

EUROPE.

ENGLAND.

FALMOUTH, August 31.

The first session of a reformed Parliament being now terminated, the following questions will be naturally and reasonably asked:—What benefits have the people derived from a measure on which they had based their solid expectations, and how far have the present government, since their accession to office, done their duty with zeal and fidelity? Have they been indifferent to the pledges which they had given, and have they deserted that line of close and severe economy to which they had bound themselves to adhere? Advocating no political partisanship, and only anxious to render our humble services in favour of those measures which appear to be prompted by a sincere purpose of national good, we have no hesitation in expressing our honest and disinterested avowal, that the present ministry, under circumstances of unusual embarrassment, and untried difficulty, have, to a very considerable extent, redeemed the promises they held out to the people; and by their perseverance of principle, have most satisfactorily evinced the determination to give the country all the good which must progressively result from the reform bill.

We are aware that the eager anticipations of some ardent reformers—unmarked by that moderation which should characterise reflecting and considerate men—have been inevitably disappointed, and they have, in consequence, querulously and loudly enough expressed their disappointment. To these we would on the present occasion calmly address ourselves, not in any lengthened series of apologetic argument, but by a direct appeal to their candour and common sense in a simple but brief statistical exposition of some of the important services which the country has experienced from the present administration.

1st, as regards economy and retrenchment.

The estimates for 1833 are £2,728,000 less than the average estimates of 1828, 29, and 30.

The diplomatic expenditure was £178,000; it is now reduced to £127,000; a reduction in these two departments of £199,000.

These great reductions sufficiently show that the present ministry have neither been careless of economy nor indifferent to their pledges and principle. In the course of two sessions reductions have been made of upwards of £3,000,000 by the present government, and had the reformers of the country been told in the fullest spirit of prophecy, that, when they took office, a corresponding amount of taxation could have been reduced without endangering public credit they must have admitted it infinitely exceeded their most sanguine hopes and expectations.

WEST INDIES.

WEST INDIA QUESTION.

(From Blackwood's Magazine.)

Many estimable persons are influenced by the consideration, that the Christian religion has proclaimed the universal equality of mankind, and thence they conclude, that it is not only wrong but impious to retain any portion of our subjects in a state of servitude, or withhold our efforts, from the general emancipation of the species. There never was a more mistaken idea; it springs from a benevolent intention, but it is fitted to devastate society by its consequences. Considerations of religion lead to a directly opposite conclusion; they support, in a manner the most convincing, the arguments for which we contend.

If immediate emancipation from slavery, or its abolition in the early stages of civilization, had been intended by Providence, or deemed consistent with human welfare in those ages, why was it not communicated to mankind at the Tower of Babel, or amidst the thunders of Mount Sinai? Why was a religion, which declared the equality of mankind in the sight of Heaven, and was fitted ultimately to effect the universal abolition of private slavery, by influencing the human heart, reserved for the highest era of ancient civilization, the age of Cicero and Augustus? Why was it cradled, not on the frontiers of civilization, not amidst barbarous tribes, but in the centre of refinement; midway between Egyptian learning and Grecian taste; on the confines of Persian wealth and Roman civilization? Why, when it did come, was it made no part of that religion to emancipate the slaves by any general or sweeping measure; but that change left to be slowly accomplished during centuries, by the silent influence of religion on individual hearts? Why, but because its author knew that the precepts it enjoined, the changes in society it would induce, were suited not to an infant but an advanced stage of civilization; and that the equality it declared could obtain only amidst the safeguards from violence, which an ancient and highly cultivated state of refinement afforded.

Why, if immediate and unconditional emancipation from servitude was intended to follow the Christian religion, did it subsist unmitigated for 1500 years after its introduction? Because the mere promulgation of its precepts is by no means sufficient to warrant such change; because it is necessary not only that churches should be built; and bishops established; and nobles baptized; but savage indolence overcome, and barbaric violence restrained, and rude depravity reformed; because it is necessary, before such a change is introduced, not only that the seed of religion should be scattered over the surface, but its roots struck and its fruits shed through the whole

strata of society; because civil freedom and habits of order, and the desire of civilization, must be long established before it can be either practicable or beneficial; and because these effects require the growth of many hundred years.

