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I.

Slave Trade.

P A P E R S

RELATING TO

CAPTURED NEGROES:

RETURN to an Address of The Honourable House of Commons,
dated 12th March 1827;—*for*

Copy of any further REPORTS made to His Majesty's Government by
Thomas Moody, Esq. and *John Dougan, Esq.* or either of them, or by any
other Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the Slaves
condemned to the Crown, in the different Colonies belonging to His
Majesty, under the Acts abolishing the Slave Trade;—*VIZ.*

MR. GANNON'S REPORT

On the State and Condition of Apprenticed Africans
AT ANTIGUA.

Colonial Department, }
Downing-Street, 16th May 1827. }

R. J. WILMOT HORTON.

[*N. B.*—An Appendix to this Report was ordered to be printed 29 June; N^o 553.]

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
17 May 1827.

London, 21st July 1826.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to enclose my Report upon the State and Condition of the Apprenticed *Africans* and other Captured Negroes residing in the Island of *Antigua*, who have been liberated from Slavery under the Acts of Parliament for abolishing the Slave Trade.

I have to regret that this duty has not been sooner performed ; but, as the delay which has taken place was produced by circumstances which I could not have calculated upon, I shall therefore hope for your indulgence.

You will find, I trust, that the information I submit to you, was collected with care ; and that no inferences have been made unsupported by facts.

It will be unnecessary for me to add, that I have endeavoured faithfully to execute the business I had undertaken. If I were not free from party feeling, and from every local interest that could influence my views, I would not have undertaken the duties that were assigned to me—nor would you, Sir, have recommended me as a proper person for such an office.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient and
most humble Servant,

(signed) J. P. GANNON.

R. J. Wilmot Horton, Esq.
Under Secretary of State for Colonies & War,
&c. &c. &c.

R E P O R T.

IN consequence of an Address presented to His Majesty by the House of Commons, in the Session of 1821, Letters Patent, dated 6th of November 1821, were passed under the Great Seal, appointing Commissioners "to proceed to the British Colonies in the West Indies and South America, to inquire into and ascertain the numbers, names, situations and circumstances of all Africans liberated from slavery under the provisions of any of the Acts of Parliament for abolishing the Slave Trade, and which had at any time been apprenticed, or entered or enlisted into His Majesty's land or sea service and afterwards discharged in the West Indies or on the said continent of South America, or which had been liberated there without having been so apprenticed, entered or enlisted;—and to report to His Majesty the information they should collect, together with their opinion thereupon—"

On the 30th of May 1823, I had the honour to be appointed to one of the vacancies which had taken place at that time in the Commission; and shortly after, upon receiving Earl Bathurst's instructions, I proceeded to the West Indies.

The Inquiry into the condition of the captured Africans of Tortola had been concluded by the former Commissioners before I arrived there; and their separate Reports have since been submitted to the Secretary of State, one dated 20th December 1823, the other 2d March 1825.

The business in the Islands of St. Christopher, Nevis and Antigua, successively, was executed while I was engaged in the Commission; and the information collected in the two former Colonies was reported to the Secretary of State, from the West Indies, on the 24th of October 1823, and 13th February 1824.

The following REPORT relates to the state and condition of the liberated Negroes condemned under the Abolition Acts in the Vice Admiralty Court of Antigua.

THE number of African and Creole Negroes condemned to His Majesty in the Vice Admiralty Court of Antigua, from the 1st of May 1807 (when the Abolition Act, 47th Geo. 3, came into operation) to the month of September 1824, amounted, according to the documents, &c. laid before the Commission, to 1,535.

1st CLASS.

OF this number there were captured at sea, by Commanders and Officers of His Majesty's ships of war, 1,388; viz.

- 211 On board the Spanish schooner, San Jose y Anemas, condemned 22d March 1811.
- 52 On board the Spanish schooner, El dos de Mayo, condemned 7th December 1813.
- 402 On board the Spanish brig, Carlos, condemned 11th April 1814.
- 512 On board the French ship, La Belle, condemned 3d October 1815.
- 211 On board the French brig, Hermione, condemned 24th October 1815.

1,388

2d CLASS.

SEIZED on board different vessels in the port of Antigua, by Officers of His Majesty's Customs, as forfeited under the Abolition Acts; viz.

- 128 On board the French brig, Louise, condemned 21st October 1820.
- 1 On board the schooner Alexandriana.
- 3 On board the schooner, Ocean, condemned January 1824.
- 1 On board the schooner, Alley, condemned 12th July 1824.
- 2 On board the schooner, Matchless, condemned 31st July 1824.
- 2 On board the schooner, Eagle, condemned 1824.

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3d CLASS.

SEIZED ON shore, by Officers of the Customs, as forfeited under the Abolition Acts, 10.

The entire number, therefore, condemned to His Majesty in the Vice Admiralty Court of Antigua, since the abolition of the Slave Trade, amounts, according to all the information which the Commission was able to obtain there,* to 1,535.

4th CLASS.

IF to this be added 9, the number of Apprentices who accompanied their masters or mistresses to Antigua from other colonies, the entire number to be accounted for amounts to 1,544.

ORIGINAL DISPOSAL.

CLASS I.

IT appears from Returns made to the Colonial Department by Collectors of the Customs, and printed by Order of the House of Commons in 1821, that, of the number (1,388) contained in this Class:—

- 1,017 Were taken into the Army, viz. 784 males and 233 females; some of these females accompanying the male Africans who were their husbands, the others going as servants in the families of the officers, &c.
- 86 Died previously to the selection for the army, or the disposal by apprenticing, (according to Collectors' accounts in the printed returns.)
- 285 Placed out with masters or mistresses, the greater number of whom were indentured as apprentices, (according to Collectors' accounts in the printed returns).

1,388

CLASS II.

OF the number (137) contained in this Class,

- 60 (Females of the Brig Louise) were sent to Trinidad, conformably to an order from Government.
- 29 (Females of the Brig Louise) were retained at Antigua, and placed out as apprentices; but with the exception of two, were not indentured. 21 of these were produced before the Commission.
- 39 Males of the Brig Louise, apprenticed at Antigua, of whom 27 were produced before the Commission.
- 8 Males (of different vessels) not apprenticed since condemnation in 1824, but remained in the care and employment of the Collector.
- 1 Female of Schooner Alexandriana, indentured.

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CLASS

* With a view to compare the Returns made from the Custom House at Antigua with the Records of the Vice Admiralty Court of that island, and to obtain the most accurate information that was possible upon the subject, a letter was addressed to the Registrar, requesting him to furnish the Commission with Returns of the number and names of Vessels, and of the number of Negroes, condemned in the said court under the Acts for abolishing the Slave Trade. The Registrar made a Return in compliance with this requisition, which proved to be so defective, that it was sent back, and he was requested to amend it, by making out a more correct account of the number that had been condemned. This, however, remained undone, and I am disposed to conclude that he could not find, among the papers in his office, the information sought for.

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CLASS III.

Africans
at Antigua.

OF the 10 contained in this Class, 4 had been indentured ; the other 6 were not indentured.

RECAPITULATION.

	Males.	Females.	TOTAL.
Taken into the army - - - -	784	233	1,017
Died previously to the selection for the army, or the disposal by apprenticing -	-	-	86
Sent to Trinidad, after condemnation in the Vice Admiralty Court - - - -	-	60	60
			1,163
Indentured as Apprentices, or placed so without Indentures - - - - -		358	372
Never apprenticed, but remained in charge of the Collector since condemnation in the Vice Admiralty Court, or worked for their own support - -		14	
			1,535
253 were examined before the Commission ; but 9 of these were Apprentices, who had been brought to Antigua from other colonies - - - -			244
Not produced ; nor accounted for by affidavits, declarations, or certificates, at the time the Commission was recalled from Antigua - - - -			128
			372

The number of Captured Negroes examined before the Commissioners amounted to 253. This, with the exception of some liberated Africans attached to the army at Antigua as soldiers and military labourers, and two African apprentices who were in confinement, gives the entire number accounted for, to the Commission, as living in that Island in September 1824.

The condition of those who were taken into the army can be ascertained only in the different Colonies where they now reside. This branch of the inquiry, however, so far as regards the males, will stand least in need of anxious investigation. It is not to be apprehended that persons, who had lived for some time as British soldiers, would afterwards lose sight of their privileges, or relapse into a state of slavery.

With respect to the Africans reported upon (in the Returns made to Parliament, and printed in 1821) as having died after the apprenticing, as well as those who have died since the above-mentioned Returns were made ; as also, those Africans said to be absent from the island, but whose deaths or absence had not been accounted for to the Commission by affidavits, declarations or certificates ; it may be necessary to state here, that the inquiry into the particulars of the fate of these persons, and the circumstances of the deaths, had but commenced when Earl Bathurst's letter arrived, recalling the Commission from Antigua.

This duty, therefore, remains to be performed when the new Commission can proceed to that colony ; and although it must be considered as a highly important part of the inquiry, it is, however, such as will require but little of the time or labour of the Commission, provided the individuals under whose care the Africans had been placed will promptly come forward and do their duty by accounting for them. But if, on the other hand, it should be deemed expedient to obtain information upon this subject before the return of the Commission from Berbice and the Windward Islands ; in this case, the Governor of Antigua, and the Judge of the Vice Admiralty Court, might be instructed to furnish a special Return upon the subject to His Majesty's Government.

The

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The state and condition of the 253 liberated Negroes who were examined before the Commissioners, being recorded in detail in the official Schedules of Examinations, it is my duty here to present a concise view of the subject, and afterwards to submit to you such observations as I can offer upon the circumstances which appear to me of importance in regard to their future condition and settlement. For explanation (when it should be necessary) of particular cases, to which in the course of my Report I shall have occasion to advert, I will beg leave to refer to the accompanying transcript of the Schedules of Examinations.

Of the 253 adult Negroes examined before the Commission, 112 were males, and 141 females; 53 of these females had 87 children living, viz. 41 boys and 46 girls.

It appeared from the indentures produced to the Commission, and, in default of indentures, from the printed Parliamentary Return, that 50 of the males had been apprenticed as tradesmen; 16 as sailors and fishermen; and 28 as domestic servants, cooks, grooms, &c.

State of Proficiency
in Trades or Em-
ployments.

From the examinations it was collected, that only 25 had been taught trades, that 28 had been instructed in the business of sailors and fishermen; the rest had been employed as domestics, and in services of various kinds.

The actual employments, however, of these persons, at the period of the examinations, may be computed, as well as could be collected under all the circumstances (where in many instances the same African was found to combine in his own person the various qualifications and to perform the different functions of sailor, groom, cook, and waiter at table; or cooper, cook, &c.; or mason, cook and porter, &c.; or fisherman, wood-cutter, porter and drudge,) to be nearly as follows:

- 15 Tradesmen, or Handicraftsmen.
- 14 Sailors and Fishermen.
- 41 Domestic Servants.
- 32 Porters, Drudges, &c.

Hence it will be seen, that the engagements entered into with respect to trades, were generally matters of form rather than contracts made with a *bona fide* intention to fulfil the terms thereof. This deviation, however, from the strict line of duty on the part of the master, did not in every case lead to the disadvantage of the apprentice; for there were some, whose good fortune had destined them to the care of kind and generous employers, who had them instructed in trades, although they were originally apprenticed only as *domestics*; while others there were who appeared to have been taught trades of a more useful description, and which were more likely to ensure future employment and support, than those which had been specified in the original indenture: such cases, indeed, were comparatively few, but they serve however to redeem and in some degree to make amends for the too general omission or neglect of duty which had taken place in the instruction and treatment of these people. Whatever abuses may have happened in their treatment, it could serve no useful purpose now to remark upon them in a merely retrospective way; any observations, therefore, which would only convey reproach to one party, without presenting any thing remedial for the other, I do not conceive it my duty to offer.

