making it penal to teach slaves to read. Do you know what occasioned their passage, and renders their stringent enforcement necessary. I can tell you. It was the abolition agitation. If the slave is not allowed to read his Bible, the sin rests upon the Abolitionists; for they stand prepared to furnish him with a key to it, which would make it, not a book of hope, and love, and peace, but of despair, hatred, and blood; which would convert the reader, not into a Christian, but a demon. To preserve him from such a horrid destiny, it is a sacred duty which we owe to slaves, not less than to ourselves, to interpose the most decisive means. If the Catholics deem it wrong to trust the Bible to the hands of ignorance, shall we be excommunicated because we will not give and with it the corrupt and fatal commentaries of the abolitionists, to our slaves? Allow our slaves to read your pamphlets, stimulating them to cut our throats! Can you believe us to be such unspeakable fools?

I do not know that I can subscribe in full to the sentiment so often quoted by the