Let, then, the friends of speedy Negro emancipation follow the steps of Providence in the past extrication of the human race from the restraints of servitude; let them bring up the West India Negroes to the level of ancient civilization at the period when the gospel was promulgated; and then they have brought the human mind to that stage when the author of nature deemed it practicable to relax the fetters of private slavery. But let them not urge on immediate or early emancipation under circumstances which Supreme Wisdom has in all past ages deemed unfit for its introduction; let them not precipitate those changes in infants, which have been uniformly reserved for the most advanced stages of civilization; or delude themselves with the idea, that they are preparing the pacific reign of the Gospel for the sable inhabitants of the regions of the sun, when they are only hastening the horrors of a Jacquerie, or the flames of St. Domingo.

How is it possible that men in the condition of African Negroes can conduct themselves as freemen?—They see none but their masters, the owners of the estates on which they work, and their overseers, and they expect, of course, that when they become free they are to live like them, and enjoy the same immunity from personal toil. They little know that the free labourer is chained by necessity to severer toil than that which is wrung from them by the lash of the overseer; that they receive no certain provision in sickness or age; are allowed to beg their bread through a land flowing with milk and honey; and frequently perish of want amidst the palaces of heartless opulence. They feel none of the artificial wants, which sweeten to the European labourer his unceasing toil; and are drawn by an irresistible attraction to the indolent habits, the dreaming existence, the listless repose, which constitute the chief enjoyments of savage life. The indulgence of such habits must be utterly destructive of the splendid but imperfectly founded fabric of industry which the West Indies exhibited. If their labouring classes are emancipated before ages of civilization have given them the habits, the wants, the self-command, and the desires of civilized life, society must instantly be resolved into its pristine elements; the smiling plantations, the industrious villages be destroyed; the human race be reduced to a tenth part of its present amount, and a few naked savages gain a precarious subsistence amidst the woods, which will speedily obliterate, under a tropical sun, all traces of former civilization.

This is not mere speculation:—the truth of these principles have been demonstrated in the most signal manner: the experiment of precipitate emancipation has been tried on the largest scale, in the greatest, the richest, and the most flourishing of the West India colonies; conflagration, murder, and ruin, signalized its commencement, and the most frightful dissolution of manners, a rapid decline of population, a total cessation of industry, and general suffering among the unhappy victims of premature freedom, have been its lasting effects. It is this dreadful example which has penetrated the West India proprietors with a sense of the danger which threatens them, and it is in the face of its lamentable effects that the same deplorable system is incessantly pressed forward by a numerous and well meaning, but ignorant and deluded party in this country.

When the French Revolution had spread the same ideas of liberty and equality through its extensive dominions, which have lately penetrated the vein of the British Empire, the situation of the Negroes of St. Domingo excited the immediate attention of the National Assembly. It was strongly urged, that the existence of slavery was an abomination inconsistent with the new-born principles of freedom; that all men were by nature equal, and that it would be a lasting disgrace to the French Legislature, if, after emancipating themselves from the fetters of slavery, they permitted them to hang upon the wretched cultivators of their distant colonies. In vain it was urged, by those practically acquainted with the state of the Negroes, that such a measure would, without benefiting the slaves, involve the whole colony in conflagration, and ultimately occasion the ruin of the very men whom it was intended to benefit. These wise observations were utterly disregarded; a society, with the title of Les Amis des Noirs, was instituted at Paris, under the auspices of Brissot and the leading Revolutionists, which carried on a correspondence with the friends of emancipation in the colony; and at length, overcome by clamour, and subdued by declamation, the Colonial Assembly passed several decrees, tending to the gradual abolition of slavery.