The actual condition of the Apprentices (in 1824,) their proficiency in trades, state of moral and religious improvement, and general character, as a class of persons who are to live by their own labour and industry as free members of the colonial community—these, and every other consideration, abstract and relative, that could assist in showing what materials are presented in this collection of human beings, to enable His Majesty's Government to carry forward to completion the benevolent intentions of the law, are what I conceive to be the proper subject of my Report.

Of the entire number (253) examined before the Commission—

- 181, viz. 78 males and 103 females, were still living as Apprentices.
- 10 were permitted to work for their own support, independent of masters or mistresses; 4 of these had received certificates of their free condition.
- 62, viz. 29 males and 33 females, besides 27 children, were maintained by the Collector, at the expense of His Majesty's Government.

MR. GANNON'S REPORT ON APPRENTICED AFRICANS. 7

Of the 62 adult Negroes upon the Collector's hospital list, 45 were in good health, and employed in various services about the Custom-Houses. Several of these appeared to me to be the most active, intelligent, and useful persons among the Africans. Africans at Antigua.

Upon the subject of this Hospital establishment, some observations will be submitted in the proper place.

The Table which I have inserted in the Appendix (A.) to this Report, will, I hope, present a tolerably correct return of the particular trades and employments of the Apprentices of both sexes. To the Analysis there exhibited, I beg to refer for a concise statement of the actual employments of the Africans, comparatively with those originally specified in the indentures, and those in which they have been chiefly exercised.*

It will be seen, by referring to the Evidence given before the Commissioners, that,—of the 253 adults examined, there were not more than 24 whose ability to earn a livelihood appeared at all doubtful.

This evidence, and every relative circumstance, I have considered and compared with much care and attention, with a view to be enabled to lay before you as accurately as I could, the actual state and condition of the Apprentices. I shall therefore venture to state here, *generally*. (and this statement you will, I trust, find to be fully borne out by the facts and cases which in the sequel I shall submit to you) that 229 of the Africans, so far as personal ability is concerned, were fully capable of earning their own support, and that upwards of 100 of these were persons whose proficiency and whose characters were of such a description, that no well grounded apprehension need be entertained as to their being able to find employment in Antigua, in their respective capacities, and eventually to become a useful addition to the free community. The condition of some of the females, indeed, who are incumbered with children, but more especially those females who may have a *young* offspring to support at the expiration of their fourteen years' servitude, is that, which manifestly presents the greatest difficulty, and, comparatively speaking, the only real grounds of anxiety as to their future condition and welfare. These persons and a few others, males and females, who happen to be incapacitated by bodily infirmity from the more laborious kinds of service, or who should be deficient in such acquirements as would render them profitable servants to their employers,—such individuals would furnish grounds of solicitude for their future condition, unless the benevolent hand of Government were held out for their protection. But as to those Africans who have been taught such useful handicraft trades as that of cooper, carpenter, blacksmith, &c. and those who have been employed in the business of sailor, an occupation equally useful and productive in insular situations,—this class of the Apprentices, and I will add, but not with equal confidence, some of those also who have been brought up as domestics, females as well as males, could not fail to find employment in a colony which presents such resources as Antigua,—provided no impediments were to be thrown in their way by party feelings or the interested views of individuals.

With respect to the evidence from which these inferences are deduced, and the authenticity of the facts upon which the opinions I shall have the honour to submit to you are founded, I beg to state that this part of the subject will be explained in its proper place, and I hope satisfactorily.

From the accounts given by the different parties at the examinations, it was collected that the number of adults baptized was 189, viz. 78 males and 111 females. Religious and Moral condition.

* The Table referred to, will show :—

- 1st. The trades or employments to which the Africans were apprenticed.
- 2d. The trades or employments in which they appear to have been chiefly instructed, and by which they would be able to earn a livelihood hereafter, if left to their own exertions.
- 3d. The actual occupations of the Africans (at the period of the examinations) and by inference therefrom, the kinds of services then mostly required from them in the colony.

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females. It appeared, however, that 209 were attendants at public worship, some regularly, others seldom:

24	attended divine service at the Church of England.
27	- - - - - the Methodist Chapel.
153	- - - - - the Moravians.

Upon the subject of Religious Instruction, I regret that it is not in my power to report as favourably as might have been hoped and expected from the consideration, that, of all His Majesty's West Indian Colonies, there is none in which more opportunities are afforded for religious improvement, to this and to every other class of persons, bond or free, than are presented by the different ministers of religion in the island of Antigua.

With a view to obtain as accurate information as was practicable upon this important and interesting branch of the inquiry, the rule I observed in examining the Africans under this head, was to put a few simple questions, which would elicit from the individuals what conceptions they entertained as to the existence of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments. A few appeared to me to have received sensible impressions as to these points; and of those the greater number were females. Some others there were who explained their perceptions of the difference between moral good and evil, and could state in a confused and general way the hopes and fears that should be felt as to the consequences of a well or ill spent life. Of this class of religious proficients, there was a considerable number. But there were also a great many who did not appear to have received any religious instruction whatever;* their minds seemed to be as dark and unenlightened (so far as religious knowledge was concerned) as if they had been imported from Africa only the day before. And it is not undeserving remark, that the state of religious improvement among the Africans was found, in many instances, to be in the inverse ratio of the lengths of time that the individuals had resided in the colony; but was always, however, directly proportional to the degrees of attention that had been paid to their instruction, and to the facilities afforded them for attending divine service. Those who appeared most advanced in religious knowledge and civilization I observed to be the apprentices of liberal minded persons of the *middle* class, whose circumstances were sufficiently affluent to enable them to maintain their servants and dependents comfortably, at the same time that their pursuits and station in life were not of such a description as would necessarily remove their working people from frequent intercourse with them in the way of their businesses.† It is with such masters and mistresses that apprentices are most likely to have an opportunity of learning some handicraft trade, or of becoming expert in some department of industry, which would insure future employment and support; and it is in such situations also that they are most likely to improve in morals and in civilization. These advantages are not so certain when the Africans are apprenticed to persons of the higher condition and greater affluence; for, though in the latter case little apprehension need be entertained for the physical comforts of the apprentices, yet it may reasonably be expected that their moral condition will not be equally attended to, as this must of necessity depend upon the conduct exercised towards them by the "head man" or person under whose direction they are placed by the master, and upon the examples of their fellow servants or companions in labour.

With respect to those ill fated Apprentices who are assigned to the lowest class of White employers, hard indeed is their lot. This is the true school of adversity
for

* It is necessary to observe, with reference to the subject of religious instruction, that those Africans, whose minds had received even these slight impressions of first principles, as above mentioned, are accounted in the Schedules of Examinations, under the head, *Religion*, as "*instructed*;" but this must be considered only in a relative sense and comparatively with the others, who seemed not to have received the smallest tincture of religious information.

† A few of the female Africans, who had been apprenticed to good and amiable women of this class, were well instructed in religion, and bore the character of well-behaved and useful servants; and such apprentices, I observed, almost universally spoke in terms of gratitude and affection of their mistresses. It afforded particular gratification at the examinations of these persons, that the children of female apprentices thus situated showed they had been generously treated; their young minds were evidently well instructed; and they appeared to have been attended to in every respect.

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for the captured Negro. The African, who is devoted to the service of one of these masters or mistresses, for the space of 14 years, may be denominated, for distinction sake, "liberated," but the kind of emancipation that has fallen to *his lot*,—the condition of the individual so disposed of, may truly be considered the reverse of a state of freedom. The needy master has received the apprentice only for the purpose of extracting from him the means of subsistence for himself; and, conformably to his views, he makes the most of the term of years, or interest, he has obtained in the African, without much concern as to the latter's present comforts or future welfare.

Africans
at Antigua.

It is among this class of employers that instances of cruelty are apt to be met with. Here it is that the poor Negro's condition is often truly pitiable—for if the individual survives the fourteen years servitude, he or she will have then to seek a livelihood in the way in which alone it is probable they have been hitherto exercised, namely, as hired drudges; a mode of existence, for which perhaps their age and strength are now but ill adapted.

As the religious and moral condition of the African Apprentices is a branch of the inquiry upon which information from third parties was in many instances necessary, in order to be able to form a satisfactory opinion upon the subject, circular letters were addressed by the Commission to the Ministers of religion. The following brief account will afford a general view of the religious and moral state of the Africans, as contained in the Reports made to the Commission by the Ministers of religion. A copy of their communications is given in full in the appendix (B.)

According to the returns obtained from different Ministers of religion, and one received from the Collector of the Customs, the number of adults baptized was 174; which differs from the numbers given in the Schedules by a deficit of 13. This variance, however, is easily explained, for, upon recurring to my memoranda, I find no return from the Wesleyan Missionaries, and I therefore conclude that no circular was forwarded to them at the time that the other ministers of religion were addressed upon the subject. But, by what inadvertency this could have happened, I am at this time unable to account.

Of the above number, 102 had been baptized by Clergymen of the Church of England, and 72 by the Moravian Missionaries.*

The number recognized in the returns of the clergymen, as attendants at divine service, is considerably less than that stated by the parties at examinations. These discrepancies, however, if they were of any importance, are adequately explained by the following circumstances; 1st, That the Moravian Missionaries returned the number of those only who were regular attendants at their place of worship; whereas many of the Africans occasionally went to the Moravian chapel as hearers, without being considered as particularly belonging to that religious sect; 2dly, The omission on the part of the Rector of Saint John to furnish the information requested from him, by the circular letter of the Commissioners, rendered it necessary for the latter to acquiesce in the information given in the statements of the parties themselves, as to what might be the number who attended divine service at the parish church; † and, 3dly, The inadvertency already alluded to,

either

* Although the number of adult Africans baptized by the Moravians were so few, comparatively, yet the great body of the Africans attend the Moravians' chapel, either as members or as hearers. The Moravians require a higher degree of preparation for baptism, than seems to be required by the other ministers of religion. See Mr. Richter's evidence, in pages 40—41 of the Schedules, respecting his own apprentices.

† By referring to the Appendix (C.) it will be seen, that among the items in the Collector's Return of Disbursements on account of the Africans, for the quarter ending Jan. 1824, there is a charge of £.29. 14. paid to the Reverend S. Harman (rector of St. John) for christening 66 Africans. It appeared strange, therefore, and perhaps deserves here to be remarked, that the Rev. Mr. Harman was the only minister of religion in Antigua who declined to answer the circular letter of the Commissioners, and to furnish the information they required.

Most of the 66 persons thus admitted to baptism in the year 1823, had been living in Antigua since the years 1811 and 1814; but, notwithstanding this, they appeared before the Commission in 1824 to be as devoid of religious instruction, as if they had but lately arrived from Africa; some of them did not even know the meaning of the word Baptism, nor the name of the clergyman by whom they had been baptized.

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either on my part, or that of the Secretary, to obtain a return from the Wesleyan Missionaries at the time that the circulars were addressed to the other ministers of religion in Antigua. That these gentlemen (the Wesleyan Missionaries) would most willingly have furnished the requested returns, there cannot indeed be any doubt entertained.

If the too general deficiency of religious instruction among the African Apprentices would excite in the religious mind feelings of commiseration, upon the mere abstract view of the matter, without any regard to worldly considerations: it must of course, be regretted by those who have to consider the subject in an additional sense, also, that a more favourable report cannot be presented upon this important point, which, as it is deemed the only foundation for real happiness in the individual, so must it necessarily be the preliminary to every substantial improvement in his civil and social condition. It is to this want of religious instruction, perhaps, rather than any other cause, that the too general neglect of regular marriage is to be ascribed, which is allowed among those African Apprentices who have formed attachments as husbands or wives. If the absence of instruction were not to be pleaded as a present obstacle to the ordinance of marriage among these persons, (however bad the excuse may be) such a heathenish state of relationship as they now generally live in, however it may have been permitted upon large plantations among the slaves, and however tolerated by custom among the Negroes of the West Indies in general, would, notwithstanding, in the case of these captured Africans, deserve every censure and reprobation. Indeed, when such connexions are formed by the liberated Africans with slaves, the matter must of necessity be differently judged of, and the evil must often be left without remedy; for, it may happen that the owner of the slave would consider it necessary or proper to withhold his consent from a marriage between his slave and an African apprentice; and it is moreover contrary to a law of the island for a beneficed clergyman to solemnize matrimony between a free person and a slave, (Rev. Mr. Curtin's Letter, Appendix) although they may, and sometimes do unite such parties in a kind of unlegalized, but customary wedlock.* But such difficulties, as these, do not present themselves, where the persons who live together are both captured Africans, or where one is a captured African and the other a free black or coloured person. Here no impediments from the law, nor from the relative conditions of bond and free, lie in the way of regular matrimony; and, therefore, in every case of the kind, the Africans should be advised and encouraged by those under whose control and direction they live to be legally married, having first been somewhat instructed as to the meaning of the institution, and the obligations enjoined by it. Independently of the salutary consequences which would naturally follow, from the observance of this institution, in the moral habits and civilization of these persons, it is a subject which upon the bare ground of policy calls for particular attention. In the sort of relation which now for the most part subsists between the parties attached, neither the offspring nor the mother can be secure of any future protection or support from the father;—an evil, which obviously must require a remedy in this class of persons, who, differently circumstanced from slaves, must either find subsistence for themselves and their offspring, or they must be maintained at the charge of Government.

What has been now submitted relative to the connexions formed by the African Apprentices at Antigua, has not been offered as a comment upon any part of the system of morals that prevails among the Negroes in the West India Colonies, neither is it to be considered as exhibiting any proof of, inherent depravity or grossness of character in those Africans who may live together without the sanction of regular marriage; but rather, as showing a consequence of their neglected condition. If the matter were regarded only in reference to the *local law of opinion*, this unsolemnized wedlock (if I may use the expression) of the Negroes is not to be measured by the same rule of moral rectitude, which in more civilized parts of the world regulates the conduct and intercourse of the sexes, even in the humblest walks of life. In the West India Islands, as long as the parties, who live together, remain constant and faithful to each other, the connexion is not
looked

* The form of matrimony alluded to, renders the relation or terms on which the parties live, as it were, morally correct; and therefore requires them to observe the same rule of connubial fidelity which legalized marriage would enjoin if both were free.

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looked upon as any remarkable deviation from propriety of conduct; and this kind of connubial attachment, although not recognized by the law as marriage, nor even registered as such by the sectarian missionaries, is yet considered among the Negroes as a species of wedlock sanctioned by custom, as appeared to be the case from the familiar use made of the terms *husband* and *wife* by the apprenticed Africans, at the examinations, when speaking of their respective partners. Indeed, it would not appear that those who had been regularly married, were anxious, generally, to make known such change in their moral condition; for the number given as married, according to the statements made by the parties themselves, bore only a very small proportion to that which was afterwards returned by the ministers of religion. But, perhaps this discrepancy is better accounted for in the length of time that intervened between the examinations, and the period at which the Missionaries sent in their returns. The examinations commenced in the month of February, but the returns included all marriages solemnized by the Moravians up to the 1st of May following; it would therefore appear probable that most of the marriages included in the returns, were solemnized in consequence of the remarks and recommendations which were made upon the subject in the course of the examinations.

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at Antigua.

From the statements of the Africans it would appear, that of 109 who had formed connexions, in 21 instances both the parties were captured Negroes, making the number of Apprentices so related 42. There were 22 living with other free blacks or coloured persons, and 45 with slaves.

It appears from the clergymen's returns, that the number of Apprentices, whose attachments had received the sanction of marriage, was 44; 18 of these had intermarried with each other; 3 were married to other free blacks; 16 to slaves. The civil condition of the persons to whom the remaining 7 were united, had not been noticed in his register by the clergyman who had married them. (Rev. Mr. Curtin's Letter—Appendix (B.))

In the marriages thus solemnized, the ceremony was performed for 36 by the Moravians; in the other 8 instances by Clergymen of the Church of England.

The Rev. James Curtin, a clergyman of the Church of England and Missionary from the Society for the conversion, &c. of Negroes, in his answer to the circular of the Commissioners, respecting the moral and religious condition of the Apprentices, states—

“ With regard to their marriage, I beg to state, that some years ago I received directions from the Venerable Society for the conversion of Negroes, &c. to the following effect; viz.—that when an unbaptized person or heathen came to me to be baptized, she or he is to declare whether they had one husband or wife at the time of their baptism, and in that case the parties were to be considered as married, without any further ceremony after baptism.*

“ The African Apprentices, as *free people*, cannot at this time be joined in matrimony with slaves (in any other way than I have alluded to) it being against the laws of this island for any of our beneficed clergy to marry a free person to a slave.

“ Very few indeed of the Africans are as yet sufficiently instructed to understand the meaning of the holy ordinance of matrimony; and from the evil habits which they acquired in their own country, it will take some time before they are sufficiently civilized to form that contract.

“ There is a schoolmaster from the above-mentioned Society regularly in attendance at our Mission Chapel in St. John's, from the hours of 9 to 3 P. M. throughout the week, except Saturday, and then till 12 o'clock, when he catechizes under my inspection. And thither the Apprentices, as well as the free poor children, are invited to come by bringing a note signifying the consent of their respective masters or mistresses.”†

Mr. Curtin

* Seven females were “baptized as married” conformably to this rule, by the Rev. Mr. Curtin (Appendix B.)

† It is but due to this worthy Clergyman, and to the venerable Society, whose missionary he is, to observe here, that all those duties are performed without fee or reward, except what is allowed by the said Society.

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Mr. Curtin then proceeds to general observations respecting the character of the Apprentices.

“ The Africans (he says) in general appear to me to be more untractable than our Creole Negroes, and this untractableness is not diminished by their notions of not being equally liable to coercion.”

The Rev. Mr. Coull, (a clergyman of the Church of England) states in his letter :

“ —As there are but few African Apprentices in either of my parishes, I have baptized only one woman and two infants, and I have never been applied either to baptize or marry any other. I require that adult Negroes who apply to be baptized should know the Lord's Prayer, know something of the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments of God, as, when they are baptized, they promise to obey them. I baptized 6 African Apprentices on the 12th of April 1818, at Castries, in the island of St. Lucia, at the request of Mr. Robinson, the then Collector of the Customs there, on representing the necessity of trusting to their godfathers and godmothers having them instructed, as they would not have me then to baptize them when they had got some little knowledge of the Christian religion.

“ The Roman Catholics baptize adult Negroes, I understand, in this manner, considering them as infants; in which light only the African Apprentices can be baptized by the ministers of the Established Church, or of the Sectaries.

“ I am sorry to inform you that I have found an adherence to their African superstitions universally prevalent among the adults, and the greatest difficulty in persuading them to relinquish them, and to worship a God of mercy instead of a God of terror. Since the abolition of the Slave trade, and the decrease of Obeah men, most of our black population are baptized, and attend either the parish church, the Moravian or Methodist meeting houses.—”

The Rev. Geo. Collins, garrison chaplain, had baptized 4 female Apprentices, one of whom was regularly married by him to a military labourer.

Mr. Collins adds,—“ In the parish of St. Philips, of which I am rector, there is a church and chapel of ease—the church is at Willoughby Bay, close to the Sea—the chapel is at Belfast; in both of which I officiate, and both are open, and have been since I was collated to this living, a period of about 21 years, to persons of all classes and colours, whether free or slaves, but I know of no African Apprentices who attend either.—”

The Missionaries of the Church of the United Brethren (Moravians,
Rev. Messrs. C. F. Richter, J. G. Procop, Geo. Robins.

“ —We have the satisfaction to know that many of those who attend divine service regularly, gain religious knowledge, improve in their morals, and give satisfaction to their employers. On the other hand, we have the grief to see that some neither value nor make a proper use of the privileges granted them; others are dull, and cannot understand what they are told of spiritual things. We find by experience, that they are like children, who, by constantly attending a school, gain the knowledge intended for them. We, on our part, cannot see what more can be done for them by us, than what has been, and is still continued to be done for them.

“ Much depends upon their masters and mistresses in allowing them time to attend divine service, and giving them an opportunity to learn to read.”

The Rev. S. Bruemar (Moravian.)

“ Gracehill being situated in such a district of the island to which but few probably of the African Apprentices come to live, both myself and my predecessors, according to our church book, never had the favour to baptize or to marry any of those Apprentices; neither do I know that any of them, who might have been baptized in other churches, are now attending our church or members thereof, and of course am not able to fill up the form you were pleased to send me.”

The Rev. Mr. Taylor (Moravian.)

“ In compliance with your request, I have examined our church books, and found that only one of the above-mentioned Apprentices have been baptized here at

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at Newfield since the beginning of this station, December 6, 1808, as specified in the inclosed form you were so good as to forward to me." Africans at Antigua.

THE observations communicated by the Ministers of religion, respecting the general habits and character of the Apprentices, were very limited. Mr. Curtin states, that the Africans in general *appear* to him to be more untractable than the Creole Negroes, that they require to be kept under strict discipline. And further, he observes,—“As they are naturally adverse to labour, and prone to evil, it is manifest that compulsion will be requisite, particularly in their uncivilized state.” He then offers some suggestions as to their future disposal, and says, that if they were placed under proper officers appointed by Government, they might be employed in useful agricultural labours, preparatory to becoming free settlers. He concludes by giving it as his opinion, upon grounds stated by him, that the removal of the Africans from the island should be left optional to themselves, “except in cases of crimes which would be dangerous to the community.”

The Rev. Mr. Coull confines his remarks to the subject of the religious condition of the Africans. There is one observation, however, of his, which, although it appears to be applied by him to African Negroes in general, and not to these Apprentices alone, it may be right to repeat here. “I am sorry (he observes) to inform you that I have found an adherence to their African superstitions universally prevalent among the adults, and the greatest difficulty in persuading them to relinquish them, and to worship a God of mercy instead of a God of terror. Since the abolition of the Slave trade, and the decrease of Obeah men, most of our black population are baptized, and attend either the parish church, the Moravian or Methodist meeting-house.”

THE Ministers of religion who appeared to me the best able to form sound general opinions respecting the moral conduct and habits of industry of the Africans, were the Missionaries who resided in the town of St. John, but particularly the Moravians. Those gentlemen, from the frequent opportunities presented to them at their religious meetings, and in their intercourse with the inhabitants, ought to be capable of giving a tolerably fair estimate of the general character of the Apprentices. It appears from their report, that, of the number admitted into their society, two only were afterwards expelled for immoral conduct.

It may be right here to state, that the United Brethren residing in the town of St. John, and the Rev. Mr. Curtin, were the only clergymen who had Apprentices living in their service. And it may moreover be to the purpose to insert in this part of the Report, the statements made by these gentlemen before the Commissioners, at examinations, respecting the character of their Apprentices; in order, that by a juxta position of their particular testimonies orally given, with that which is general and documentary, the value of these different kinds of evidence may be properly estimated.

Account given by the Rev. Mr. Curtin, of his two African Apprentices.

— Jarvis*. “A very harmless, but extremely stupid person; his intellect is of the lowest possible grade; he is incapable of improvement.”—
(Schedules, page 12-13.)

— Barrett. 21 years of age. “A tolerable general servant; intends to have him taught to be a carpenter; he is of a lofty mind and violent temper when intoxicated . . . he is improved lately.”
(Sched. p. 80-81.)

* This poor African (Jarvis) was 45 years of age, and his sight was defective. His master, however, continued him in his service, without calculating, or seeking to get rid of him in exchange for one of the active Africans who were on the hospital list of the Collector.