Nothing could exceed the picture of prosperity which the colony exhibited when these well-meant, but fatal innovations, began. The whites were about 40,000; the free men of colour, 30,000; and slaves, above 500,000. Above a thousand plantations, in different parts of the island, nourished its numerous inhabitants in peace and happiness; great part of the most fertile portion of the island was cultivated like a garden, and the slaves indulgently treated, and liberally partaking of the fruits of their labour, exhibited a scene of rural felicity and general happiness, rarely witnessed in the freest and most civilized states. Every evening, the whole slaves of both sexes, were to be seen dancing in festive circles; the sound of mu-

sic, the voice of gladness, was to be heard on all sides, and the traveller, captivated by the spectacle, blessed the beneficent hand of nature, which had provided such means of felicity to the humblest of its family.

But very different was the state of the island, when the demon of revolutionary innovation found an entrance. A variety of laws, tending to the emancipation of the Negroes, were first passed in 1790 and 1791; and at length, on 21st June, 1792, a decree emancipated all the slaves who should take up arms in favour of the Republic.

The consequences of these well-meant but injudicious innovations, are thus described by the contemporary republican historian:—

"The black slaves, greatly more numerous than their masters, had already heard the thrilling words, liberty and equality, addressed to them, rather by political ambition than the spirit of humanity. Insurrections broke out so early as 1789, which were only repressed by measures of severity. The first negroes who revolted, acted in the name of the King. In their savage exclamations they repeated the name of Louis. At length, after great disorders, a general insurrection took place in July 1791; in a few days 15,000 blacks were in arms; they chose two chiefs of the name of Boukman and Auguste. In a single night, the whole habitations in the island were in flames; the sugar works, the coffee plantations, were all destroyed; the whites every where murdered, hunted down, or roasted in the flames; the rich plain of the Cape, so lately smiling in prosperity, exhibited only a vast field of carnage and conflagration.

"When the first fury of the revolt had evaporated, and the whites were all shut up in Cape Town, the blacks spread themselves over the country, and avenged the executions under which they had suffered, by all the refinements of the most frightful cruelty. Both parties exerted themselves with the utmost fury; on the one hand the habit of power, and an inveterate contempt for the Negro race, on the other the passion of revenge, prompted to unheard atrocities.

"The island remained a prey to the most complicated disorders, until June 1792, when the whole that remained of the European population was shut up in the Cape Town. At the first appearance of an attack, a portion of the inhabitants had made their escape by sea; but a large party remained, trusting that they would suffer nothing from a combat in which they had taken no part. No sooner, however, had the republican authorities withdrawn, than the negro troops broke in and finding neither resistance nor restraint, soon commenced the most hideous excesses. Twenty thousand Africans unopposed, mingled with the assailants; every thing was confounded in the indiscriminate massacre; inhabitants, sailors, slaves, were butchered without mercy; the conflagration which soon arose, augmented the horrors of the scene at the sight of its illumination in the heavens, the Negroes in all the neighbouring mountains descended into the plain, and rushed in torrents into the devoted city. Every excess which vengeance, cupidity, brutal insolence, and unbridled passion could produce, was speedily committed; the asylums of young women were forced, their persons violated, and afterwards murdered; shrieking females, weeping children, trembling old men, were to be seen striving to force their way through the brutal throng, to gain the ships, or perishing under the ruins of the burning edifices. In less than twenty-four hours, Cape Town was destroyed, and its inhabitants massacred or dispersed.

When fatigue had caused the disorder and carnage to cease, and the conflagration had ceased for want of anything further to burn, the remaining black inhabitants were organized into battalions, and the slaves, not knowing what to do amidst the general wreck, with their newly acquired freedom, surrendered themselves to obtain provisions. Ships imploring succour were dispatched to the neighbouring islands and the continent; and the remains of a flourishing colony resembled a horde cast by shipwreck on a desert shore.