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Character given by the Rev. Mr. Richter, of his African Apprentices.

- Vincent *. 25 years of age. "Is a good house servant; honest; lived 8 years with the late searcher, Mr. W^m Wyke. Mr. Richter does not consider his mind sufficiently illuminated for baptism."
(Sched. p. 40-41.)
- Aubrey, Hannah. 33 years of age. "Has a pretty good character; sometimes rather indolent; can wash and iron very well; may probably be able to support herself."—(Sched. p. 56-57.)

Having thus reported to you, as concisely and accurately as I could, the information I collected respecting the abilities of the Africans, and their state of religious and moral improvement, I shall proceed to a statement of facts and cases, which will show the grounds of the opinions I shall have the honour to submit (in obedience to the instructions contained in the Commission.) It is right, however, previously to observe, with reference to the moral character of these persons as given by the Moravian missionaries, that, of the entire number received into their society, only two were afterwards expelled for immoral conduct, as has been already stated. (Appendix B, p. 52):—and that, upon the closest examination of the evidence which was given before the Commission by the employers or other persons who attended to speak to the conduct and character of the Apprentices, I find that of the 185 cases where characters have been given, the reports in 149 instances were of a favourable description; and in 70 of these the employers spoke of their apprentices in terms of high commendation, as well with regard to their habits of industry as respecting their honesty, sobriety and general good conduct. Their state of proficiency in useful occupations, and their ability to maintain themselves by their own labour and industry, may be represented in a similar manner. Thus, taking the statements of the parties who were examined, conjointly with the circumstances of the apparent personal condition, age, &c. of the Africans, as the premisses, I would conclude, that, of the 253 captured Negroes residing in Antigua, 229 would be capable of maintaining themselves if properly employed; and that 107 of this number were such persons as could not fail to find adequate employment and support in any colony affording equal resources to those of Antigua, provided no impediments were to be thrown in the way of their exertions. I may, perhaps, appear too minute in these calculations, but this minuteness I consider to be of the utmost importance in the present question, as I am of opinion that it is only by collecting the characters of these persons *individually*, that a right conclusion could be arrived at, and information obtained respecting the Africans, which I would submit to you as most to be relied upon. I have for this reason avoided taking into the account Apprentices whose employers did not attend at the examinations to speak to their character, although some of those apprentices might possess that sort of appearance which sobriety and good behaviour are always observed to wear.

It appears from the printed Reports upon the state and condition of the apprenticed Africans of Tortola,† (pp. 68-78) that the mode of collecting evidence by the oral statements of individuals, separately examined before the Commission, has been strictly canvassed by one of the former Commissioners‡, and then pronounced to be ill calculated for obtaining the information sought for by His Majesty's Government: while he appears at the same time to set a high value, and place great reliance on the "extrinsic aid" which he afterwards had recourse to, in the written opinions of "certain respectable inhabitants of Tortola, who had not any apprentices in their service." As the mode of collecting evidence from statements orally delivered before the Commission, is that which, conformably to Earl Bathurst's instructions, was pursued by me while engaged in the inquiry, and as the opinion which I now entertain upon this point (after much consideration, and from whatever local experience I may have acquired) is altogether at variance with

* It is but due to the pious Missionary to observe, that the apprentice (Vincent) had been in his service only since April 1823; this accounts for his not being yet baptized. The Moravians do not admit *adults* to baptism until their minds are "sufficiently illuminated" by instruction.

† Ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, 16 March 1825.

‡ Vide Major Moody's Report, dated 2 March 1825.

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with that delivered by Major Moody in his Report, I shall feel it my duty to submit to you some observations upon this subject, before I conclude this Report. For although it might be sufficient for me, so far as I am individually concerned, to state that the evidence laid before you by me was collected according to the rule prescribed by Lord Bathurst for the guidance of the Commissioners, yet, as it must be of importance in what light his Lordship may view the representations of a Commissioner, whose pretensions to local knowledge, and whose professed skill in West India affairs, are such as Major Moody's, I shall explain my sentiments upon this and some other leading points, wherein the objects of the Commission are differently viewed by Major Moody and me,—so far as I can judge from his Report, which is now lying before me. But as these points of discussion are only accidental, and would have been unnecessary for me to enter upon, were it not for the tendency of some passages in the Tortola Report, which are applied in a general way to the object and business of the Commission wheresoever held, I shall postpone the remarks which I have to submit upon these heads, until I shall have laid before you a statement of facts and cases explanatory of the manner in which evidence was collected, and of the character of the information obtained by that Commission in which I had the honour to be engaged.

Africans
at Antigua.

As the Evidence is given in detail in the Schedules of Examinations, it will be unnecessary here, as it would be superfluous, to quote a great number of cases in support or illustration of the opinions which I think it my duty to submit to you. The instances I shall adduce for your consideration, are such of course as appear to me the best calculated to afford the truest specimen and most unerring test of the general character of the African Apprentices; and which will show, I trust, at the same time, that the mode of collecting evidence, by the examinations of parties, (as represented in the Schedules) was the best practicable method that could in such circumstances be adopted.

The following brief outline will show the order of proceeding which was observed at the Examinations.

The Apprentice being produced (first) before the Commissioners, the name, age, stature, &c. of the party, were noted down by the secretary; the place of residence of the employer; the trade or business to which the apprentice had been indentured, as well as that in which he or she may have been chiefly instructed and employed, were next inquired of, and recorded. The state of religious improvement was then examined into; and afterwards the African was questioned as to actual present condition, proficiency in craft or employment, local attachments, &c.; and the account given was taken down. This being done, the apprentice was desired to retire; and the master or mistress, or other person qualified to answer respecting the ability and character of the African, was requested to appear, and state before the Commission, his or her opinion as to the proficiency, habits of industry, general conduct, prospect of future employment, &c. of the apprentice.*

The above short sketch will, I hope, be sufficient here to explain the manner in which I endeavoured to carry Earl Bathurst's instructions into effect, in collecting information concerning the state and condition of the Apprentices; and if the examinations of the parties were taken according to such a rule, before Commissioners who would be capable, in ordinary circumstances, of forming sound opinions by a careful examination of the evidence,—and who, free from the bias of local interests or party feelings, should be anxious only to investigate the truth and report it to His Majesty's Government, it is my humble opinion that further scrutiny would be altogether unnecessary, except in very extraordinary instances.

The following collection of Cases will be found, in conformity with what I have stated above, to be such as will furnish means for arriving at a fair conclusion respecting the character of the African Apprentices of Antigua.

The employers whom I shall mention were those who had the greatest number of apprentices under their care. On this account, and for other obvious reasons, I consider their evidence of the greatest weight and importance.

The

* I perceived, soon after my arrival in the West Indies, that some erroneous ideas respecting the object of the Commission were in existence; to remove which, and to prevent our proceedings from being misrepresented, I invited, whenever the opportunity was presented, such persons as appeared deserving of consideration, to be present at our examinations.

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The account given by Mrs. Kentish, of her African Apprentices.

- M'Kay, A good-tempered lad, a useful servant. (Schedules, p. 7.)
(Hugh.)
- Carr, Very good sailor, understands fishing, and is a good groom; and
(Joe.) a fair character generally. (Sched. p. 10-11.)
- Clive, The Collector, in the absence of Mrs. Kentish, says that he
(Andrew.) knows this apprentice, and that he is a very well behaved and pro-
mising person. (Sched. p. 78-79.)
- Button, A very well-behaved, good servant. (Sched. p. 18-19.)
or (Cherry)
- Louisa. Very good servant; can sew and wash, and act as house servant
in general. (Sched. p. 18-19.)
- M'Craith. Can wash well, and do other domestic services. (Sched. p. 18-19.)
- Briscoe. A very well behaved girl; no fault to find with her; she can
work at her needle, and wash a little. (Sched. p. 60-61.)
- Briggs. Can wash very well, and is a good servant. (Sched. p. 60-61.)
- Bernard. A good character; rather sickly; very well behaved; can wash
a little, and work at her needle. (Sched. p. 60-61.)
- Payne, The Collector, in the absence of Mrs. Kentish, says that he
(Anna Rosa.) knows this apprentice, and that she is a very well behaved and
promising person. (Sched. p. 85.)

Miss Clarke's Apprentices.

- Cunningham. Mr. Potter (Miss Clarke's nephew) states that this is a very
(Phœbe.) good and willing servant, very well behaved; is employed about
the house in various ways. (Sched. p. 20-21.)
- Foote, Is a very good character, an obedient and willing servant; will
(Susan.) be capable of supporting herself. (Sched. p. 21.)
- Quinn, Generally an obedient and good servant; was not so much so
(Fanny) when Miss Clarke received her, but now promises tolerably well;
has a fair prospect of finding future employment. (Sched. p. 21.)
- Bromley, Is an exceedingly good character in every respect; is very in-
(Cleone.) telligent; can do fine needlework. Is chiefly employed in selling
dry goods. (Sched. p. 56-57.)

It appears from the above evidence that the conduct of Mrs. Kentish's ten African Apprentices, and of Miss Clarke's four, was highly satisfactory. The Apprentices of Miss Clarke (who appears to have been one of the kindest of mistresses) showed at examinations that they had been well taken care of. One of them was so far instructed as to be able to read a little in the Bible; and another proved that good principles had been impressed upon her, as she stated that she "paid 6*d.* a week for her child's schooling."

The testimony of Mr. Sheriff, respecting his five Apprentices, is equally favourable. Two of these (females) he stated were able to acquire their support, and were permitted to do so.

Account given by Samuel Sheriff, Esq. of his Apprentices.

- Payne, A very well conducted person, and an excellent servant. Mr.
(Sylla.) Sheriff at first placed her under his sister-in-law, Miss Dickman,
who had her taught washing. Is perfectly able to support herself
well; is capable of earning, by washing, a sufficiency for herself
and children. (Sched. p. 23.)
- Barnwell. Very good, well-disposed girl; an excellent washer, and good
general servant. (Sched. p. 28-29.)

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- Aston. Very good woman; can wash well; a very well disposed woman. (Sched. p. 56-57.) Africans at Antigua.
- Bowyer. Is occasionally employed by Mr. Sheriff; does not give her any regular allowance; she can cook and wash. Mr. Sheriff allows her to live with her husband in the town. She is submissive and obedient. Mr. Sheriff thinks she earns her bread by washing. (Sched. p. 58-58.)
- Vernon. Tolerably well disposed, and a good servant if kept closely employed; an excellent groom. (Sched. p. 48-49.)

The Account given by Mr. Barnard, Manager and Attorney for Sir H. Martin, Bart., of the four African Apprentices under his care.

- Miller. A well behaved man; a good cooper, and can act as cook. (Sched. p. 9.)
- Harney. Very well behaved apprentice; can work as a mason. (Sched. p. 9.)
- Dawson. Tolerable blacksmith, can shoe a horse well; but is addicted to drinking. (Sched. p. 9.)
- Reed. Mr. Barnard gives her a very good character; she understands cooking. (Sched. p. 18-19.)

From this evidence it appears that the characters of three out of the four apprentices of Sir H. Martin were very good; that of the fourth (Dawson) is unfavourable.

Chief Justice Horsford speaks in terms of high commendation of one of his apprentices (Wilberforce); of another (Knox) he says, "he is honest and sober; naturally of a violent temper; latterly much improved; no doubt but he will be perfectly capable of making a livelihood for himself at the expiration of his apprenticeship." Of the third (Wharton) the account is unfavourable, viz. "rather of a sulky disposition; his honesty and sobriety have been called in question, particularly while in the town of St. John; he is of late improved, and again returned into the town; is perfectly equal to supporting himself as a cook, if he conducts himself with propriety."

The Account given by Paul Horsford, Esq. (Chief Justice of Antigua,) of his three African Apprentices. (Sched. pages 32-33.)

- Knox. Is honest and sober; naturally of a violent temper, but he is latterly much improved; has no doubt but he will be perfectly capable of making a livelihood for himself at the expiration of his apprenticeship, as he understands cooking a little, and is apprenticed to the mason.
- Wharton. A very good cook; is rather of a sulky disposition; his honesty and sobriety have been called in question, particularly whilst in the town of St. John, which occasioned his being sent into the country for improvement; he is of late improved, and is again returned into the town; is perfectly equal to supporting himself as a cook, if he conducts himself with propriety.
- Wilberforce. Very good cook, and an excellent private character; has never known him to commit any kind of dishonesty, or to be ever otherwise than sober. On his first coming, he seemed to withdraw himself from his countrymen, and associate with the Creoles of the island; in consequence of which there is no trace of the African about him. He has a wife on the estate, and two children. Is very industrious, and turns that industry to his own advantage, which enables him to clothe himself, and carry an appearance superior to those of his class. His wife is recognised as such by the Moravian Establishment.

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The Apprentices of Sir H. Martin and Chief Justice Horsford are among the few captured Africans who now reside on plantations in Antigua. Besides the advantage which these persons have had in being taught handicraft trades or other useful modes of occupation, which will render their services valuable after the expiration of their fourteen years servitude (a result that would, perhaps, be doubtful if they had been hitherto worked only as field negroes,) they are, moreover, accustomed to the business of agriculture, and have acquired habits of voluntary industry from the circumstance of being allowed provision grounds to cultivate for their own profit and consumption. If all the captured Negroes who had been originally apprenticed on plantations were similarly dealt with, there could be no difficulty experienced in their future disposal and settlement.

The only instance I shall here adduce, wherein the employer had but a single Apprentice, is the following :

The Account given by John Black, Esq. (a Magistrate of Antigua) of
his Apprentice

---- Croft. A well disposed, affectionate and attentive man; is very much attached to his (Mr. Black's) family; is of an economical and industrious turn; has been able to save and lay by some of his allowance. Mr. Black considers that he will be perfectly able to find a livelihood for himself at the expiration of his apprenticeship. Mr. Black wishes to take another equally well inclined.

(Sched. p. 80-81.)

The evidence of such a person as Mr. Black, and the testimony given by him of the only captured African under his care, appeared to deserve particular notice. It would have been desirable that such a master had more than one of these people in his service; particularly as he expressed a wish "to take another equally well inclined," and as there were at the time several on the Collector's Hospital List who would have suited his wishes.

The account given by R. W. Nanton, Esq. of his 3 Apprentices.

— Henry Alex, } Very well disposed men, and have made some progress in
and } the knowledge of sailing; considers they will be perfectly
— Lewis Butler. } able to maintain themselves at the end of their apprenticeship.

(Sched. p. 75.)

— Shaw Ben. A very good boy, and good sailor.

(Sched. p. 49.)

Account given by Mr. Trott (a Merchant of Antigua)
of his African Apprentices.

— Hood, Did not think Richard competent to be a cooper, and therefore
(Richard.) did not get him taught that trade; he had diseased legs at that time; employed him sometimes as a porter, but not finding him fit for that, put him to take care of the stock at Dryhill; did behave very well till lately; latterly has neglected his business; intends to look out for some person to teach him a trade, with new indentures.

(Sched. p. 34-35.)

---- Nixon. He is not honest, but his character is otherwise good; works pretty well as a cooper; sometimes is employed as a porter.

(Sched. 42-43.)

— Ross. A pretty good character; rather a sullen temper; found that he was unfit for a house servant; allows him 8 bits a week; sometimes retrenches 2 bits as a punishment; gives him 2 suits of clothes per ann. 10 lbs. of pork, 10 pints of flour, 1 bottle of rum, and 1 dollar, at Christmas, as to each of his Negroes. Gives a very fair character of the apprentices under his care.

(Sched. p. 42-43.)

— Roberts, A valuable man; a first-rate cooper; very sullen, and insolent;
(John.) an active intelligent man; a very violent temper; thinks that John was not sick during the week, as he states.

(Sched. p. 42-43.)

— Roebuck. A very good sort of man, but unhappily half blind; employs him as a porter generally; he is diligent and attentive.

(Sched. p. 44-45.)

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- Bruce, (William.) Has had this apprentice upwards of two years, during which time he has conducted himself very well; he is rather of a warm temper; will make an excellent sailor; is very attentive to his work; allows him the same as his other apprentices. (Sched. p. 80-8.1)
- Africans
at Antigua.

Among Mr. Trott's 6 Apprentices, it appears that there was only one (Nixon) to whom he imputed any capital fault; "he is not honest (says Mr. Trott) but his character is otherwise good; works pretty well as a cooper." Of another (Roberts) he says he is "a valuable man, a first-rate cooper; very sullen, and insolent; an active intelligent man; very violent temper." He gives them due credit for the value of their services, but complains of the warmth or violence of their tempers. Being asked to give his opinion in a general way, of the Apprentices under his care, he gave a very fair character of them.

The abovenamed African (Nixon) some days after his examination, called on the Commissioners, at the Custom-house, to complain that he had been beaten on the head that morning by his master, without any provocation on his part. The master in reply to this complaint alleged, that the African had been insolent to him, and added, that he had not punished him with any severity, having only used a switch or rod, which happened to be in his hand at the moment. The African on the other side denied that he had been guilty of any insolence; and further stated, that it was the first time he had ever been so treated by his master. From the circumstances of this case, it appeared that Mr. Trott (who was rather a liberal master to his apprentices) had acted upon this occasion under the influence of a temper naturally warm, and now irritated from an idea that the African's apparent insolence was caused by the arrival of the Commission, and was a consequence of the *Inquiry* instituted into the state and condition of the liberated Africans.

After a few observations on the part of the Commission, the master and apprentice were mutually reconciled, and they left the office apparently disposed to do their duty in future towards each other.

Account given by Mr. Ronan (Merchant) of his 3 African Apprentices.

- Gilbert. He is an active working sailor, but when he drinks he becomes idle and insolent; would be capable of maintaining himself. Besides the 8 bits a week paid to Gilbert, Mr. Ronan allows half a dollar a month, to find a house for himself and wife. (Sched. p. 7.)
- Hunt. Is an excellent sailor; could maintain himself perfectly, if he abstained from drinking. (Sched. p. 7.)
- Blake. Mr. Dimond, F. C. M. Ronan's head pilot, knows the apprentice Blake, and considers him an honest, proper, and industrious man. (Sched. p. 11.)

Ch. Chatfield's account of his 3 African Apprentices.

- Gibbs. Is a pretty good character; honest; rather idle; is chiefly employed in fishing, can fish well; gets 10 pints of meal a week, and fish; is allowed to cut wood and sell it for his own profit, sometimes earns a dollar a week. (Sched. p. 42-43.)
- Nash. When he fishes, he is allowed the small fish for his own profit. Mr. Chatfield allows him two shirts and a pair of trowsers at Christmas. Is very lazy, and a great drunkard. (Sched. p. 44-45.)
- Burrard. A quiet, well behaved girl; cannot wash well. (Sched. p. 60-61.)

Mr. Gore's account of his Apprentices.

- Anderson. Is a most excellent washer, and supports herself by her own choice at present; a good character, but high tempered. Mr. Gore thinks she could earn 2 or 3 dollars a week as a washer. (Sched. p. 64-65.)
- Pigott. An excellent servant; can cook a dinner, attend at table, and act as groom; and very good character. (Sched. p. 76-77.)

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Account given by Mr. Parkhurst (Comptroller of the Custom) of his
African Apprentices.

- Norton. } Mr. Parkhurst gives these girls a very fair character; good
— M'Carthy. } and useful servants. (Sched. p. 17.)
— Nelson. A promising, well disposed boy. (Sched. p. 80-81.)

Account given by Dr. West (an Officer of the Customs) of his
African Apprentices.

- Anderson. Idly disposed, but capable of making himself useful as a cook.
(Sched. p. 6-7.)
— Lewis. A good servant, if he would abstain from drinking.
(Sched. p. 6-7.)
— Wellington. }
— George. } See Note at bottom.* (Sched. p. 46-47.)
(Sched. p. 96-97.)
— Desbrow. An idle boy; brought up as a domestic; waits at table tolerably
well; sickly constitution; sometimes affected in the head.
(Sched. p. 78-79.)
— Catharine. Is idle, but otherwise free from vice; promises to do very well,
by care. (Sched. p. 86-87.)
— Carr. A good house servant; pretty good sempstress; a clever girl,
but very pert. (Sched. p. 58-59.)
— Hall. A well behaved woman; a good washer. (Sched. p. 22-23.)

The accounts given by Dr. West of his Apprentices, it may be observed, are of a mixed character, and when he commends their conduct, he does it in a qualified manner. The circumstance, however, of retaining eight of them in his employment, is in my opinion a good proof that their services were at least equivalent to the expense of maintaining them.

Account given by Mr. Chipchase (an Officer of the Customs) of his
4 African Apprentices.

- Church. An idle man; very fond of drinking, and of general bad habits;
has a poor prospect of finding future support. (Sched. p. 10-11.)
— Dorville. A promising boy, and very good servant. (Sched. p. 76-77.)
— Dalling. A very well disposed woman; is employed by her mistress to
sell dry goods; is a very good nurse; promises fair for her future
support. (Sched. p. 56-57.)
Maria Hanmer. A very good girl and a very good servant. (Sched. p. 90-91.)

In 3 out of the 4 instances, the accounts given by Mr. Chipchase of his Apprentices are of the best description. Of the fourth (Church) the account is in every respect

* The two apprentices, Wellington and George, above-named, called upon the Commissioners on one occasion, and complained that they had been flogged by their master with a "cat," showing recent marks of their punishment, on the back; and declared their intention not to return any more to the service of this master. An inquiry was instituted; and it appeared that Dr. West had recourse to this improper mode of chastising his apprentices when under the influence of strong passion, which, he said, was excited by disobedience and insubordinate conduct on the part of the apprentices.

However improper the mode of punishment in this case appeared to be, I had good reason to believe that one of these Africans (Wellington) was of such a disposition as would provoke the anger of a man of good nature but warm temper (such as I believe Dr. West to be) to forget himself and his duty, in punishing with unbecoming severity his apprentice.

In this instance there was no order made for formally removing these two Africans from the master's service; such a step would only have the effect of adding so many more to the number of the incumbrances already on the hospital list of the Collector. The two men in question were determined to make out their own subsistence, and appeared perfectly capable of doing so. In fact, they did afterwards find their livelihood, by "butchering" and selling pork: but notwithstanding this, in some short time after, the Collector sent his clerk to inform the Commissioners, at a time when they were about to sail for Tortola on a special inquiry, that he had been obliged to confine the African Wellington in irons, on account of alleged disobedience and insubordinate conduct.

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respect unfavourable ; and it is a matter of surprise to me, that, as Mr. Chipchase gave him so bad a character, he allowed him at the same time to remain in his employment. There is little reason to doubt that he might have got rid of him by handing him over to the Collector, as had been done in other instances where the African's character was of a different description.*

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at Antigua.

Account given by Mr. Simpson (Collector's Clerk) of his
Six African Apprentices.

- Dillon. Can act as a domestic or groom, but is inclined to be idle ; had him chastized for riding his horse out at night without leave ; is capable of finding his own support. (Sched. p. 32-33.)
- Lawson. Quiet, well behaved ; is a good cook ; Mr. Simpson would be disposed to retain him in his service at the expiration of his apprenticeship. (Sched. p. 40-41.)
- Brooke, Is a very good boy and a very good servant, and trustworthy. (Sched. p. 76-77.)
(Robert.)
- Bunn. A very proper woman, and good servant. (Sched. p. 18-19.)
- Cooper. A good servant, and well behaved. (Sched. p. 19.)
- Shaw. A very quiet woman ; a tolerable servant, but discontented. (Sched. p. 21.)