This frightful catastrophe was the first signal of the abolition of slavery by the partial emancipation of the Negroes. This idea of the liberation of the Negroes had long been spread in France and the colonies; the dreams of the philanthropist had penetrated even to the workshops of the slaves. The opposition of the whites and the men of colour, speedily accelerated the evil; they mutually freed the slaves who were to be enrolled to combat each other; and enfranchisement was always the reward to which they looked forward, as the result of their revolt. This was declared universal, by a decree of the commissioners of France, on the 21st June, 1793, which announced that all the Negroes who took up arms for the Republic, should receive their freedom. Such were the effects of this great measure, dictated by philanthropy, but carried into execution without regard to the capacity of those for whom it was intended. The fatal gift involved in one promiscuous ruin the slaves and their oppressors.

Nor has the subsequent fate of this once flourishing colony been less calamitous. For ten years afterwards its history was such a succession of civil wars, disasters, and confusion, that the most patient historical research can hardly trace the thread of the calamities. Their independence has been established; but with it they have relapsed into a state of degradation, combining the indolence and reck-

* Humboldt, Voyages, IX. 232.

lessness of savage, with the vices and the corruptions of civilized life. Hardly caring to cultivate the ground, they wander through the woods, gaining a precarious subsistence by shooting and ensnaring animals: from being the greatest sugar island in the Gulf of Mexico, St. Domingo is reduced to the necessity of importing both sugar and subsistence; popularity has rapidly declined; and such is the universal dissolution of manners, as to threaten, if such an event were possible, at no distant period, its entire destruction. To all appearance, this beautiful island in half a century will be tenanted only by naked savages, more vicious and degraded, but not superior in civilization or improvement to the Indians who first beheld the sails of Columbus.

These facts are worthy of the most serious consideration. They demonstrate, that human nature is the same in the torrid as in the temperate zone; in the sable breast of the African Negro, as in the serfs of France, or the boors of Russia. An individual does not become a man at six years of age; if we give to childhood the indulgence or freedom of manhood, a life of unbridled passion, or useless indolence, may with certainty be anticipated. It denotes, may with certainty be anticipated, that all the great changes of nature are effected by slow degrees, and imperceptible gradations; that the accumulation of innumerable rills; empires, which are to subsist for ages, slowly arise out of the struggles and hardships of infant existence. Freedom, the greatest gift of nature, can neither be appreciated nor enjoyed for a very long period in the progress of civilization; if suddenly bestowed on an enslaved population, it tears society in pieces, and subjects men to the worst of tyrannies, the tyranny of their own passions and vices. If we would consult the interests of the slaves themselves, if we would save them from the dominion of the most frightful vices, if we would preserve their race from extermination, we must admit them, by slow degrees, and imperceptible gradations, to the advantages and the institution of freedom. Centuries must elapse before it can be introduced without the certainty of destruction to the slave population. When we see a middling class formed, which connects the upper and the lower classes, the proprietor and the Negro; when we behold justice, regularly, impartially, and formally administered; when we see artificial wants prevalent among the poor, and industry pursued for its own sake, and from a sense of the blessings with which it is attended, and a legal provision for the labouring classes established, then, and not till then, the bonds of slavery may be abolished. When the period arrives, however, no efforts of fanaticism, no struggles of a party, will be required for Negro emancipation; the interests of the owners themselves will lead, as in the feudal ages, to the gradual enfranchisement of the poor; the change will be so gradual as to be imperceptible, and the child will become a man without being sensible of the relaxation of the parental authority.

The time has now arrived, when good intentions will not justify insane actions; nor men be permitted to toss about firebrands, and say it was in sport.—When men mingle in political concerns, we require from them not only benevolent wishes, but rational conduct and information on the subjects which they agitate; we hold it no excuse for his ignorance, that he sacrificed his patient by his ignorance, that he spread of knowledge has effected any thing, it should distrust of their opinions, if not fortified by the lessons of experience; and it must prove worse than useless, if it does not inspire a rooted aversion for every project which is not founded on the deductions of history, and a determination to resist every innovation which does not imitate the gradual changes of nature.

[Happy condition of the slaves as compared with free persons in some other countries.]

From Mr. McQueen's Letter to Blackwood's Magazine.

The general situation of the slave population may, however, be more fully and correctly ascertained from the following account, drawn up by the Rev. Thomas Alexander M'Queen, of his own estate, Grand Sable, in the island of St. Vincent. It discloses at one view, and in a correct and masterly manner, the whole economy of a sugar estate, and the faithful delineation of the negro character. It draws, in a bird's-eye view, the general situation and condition of the slave population in the British Colonies, clearly before the enquirer. The crop of Grand Sable was, in 1830, 450 large hogsheads of sugar, and 32,000 gallons of rum and molasses, and the number of slaves 698, making an increase from 592, in 1820, to the number mentioned in 1830.

"Each family have a cottage, with a garden attached to it, a yard piece in the ground appropriated to fallow, and at the back of the estate as much provision ground as they choose to cultivate. In their gardens or grounds they grow plantains, bananas, tannias, yams, sweet potatoes, indian corn, peas, beans, shallots, thyme, pepper, ochros, purslane, callila, cassia, arrowroot, limes, lemons, citrons, melons, pine-apples, coffee, cocoa, bread-fruit, alligator pears, &c. &c.; and of the bread-fruit in addition to these in their own grounds, we have many hundreds planted in every direction, some the size of a large oak or ash tree, and all bearing abundantly previously to the hurricane. The climate being a perpetual summer, they have three crops annually of many descriptions of provisions, such as corn, potatoes, beans, peas, &c., and are not, like the English peasant, confined to one crop of corn, potatoes, and garden vegetables yearly. In addition to the provisions already noticed, they have their pigs, goats, fowls, and guinea birds, and my table is usually supplied with pork purchased from them. All their surplus produce they are allowed to send to town in the drogher or little schooner which is employed to bring up our supplies, and on these occasions several persons are permitted to go down to dispose of their provisions. The money they obtain is usually laid out in finery, most of our black ladies have necklaces and earrings, for which the giving many dollars; and which, after the lapse of a year or two, as the fashion changes, they sell at a lower price, and buy others of a newer make and more fashionable form. Every year they receive two suits of clothes, with thread, tape, and needles to make them with; and if they are old people, and incapable of making them up, or have large families, sempstresses are employed to make them up free of expense. Every week they have an allowance of salt fish, frequently of salt, and some who have young children, flour and sugar in addition. When at work in the field, they are allowed as beverage, a mixture of molasses and water, resembling treacle beer. If the work is somewhat

* Mackenzie's St. Domingo.

harder, rum once a-day in addition, and on some particular occasions twice; and should the weather prove showery, a sort of punch, of which they are very fond. During crop they are permitted to eat freely of the ripe cane, and to drink the expressed juice or hot liquor, a sweet nourishing syrup, from the coppers; and the children at this season have each a mug of cocoa well sweetened with sugar, in addition to their own breakfast. The men, and those women who are either neither pregnant nor nurses, are required to be at work till sun down, about the same hour in the evening, having half an hour allowed for breakfast, which they usually contrive to make three quarters, and two full hours to rest at noon, or if they choose to work their noon, to break off at four o'clock, so that they work about nine and a half hours per diem. Out of crop they have every Thursday, in addition to their Sunday. At Easter they have three holidays, a day also when their yam ground is allotted, a holiday on their master's birth day, a holiday when crop is over, with three days at Christmas, and the following afternoon, if they have assembled regularly at work, the morning after the Christmas holidays. On all these occasions, with the exception of the day when their yam piece is allotted, the men receive a pint of rum, and the women a pint of shrub, and the children in proportion, with the addition of a fat ox being killed, and rice, pork, and sugar distributed amongst them. Their gaiety at these times, and the smartness of their attire, amounting in some cases to elegance, from their tasteful arrangements of even a profusion of ornaments, ought to convince the most prejudiced mind, that they have a good deal of spare money to lay out in such luxuries, and that, therefore, the necessities of life are, or may be, easily obtained by them.