SUCH was the evidence given before the Commission, by the persons who, according to my humble judgment, were most competent to afford the requisite information respecting *their* Apprentices ; and, at the same time, least likely to report favourably of the industry and general character of these persons at the expense of truth. It will be seen by referring to the Schedules, that the instances here adduced present a fair specimen of the general tenor of the evidence delivered to the Commission.

In thus enumerating cases, I am apprehensive that I may have appeared tedious. The peculiar circumstances of the question, however, rendered it necessary for me to enter into such details, in order to bring the matter fully before you, and thus afford an opportunity of comparing the nature of the information officially obtained by the Commission, with those vague and general assertions which, under the shape of opinions, have been advanced from time to time and from different quarters, respecting this class of Negroes.

Having explained the manner in which evidence was collected while I was engaged in the Commission, and having laid before you such a collection of facts and cases as I considered best fitted for giving a fair representation of the general character of the persons in question ; I shall now respectfully submit to you some remarks upon the character of evidence that would be obtained by addressing written " questions to certain respectable inhabitants of the colony, who had no African Apprentices in their service," and at the same time state my reasons for declining that *supernumerary* mode of obtaining information, except so far as the Ministers of religion were concerned, and the religious and moral condition of the Africans formed the subject of the inquiry.

In the first place, I considered that such evidence, being *ex parte*, would be defective, and this defect would not seem to me the less objectionable because the persons furnishing such written evidence had no African Apprentices in their service. On the contrary, this circumstance would incline me to think that those persons were the less fitted for giving the requisite information respecting the Africans ; as it could be alleged, that it was in consequence of prejudice, or a dislike of

* It will be seen (in Appendix (C.) page 55) that an African, named Cox, was received from Mr. Chipchase and placed upon the Collector's list, upon the grounds that he was become " old, infirm and worn out." That the African was old I afterwards saw, when he was produced before the Commission (he being upwards of 49 years of age ;) but though he might also be infirm and worn out, so far as hard labour was concerned, he nevertheless was able to perform services at the Custom-house, which made him to be considered there as a very useful person. He was sober, intelligent and industrious, and had acquired some little property in money and small " stock."—(Schedules, pages 4-5.) Both these Africans (Church and Cox) had been apprenticed to planters in 1811.

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of this class of people, that they wished not to retain any of them in their service. 2dly, I was aware that it could fairly be objected, that, after a residence of several months within the limited circle of a small colonial community, a person holding the office of Commissioner of Inquiry could not but be apprized of the opinions or feelings which were entertained by the principal inhabitants of the island with respect to the liberated Negroes; and, therefore, that the information which the answers of those persons would convey was already anticipated in the mind of the querist, and required only to be elicited by leading questions. Then, if any bias, either of a religious or an interested nature, could be charged to the account of the Commissioner; or, if strong party feeling, growing out of the warmly agitated West India question, could be imputed to the persons thus solicited for information; one or either of these considerations would render such evidence ill suited to the wishes of His Majesty's Government, as it would not be calculated to afford the means of arriving at a satisfactory conclusion—such as would follow from the simple, but less objectionable premises given in the oral statements of parties regularly interrogated before the Commission. For these reasons I declined seeking information of that description; although I am sure I could have received thereof as much as would fill many pages of this report: and I hope, Sir, that I shall not appear to have neglected my duty by this voluntary omission; for, if such a mode of inquiry were considered better calculated to attain the proper object than that which had been prescribed by the instructions of Earl Bathurst, it never would have been deemed expedient to send out two Commissioners with a Secretary to the West Indies, for the purpose of investigating and reporting upon particular cases, when the business could be performed through the agency of the several Governors, or other *local authorities*, if they were instructed to obtain the desired information by addressing interrogatories to a certain number of inhabitants upon the subject. In the course of a few days, answers to the circulars would be returned, and the Governors would then be able to forward reports from the colonies by the first packet that should sail. I will not presume, Sir, to obtrude any opinion of mine against such a mode of collecting materials to enable His Majesty's Government to decide upon a plan for the future disposal and settlement of the African Apprentices; but I have felt it my duty thus to explain my sentiments to you upon a subject which I consider of the greatest importance in the business of the Commission.

It may be right here to examine the position in Major Moody's Report, where he states, that in consequence of the presumed defects he experienced in the mode of collecting information by oral statements of parties examined before the Commission, recourse was had to "extrinsic aid." I shall, for this purpose, take the liberty to quote the passage to which I allude, and then will examine how far the premises assumed by him are calculated to lead to the conclusion which he undertakes to establish.

In page 78 of the Report, addressing Earl Bathurst, he states as follows:—

"It will be seen, my Lord, that the collection of individual characters, obtained in the manner that these were, does not afford the most satisfactory data on which a plan for their future government could be founded; and I am obliged to confess, that the plan which we were ordered to adopt, of separately examining the parties concerned as to character, was not attended with any advantages for the removal of the defects which I have stated; whilst that plan of examination more particularly required perfect local knowledge as well as freedom from bias, in those appointed to conduct examinations taken so privately; qualifications which few persons can be found to possess together."

In one part of this position I entirely concur in opinion with the Commissioner, namely, that the *persons appointed to conduct such examinations ought to be free from BIAS*. The other branch, however, which lays down that "*perfect local knowledge*" was essentially requisite for the duly executing the duty, this I cannot agree to, without further proof than has been adduced by him.

The first reason assigned by Major Moody against the value of information obtained at examinations is, that the evidence was sometimes collected under excitement and disagreements in opinion. Such an objection as this would be equally applicable to evidence received in any court of law or justice.

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The next objection he makes is, that a certain description of masters and mistresses who were wont to traffic in the labour of their Apprentices, "by commut-
ing their services for some pecuniary reward," were disposed to give a flattering character of their Apprentices, with a view to insure a continuance of their services. The only remark I can offer upon this point is, that I never discovered, in the course of my inquiry, any such disposition to exist among masters or mistresses; and I think it may safely be affirmed, respecting every case which came under my observation, that wherever a favourable testimony was given, it was fully merited by the conduct of the Apprentice.

The cases first selected by Major Moody, to support his position, are those of "John Sano" and the female "Cottrine," (p. 71 of the Report.) As the circumstances relative to these two cases only go to prove that the price of labour as well as the demand for it may vary in Colonial communities (as they do every where else,) and that casualties may sometimes happen to individuals among the liberated Africans, which would show the expediency of making some legislative provision for such cases of emergency,—it will be unnecessary to say any thing further of them than that they appear to me to contain nothing that could affect the general character of the evidence obtained at their previous examinations; and this appears to be admitted even by the Commissioner himself, in page 73 of the Report.

The instances next adduced, viz. those of "Hull" and "Boatswain," (pp. 72, 76 in the Report,) as they appear so mixed up with the question of "free labour," (which is not the subject of the present Report,) and as they have been matter of controversy between the Commissioners, I should wish to pass over altogether, and therefore will notice them only so far as they have been involved in the subject which I feel it my duty to examine.

In Hull's case it appears that the Report made by one of the Commissioners (Mr. Dougan) varies in some points from the account which had been given by the African himself, in his statement before both Commissioners. This variance, however, may very easily be explained; and I think it will be found that there is nothing in it, after all, which can be used to prove that the plan of collecting evidence by oral statements made before the Commission is not calculated for obtaining correct information for Government. Having carefully examined the Tortola schedules, I cannot discover in the statement of Hull any thing that may not easily be reconciled with the Report, dated 20th December 1823, made by Mr. Dougan, upon the condition of this liberated African; for when it is considered that Hull's examination before the Commissioners may have taken place about the end of 1822, soon after the re-opening of the Commission at Tortola, and that Mr. Dougan's departure from that island was not before the summer of 1823, it will be seen that there was plenty of time for Hull to "build himself a house" during the several months that had intervened between these periods; and therefore, although Hull had formerly stated before the Commission that "he never put up a house" upon the ground which he cultivated, this statement is not the less worthy of credit because at a later period he should have built a house for himself, and by doing so furnish additional information respecting his character and condition; which information, although not officially given before both Commissioners at a second examination, might yet be acquired accidentally by the personal observation of the Commissioner himself, or might come from such authority as would render it worthy of being noticed by him in his separate Report.

I trust I have shown that there is nothing even in this case of Hull that can operate against the value of evidence collected from the examinations of individuals before the Commission.

With that part of the argument which relates to the agricultural industry of Hull, I do not think it would be right to meddle; but if it were my duty to do so, I believe I should not find it difficult to show that the comparison which is instituted (at p. 74 of the Report) between two persons so differently educated, and so dissimilarly circumstanced, as "an English labourer on the Schoose farm of J. C. Curwen, Esq." and an aged Negro at Tortola, who had not been brought up as a field labourer, is little adapted for affording useful information to Government, or even to prove that without slave coercion there can be no hope of steady and

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and continued industry among persons "in a backward state of knowledge and civilization in the torrid zone."

The African next referred to, is "Boatswain." This person never was examined by the Commission, and of course the reasoning upon his case (as in p. 75-76 of the Report) is irrelevant to the question concerning the value of evidence so obtained; for this reason, and because his case formed part of the subject of a paper which I formerly had the honour to submit to you, I shall now decline entering into any inquiry respecting him.

With reference to the cases of the female Apprentices, "Ann Cumberland" and "Penelope Whan" (in pages 77-78 of the Report,) I beg to state, that as the examinations of these persons were taken before one Commissioner only, they do not bear upon the present question. No such examinations were ever taken during the time that I was engaged in the Commission; and, therefore, whatever observations I might otherwise feel it right to offer upon these cases, with a view to show how little they could affect the general value and credibility of the evidence given before the Commissioners, I shall of course in these instances omit.

Among all the cases selected by Major Moody to prove that the mode of collecting information according to the instructions given to the Commissioners, and as prescribed in the form of the Schedule, is not calculated to afford a sufficiently solid basis whereon to found regulations for the future government of the captured Africans, I can find but one, viz. that of "Daniel Onabou," which I can acknowledge as going to support his position; although it is highly probable that the instances which have been adduced by him are among the strongest that could be found in the long list of 292 Africans who were examined before the Commission at Tortola.

In thus examining the positions which have been laid down in the Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry at Tortola, I have endeavoured to confine my remarks within the narrowest possible bounds consistent with what I considered to be my duty, adverting only to such points as I deemed it absolutely necessary for me to discuss, in order to lay before you what I conceive to be the true state of the question. You will therefore, I hope, excuse, if I shall appear in any instance to digress beyond the exact line which the business of my report marked out for me. The opinion delivered by the Commissioner, in his report, being applied not only to the character of the evidence collected at examinations by the Commission in which he was himself engaged, but also directed with a tendency to invalidate all evidence collected according to the rule prescribed in the Schedule, it became necessary for me to explain my sentiments upon the subject, and to show upon what grounds I have formed opinions which I would venture to submit to you respecting the condition and character of the African Apprentices.

I cannot pretend to much experience "in the control of labour among persons in a backward state of knowledge and civilization," nor to any great length of residence in tropical climates; but, as I have already stated it to be my opinion that "perfect local knowledge" is not necessary to form an ingredient in the qualifications of a person appointed to collect useful information, and make an impartial report to His Majesty's Government upon the condition of the captured Africans, preparatory to measures which may be adopted for their future settlement—so am I persuaded that great skill in agriculture is equally unessential for the due fulfilling of that duty, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary in pages 58-74, of the Commissioner's report.

It may moreover be right to state here, that although I highly value all kinds of useful knowledge, wheresoever or in whomsoever found, I would not however look upon him as an *accomplished* agriculturist, who might be thoroughly versed in the agriculture of the West Indies—where, such is the nature of the soil and climate, that the *science* of agriculture is but a very secondary consideration, and the *practice* continues to be rude and simple. And then—as to the great importance that has been affixed upon the having had the "control for years over men in a backward state of knowledge and civilization," you will judge, Sir, how little that kind of experience weighs in the scale of a Commissioner's qualifications, when it is considered that there are thousands of Overseers and Slave-drivers in the West India islands who amply possess such qualifications: and therefore,

that

that it would not be necessary to devote any great length of time to learn so much of that art as would enable a person to form sound opinions upon the present subject. For my own part, I think it possible for any man, who should possess the ordinary portion of common sense and had received a good education, to acquire in the short space of a few months sufficient *local* knowledge, civil, commercial and agricultural, of any of His Majesty's West India Colonies, in which captured Africans reside, as would enable him to collect the requisite information for Government, and furnish such a report upon the subject as might be relied upon, *provided the individual were also unbiassed by interested views or party feelings.*

Africans
at Antigua.

As the observations which I have thus been led to make were rendered necessary in consequence of the opinions delivered in the Report upon the Apprentices of Tortola, they will not, I trust, be imputed to any interested motive, or inclination to depreciate the official communications of others, or to raise my own. There is not any thing which I consider less excusable in another than the being influenced by such feelings, and therefore there could be nothing, which, in my own conduct, I would more carefully shun.

These necessary remarks being made, I shall now proceed in the proper business of my Report, and respectfully state to you, that—after a careful consideration of all the materials afforded to me, and from whatever knowledge of the subject I may have acquired by experience and personal observation, the opinion which I have formed is, that—the great majority of the captured Negroes residing at Antigua are persons who could acquire their livelihood in the ordinary resources of that colony, by their own industry and good conduct, if no obstacles were to be placed in the way of their exertions. I do not, however, pretend to support this conclusion by a reference to numerous cases, wherein persons of this class have already independently supported themselves in that island. The means that would have been afforded for grounding an opinion upon such desirable facts, have been prevented by the system which for some time has been pursued at Antigua, in keeping up an establishment at the Custom-house, upon which those Africans are placed for support, whose apprenticeships happen to be interrupted by any cause or accident, whether arising from the death or the poverty of employers, or from disinclination to continue the Apprentices in their service, or, in some instances, from maltreatment. In my report dated 16th May 1825,* I submitted some observations upon the subject of this Hospital Establishment, and have there shown that a different line of conduct, and, as I conceive, a better rule than this pursued at Antigua, has been followed by the Collectors at Tortola, Bahamas, and Dominica, in respect to the manner of disposing of those captured Negroes whose service or apprenticeship should happen from any cause to be interrupted. But, the remarks which I then felt it my duty to offer were directed solely against the inexpediency of unnecessarily incurring great expense by maintaining at the charge of the Crown so great a number of persons, of whom there were but a few who would not be fully competent to find a livelihood for themselves if they were encouraged or permitted to do so.†

* pp. 57—58.

But if unnecessary expense were the only evil to be corrected in such an establishment, the matter perhaps would be of minor importance, as being capable of a speedy and effectual remedy. There are other disadvantages to be apprehended from the system, which it may be difficult to obviate. For, though I do not believe that the Africans who were retained on the Collector's List were permitted to live in a state of idleness, but, on the contrary, am of opinion that many or most of them performed active and useful services, which would have entitled them as hired servants or labourers to competent support, yet, from the manner in which they lived about the Custom-house stores and environs, or wherever else they might be employed, forming, as it were, an irregular gang, there could be
but

† By reference to the Appendix (C.) p. 53, it will be seen that the expense of this establishment has greatly increased since the year 1820. The average number supported at the charge of H. M. Government, through the year 1819, was only 12; in October 1821, the number was 30; in October 1822, the number was 23; and in October 1823, it was 69. Before the Commission was opened at Antigua, the number on the hospital list had increased to 77; and when this class of the Africans was examined before the Commission (in 1824) they amounted to 89. In the August of that year they exceeded 100.

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but little hope entertained that their moral condition would be improved in such a situation, or that habits of regular and useful industry would be acquired. It was from this view of the subject, principally, that I was induced when at Antigua to discourage any unnecessary increase of the number on the hospital list, and also to recommend the expediency of permitting such Africans, as had been delivered over by their masters or mistresses, to work for their own support, if they were able to do so, and had expressed a desire to obtain that permission.* But I have to regret that such recommendation was ineffectual, and that this establishment, instead of being diminished, was still further increased; so that the evil consequence now resulting from the circumstance of preventing those Africans, who were of an industrious and thrifty turn, from labouring for their own profit and support, is, that His Majesty's Government are prevented from having additional means of inferring, from incontrovertible facts, how far these persons would be capable of making a proper use of their time and freedom, if they were left at liberty to seek a livelihood for themselves.

As the matter therefore stood at the beginning of 1825, Antigua, of course, could present but very limited materials to Government, whereby they would be enabled to judge, otherwise than by inference from the conduct of the Africans during their apprenticeship, what their behaviour would be if released from control, and left to depend for support upon voluntary industry. At the latter end of 1824, there were but four instances among the entire number of captured Negroes residing in Antigua, who had received certificates of their free condition; and these four, it appeared, contrived to support themselves without becoming burdensome to the community: although two of them (males) were but indifferent characters. There were several however, who, although their period of service had not yet terminated, generally supported themselves by their own industrious exertions; and among these there were females, who, according to their own, and their master's statements, were able to earn sufficient subsistence for themselves and their children. Some male Africans had worked about as hired porters or drudges, and were able to pay their masters from one to one-and-a-half dollar a week, out of their earnings. There were others, who when their masters had not employment for them, were allowed to seek their own subsistence, and have earned in such cases from one to one-and-a-half dollars per week for themselves.

Others

* For the reasons above stated, I considered it my duty (whenever the Commission was applied to upon the subject) to require, before I would sanction any admission into this establishment, that satisfactory proof should be given that the case was one of urgency; such, for instance, as might happen through the inability of the master or mistress to maintain the apprentice, or in consequence of severe treatment of the latter. It was my wish, moreover, and my intention so far as in me lay, to remedy the evil then existing, by diminishing the number retained on the hospital list; and, with a view to carry this intention into effect, I proposed to my colleague, at examinations of the Africans at the Custom-house, that we should begin the matter by addressing an order to the Collector to *furnish certificates of their civil condition, and permit to work for themselves*, two Creoles of Antigua, who had been forfeited to His Majesty under the Abolition Acts, *as they were perfectly able to maintain themselves, and were anxious to be permitted to do so*. The Collector, who appeared adverse to this proceeding, offered some reasons against its expediency; but these reasons were insufficient to show that the measure, when carried into effect, would not be attended with good consequences to the industrious among the Africans. My colleague, however, declined upon this occasion to join with me in signing the order proposed, and it was therefore postponed; till some days after, when he consented to join in signing it.

[The following is a copy of the Order:]

" Sir,

Antigua, 31 May 1825.

" It appears to us, that James Wright, ship-carpenter, and Rachael Gallien, sempstress, Creoles of Antigua, condemned to His Majesty in the Vice Admiralty Court of this Island, are perfectly cable of finding a livelihood for themselves; we therefore recommend that the names of James Wright and Rachael Gallien be removed from the Collector's hospital list, and that these persons be furnished with certificates of their civil condition, and permitted to work in future for themselves.

" To Geo. Wyke, Esq.

" We have," &c. &c.

" Collector, &c.

. . . . The Collector omitted to comply with this recommendation; but on the 21st of the following month he addressed a Letter to the Commissioners, offering an explanation. The correspondence upon this subject is given in the Appendix, and I have there added some remarks which I considered it necessary to submit to you.

(See Appendix (E.) pp. 56-58; and Schedules, pp. 102, 103 & 106, 107.)

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Others were permitted, in addition to their weekly allowance, or in lieu thereof, to work for their own profit after four o'clock in the afternoon; and of this permission they sometimes availed themselves with advantage. One case of this kind deserves particular notice, on account of some circumstances which were connected with it. Africans
at Antigua.

An African, who stated that he worked for his master (Mr. Blaney) from six o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon, in getting ballast, (which his master provided for vessels) complained, that although his fixed or *nominal* allowance was seven bits a week, he was sometimes three weeks without getting any; that his master gave him no clothes, nor provided him with lodging. Being asked how he endeavoured to maintain himself under such circumstances as those he complained of, he replied, that he was assisted by his countrymen, *i. e.* the African Apprentices; and, that he worked on Sundays, and assisted in moving houses, for which his part of the payment was four bits, or 1*s.* 4*d.* sterling.* As the master (Mr. Blaney) did not attend the Commissioners, when called to give some account as to the character of the apprentice and the treatment of which he had complained, it would not be just to conclude *positively* that the apprentice's allegations were entirely correct. But, from a consideration of all the circumstances, I am inclined to think it very probable that the statement the African had made was founded on fact.† He did not appear to be one of those persons who are, by nature or by habit, disposed to grumble. Nor did he complain of having experienced any positive cruelty, or other ill treatment, further than the privations under which he was left to suffer; and, to a question which had been put to him, he replied, that his master did not ever "lick him," but he afterwards qualified this *praise* by a sort of indirect charge of insubordination against himself, by adding, that "he would not let him (his master) do so, if he attempted it." (Schedules, p. 44-45, No. 18.)

I have not observed in the course of my inquiry, a disposition to complain of maltreatment to prevail among the African Apprentices; on the contrary, cases occurred at the examinations, wherein it was stated by employers that they had inflicted punishment on their apprentices, although no such circumstance had been mentioned by the latter in delivering their statements. I am therefore induced to believe that complaints were rarely made by them, unless they were well founded, notwithstanding the assertions which sometimes have been made at Antigua, that the Africans were become "more turbulent, insolent, and unruly," in consequence of the arrival of the Commission. (See Appendix (E.) p. 57.) Redress for their wrongs was of course prescribed in such instances as appeared to call for the interference and protection of the Commission; but, on the other hand, any ill-founded complaints were treated in the way that they deserved.

If reasoning inferentially be a good way to arrive at a just conclusion upon a subject where moral as well as physical considerations constitute the materials upon which the mind is to form its judgment, the evidence which I have submitted to you would appear to me to prove that the great body of the African Apprentices of Antigua would be capable, after the expiration of their apprenticeships, of making

* This reprehensible practice, of hauling wooden houses from one part of the town of St. John to another, on the Sabbath day, although in some instances it may afford a temporary relief from want to poor Negroes similarly circumstanced as was this African, is too generally however a source of riot and dissipation to those among the town Negroes, who are most remarkable for habits of general profligacy.

† It will be seen by reference to a paper in the Appendix (D.) which was inclosed to me by the Attorney General of Antigua, that, previously to the 10th of September 1822, a Mr. Blaney had been indicted for "*immoderately correcting* his apprentice," and that upon trial, it was decided by the Judges of the Common Pleas, that African apprentices could not be legally dealt with (*i. e.* punished) as Slaves, but were to be regarded (in this point of view) as on a footing with apprentices in the mother country, whom the master had, by the *Common Law*, a right of correcting with *moderation*, and that the measure of the punishment was a fit question for the determination of a jury. It also appears from the same authority, that "*an oppressive practice had prevailed*" at Antigua, of *inflicting punishment upon this class of persons at the mere will and caprice* of their masters, which rendered it necessary for the Governor upon to interpose his authority. The Law Officers at Antigua, in their joint report to the Governor upon this subject, have given it as their opinion, that the Magistrates have not, in *strictness of law*, any right "to order African apprentices to be punished as they are in the habit of doing," although it appears that they (the Magistrates) held themselves warrantable in so acting upon the assumed authority of the 20th of Geo. 2, c. 19.