"The privileges of the woman are so many and so various, that it may be satisfactory to enumerate them distinctly and separately.—Women who have declared themselves pregnant, are almost immediately exempted from their accustomed work, and put to work of a lighter description, to which they attend very irregularly, employing themselves, with hardly an exception, for their own benefit for at least six months before their confinement. On giving birth to their infant, they receive a present from their mistress of baby-linen, consisting of two shirts, two caps, with some old linen; and from their master a blanket, one yard flannel, a few pins, six pounds salt fish, six pounds sugar, two bottles rum, and one bottle of oil for a lamp. During their confinement they are regularly attended by a nurse for the first three weeks, which, in most cases, is extended to a month, and if the mother is at all weak and delicate at the expiration of that time, she is continued longer. At the end of six weeks, if the mother is quite well, she receives notice to return to her work again, which, however, is seldom either complied with or exacted for a week or ten days afterwards. She is then set to light work of one kind or other for a month or six weeks longer, after which she usually resumes her former work. If her child survives three weeks, the midwife and nurse receive \$3 sterling each; if it attains the age of fifteen months, the mother receives £2. 9. 6d. currency; and on the child going to the vine gang, which is usually at six or seven years, and whose employment is merely to collect a few vines from the bushes for the pigs, the mother receives in addition 16s. 6d. These sums are usually termed the child's ten dollars. Women with only one or two children generally work six and a half hours a day; those with three or four children work five hours a day, and have one day a week out of crop, and generally an afternoon in crop, in addition to the Sunday; those with five children work on an average five hours a day, and out of crop, and have two whole days a week in addition to their Sunday; lastly, those who have six or more children (of which description we have several upon this estate) are privileged and exempt by their master, from all labour on his estate."

"With regard to the privileges and exemptions from work of the mothers of families amongst the negroes. I could not, says that amiable man, 'help contrasting it with what has frequently come under my own observation at home. To select one instance out of a multiplicity of examples, I will remember the mother of ten children in my parish of Bolton near York, who continued at work in the harvest field up to the very evening previous to her confinement which took place early next morning; and who, when I visited her to baptize her infant, expressed her concern that she was losing so much valuable time at so important a season, and at the expiration of the third week entreated and obtained my consent to her being churched at that early period, to enable her to resume the same hard work in the harvest field with her family. How many, too, have I not seen, at the end of the second or third day, without nurse or medical attendant, busied in their domestic occupations, and even washing for their families. Another poor creature, whom, contrary to my usual practice, I attended for the purpose of churching in her own house, because she was too delicate to move out of the house, which she thought she could not do with propriety until she first returned thanks for her deliverance, after the ceremony was over, placed in my hand the accustomed fee of one shilling, consisting entirely of pence and halfpence, and as I returned it I saw the tear of gratitude start to her eye, whilst with convulsive lip she confessed to me that it was the last shilling she had in the world, and that it had been scraped together with difficulty for this sacred occasion."

AFRICA.

From the Liberia Herald of August 5th, for which we are indebted to the Editor's politeness, we learn that an increasing and very gratifying interest is apparently felt in a point of vital moment to the Colony—its Education. A free school for the benefit of recaptured Africans has been in successful operation for some weeks under the care of Rev. James Eden. Mr. Savage, also who had, recently arrived as agent for the emigrants by the Ajax from New Orleans, was making arrangements to establish a manual Labour School at Millsburg, and the Editor thinks he may have the credit of establishing the first institution of this kind in Africa. He dwells also with great apparent pleasure, on the project of the Massachusetts Free School, which he hopes will be vigorously pursued.

To illustrate the business of that Colony we make an extract:

Commission Business.—The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public, that he has built on Water street, No 320, a large stone warehouse, convenient to the water's edge, where he intends carrying on the commission business; and is now ready to accept of any vessel or vessels, whose masters wish to have their business done. The said house is quite convenient for storing tobacco, flour, beef,