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making a proper use of civil liberty, and of discharging their duties as useful members of the community, without being subjected to any greater degree of control than is necessary for the government of other free persons of their humble condition. But although such is the view of the subject, which, after the experience I may have acquired relative to the conduct and character of these persons, I entertain, yet I am far from thinking that it would be advisable to let so great a number live altogether free from control, and, without further protection on the part of His Majesty's Government, to seek subsistence in a colony where they would have difficulties to contend with,—greater, perhaps, than would arise from want of industry on *their* part or scantiness of employment on that of the colony. I have already had the honour to submit to you (in my Report of the 16th of May 1825) what my sentiments were upon this branch of the subject, and therefore shall not at present offer any additional observations, further than to state, that any regulations for the future settlement of the Africans in Antigua, which would not secure to them the care and protection of His Majesty's Government, would not appear to me to be calculated, under present circumstances, to establish their welfare.

The opinions which I have submitted being founded upon facts that came under my own observation, and upon authorities which I consider the most deserving of credit, they cannot, as I conceive, be affected by vague and loose assertions of an opposite tendency, made by persons whose opportunities of observation were extremely limited, and whose information has been derived from interested sources. It may not, however, be improper to offer some remarks upon certain publications which have appeared upon this subject, and show upon what weak and inadequate grounds the opinions delivered therein have been formed.

In a work lately published, entitled "Six Months in the West Indies," the character of the African Apprentices of Antigua has been represented in such a way, that I must conclude the opinions of the author were formed as erroneously as they appear hastily delivered. As this book has been commended in a periodical work of high character, as the production of an impartial observer of West India affairs, and was lately quoted *elsewhere* upon West India subjects as an authority, you will therefore deem it not irrelevant that I should offer a few observations upon that part of the work which treats of the African Apprentices.

The Author commences his observations on this subject thus :

" I went to see the African free Apprentices, who were all drawn up in line in the yard of the Custom-house. They amount to upwards of two hundred. It has been the intention of Government to bind out these persons as apprentices for seven years under the ordinary incidents of that species of service, and to declare them absolutely free at the expiration of the term."

From this passage it appears that the Author had been ill informed respecting the period of apprenticeship of those persons to whom his observations can apply.

. " Unfortunately (states this Author) these wretched creatures are for the most part so barbarous, that it has been found almost impossible to induce them to engage in any regular work, and so profligate that they universally import disorder and vice into every plantation where they may be. About thirty only were of such a character that they could be safely employed ; the rest remain in idleness or in very useless occupations, and are maintained entirely at the expense of Government."

When it is considered that the writer of the preceding passage knew no more from personal observation of these Africans, than what he could learn by *an inspection* of them while they were " drawn up in line in the Custom-house yard," it affords matter of surprise that he could report upon them (to the public) so decisively as he has done. It is evident that his personal knowledge of this subject was extremely limited, and that it could not have been otherwise, from his short stay at St. John's. Had it been his duty, Sir, to inquire more carefully into the conduct of the persons whom he represents as being " for the most part so barbarous . . . and so profligate . . ." he would not have reported thus carelessly concerning their characters, upon information received from persons with whose views he appears to be entirely unacquainted. With respect to the number
and

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and character of those Africans who might be employed upon plantations, he (the writer) is entirely in error. The number living on plantations in 1824 was very limited, but not for the reasons assigned by him. These did not exceed ten; and with perhaps a single exception, the accounts given of them by their employers were favourable. Africans
at Antigua.

. . . . "It is vain (he continues) to represent to them the superior advantages of independence and the possession of enjoyment, which are only to be obtained by industry; it is equally in vain to tell them of the fertility of Trinidad, where they may have land given to them on condition of cultivating it, and where their labour would be highly valuable; nothing moves them, nothing seems to make them think for a moment of family or fortune; besides that, there is always at bottom a suspicion lurking in their minds that you are going to entrap them in some snare of which they are ignorant, and from which they shall not afterwards be able to escape."

In support of the opinion here expressed, the author relates a conversation which he held with one (African) whom he designates an "uncommon rogue," and who should therefore be considered rather as an exception, than a just ground of forming a general conclusion respecting the character of the Apprentices. I think it not improbable that the writer's contact with this very objectionable individual was not accidental, but brought about by interested persons, with a view to strengthen those erroneous impressions which it was their object and intention to make.

Again he states,—“Much temper and deliberation are requisite to deal with them beneficially; they present within a comparatively small compass, all the difficulties which would necessarily attend the immediate enfranchisement of the entire Slave population in the colonies; and they, who affect to hold these difficulties cheap, only discover their own consummate ignorance of a subject, upon which they have nevertheless the assurance to set themselves up as oracles.”

From the manner in which the subject is handled by this writer, it would not appear that he felt any of the difficulties of which he speaks; for, after deciding in a summary way upon the characters of these Africans, he then disposes of them by a very simple process, and develops his plan in one short page of his book. It is rather surprising, that a person who could write the concluding sentence of the last quoted paragraph, would not have anticipated that its contents might justly be considered as applicable to himself, although his abilities as an agreeable writer should be fully admitted.

I considered it my duty, Sir, to submit these few remarks to you upon the work above referred to; this I would not have done if the writer had been considered as a partial or interested person. In the account given by him of the African Apprentices, it is easy to perceive from what sources he derived the information he has transmitted concerning them. This circumstance is important, in showing that even persons free from bias, and possessing ability, may yet incautiously become the medium of erroneous intelligence. It shows also what share of credit is to be given to *hearsay* evidence upon this subject, or to information obtained in any other way than by regular inquiry and examination of parties, as prescribed in the instructions that had been given to the Commission.

To explain still further what value should be set upon any information obtained in the way above mentioned, or by means of written queries addressed to certain individuals, I shall now briefly advert to certain reports which from time to time have been published respecting these captured Negroes; which reports, although inofficial, are yet deserving of some notice, on account of the respectability of the authors in some cases, and the speciousness of the authority in others. In more than one publication of this kind I have met an opinion quoted, which was given by the late Chief Justice of Dominica, in a letter addressed by him to the Commissioners (Messrs. Moody and Dougan) relative to the liberated Africans; and this opinion has been used, rather illogically, as an argument to prove *generally* that this class of people can be of "little utility to themselves or the State."

I shall take the liberty to submit to you the passage in the Chief Justice's letter to which I allude:

- - - "The question respecting the policy of removing from the Colony Africans condemned to the Crown, is a subject of graver consideration; and I could
desire
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“ desire more time to furnish my ideas upon the subject than your short stay here affords, particularly as it regards *their future welfare*, of which no man of feeling can be unmindful. I am really quite at a loss to say where I would advise their transportation hence, with a view to bettering their condition. Larger naval yards, or military depôts of stores and ordnance departments, it occurs to me, would afford them employment beneficial to His Majesty's service. On board ship, too, they might be found of some use. At present they are without religion or moral discipline, and under no sort of superintendence or restraint, following the dictates of their own blind minds and impetuous passions; and you can, Gentlemen, very well judge from your own knowledge of mankind, of *what little utility to themselves or to the State such half savages can be*. I know of none employed in the country upon sugar, coffee, or provision estates.

“ As far as this community is concerned, and more particularly as we cannot say to what extent this anomalous population may be hereafter carried, there can be but one sentiment, which is, that their removal would be beneficial. The few we have, are, *I understand*, an idle, drunken, noisy, quarrelsome, fighting race, of no use to our internal force, not being called, as are other free blacks, to discharge militia duties; indeed they are of that class that might in case of insurrection or of invasion be dangerous. They are, moreover, the cause of angry and jealous feelings in the bosoms of the field and domestic slaves, who view with envious eyes, persons of their own black complexions, much more ignorant, uncivilized, and unlawful and tumultuous than themselves, their own masters, and labouring or not labouring, just as it suits their own convenience.”

If the opinion thus delivered by the Chief Justice is compared with that given by Mr. Bridgewater, the Collector of the Customs at Dominica, in his letter of the same date, it will be found that these gentlemen had taken quite different views of the same subject.

The following is an extract of the letter of Mr. Bridgewater :

- - - “ In regard to how far Africans condemned, would support themselves by regular labour throughout the year, or if any expense may be expected to be incurred by the Treasury for their maintenance during any part of that time; *from the frequent requests for grounds to cultivate on their own account, which have been made to me by the Africans under my charge, who are of a laborious and industrious turn, I am decidedly of opinion that they would be fully competent to provide themselves all the year round, if such were given to them for that purpose.* But as it would require some nine or ten months before they could erect huts, cultivate their grounds, and get settled, it would be necessary for Government to supply them in the meanwhile with such articles of food, &c. as are commonly given to Negroes, which might be furnished very reasonably; after which period, I cannot conceive that any expense ought to be incurred by the Treasury for their maintenance. Such Africans as have trades, and are desirous of working at them, I think it but right that they should be allowed to exercise their judgment as to the line of life they prefer; and as a measure likely to secure their welfare and good conduct, I would beg to suggest that every countenance and support ought to be given to them by the Governor and Collector, for it is indispensably necessary that they should have some persons in authority to look up to in the light of guardians, in order to excite emulation, and correct any tendency to improper conduct among them.” - - -

Between these conflicting opinions the mind is left to form its judgment; not upon the comparative credibility of the witnesses, (for both were persons of the greatest respectability, who would not express sentiments upon the subject which they did not entertain) but upon the comparative solidity of the grounds upon which their respective opinions were formed. Wherefore, considering their different evidences in this way, I am obliged to give a preference to the opinion of the Collector, as he has spoken from his experience of facts that had come immediately under his own observation; while the Chief Justice, in giving his opinion, appears to commence with that kind of hesitation which is observable when persons of good sense speak merely upon *hearsay*,—evidence, which this learned and intelligent Judge would himself have received with great caution, had he been acting in his judicial capacity.

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It therefore presents a subject for remark, that, although the letters of the Collector of Customs and Chief Justice of Dominica are to be found printed on opposite pages of the same Report, the latter has been repeatedly quoted in the publications above alluded to, while the Collector's letter has been altogether overlooked; — a circumstance which cannot be otherwise accounted for, than that its contents would not equally serve the views of persons who were anxious to establish a particular theory.

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at Antigua.

Another authority of the highest respectability has been assumed, to prove that the liberated Africans are in general unprofitable class of labourers in the Colonies; and a letter of Colonel Van Scholten, Commandant of the Danish Islands of St. Thomas and St. John, addressed to the President of the Council of Tortola, in answer to one he had received from the latter, has been quoted in some late publications, for this purpose.

As this communication of the Danish Commandant has already been laid before you in the Report of the Commissioners, dated 29th May 1822, (and since printed, by order of the House of Commons) I would not offer any observation thereon, if it did not appear to me that too much has been assumed from the Commandant's letter, and that it has been expounded in a way which the contents do not appear to admit.

I shall here submit to you the passages in the Danish Governor's letter which have been so explained.

- - - "By your Honour's letter, I further observe that many of these Negroes condemned to H. B. Majesty, have found their way to this Island; but, as these cannot be discerned from runaway slaves, and in order to avoid all difficulties, I should be glad to find that your Honour would, if possible, find means to prevent the sending of them to this country, where such people, without means to maintain themselves, become a burden and nuisance to the community." - - -

It is very evident, as His Excellency the Commandant observes, that such people, "without means to maintain themselves," would become a burden and a nuisance to the community." But it is also evident, that a great many of these Africans did find means of maintaining themselves at St. Thomas's by their own labour and industry; and so far were they from being a burden to the community, that several had been able, after maintaining themselves, to devote no small share of their earnings to the support of their masters or mistresses who resided in Tortola.

From President Porter's letter to the Commissioners, dated May 14th, 1822, it appears that the number of captured Negroes then living at St. Thomas's amounted "to a large proportion of those who were apprenticed in Tortola;" and notwithstanding the number being so great, yet it does not appear from the Correspondence with the Danish Governor, that there were more than three whose conduct or condition had come under the notice of the Danish Government, or had incurred any penalty from its laws. Had others among them been such characters as those, there is no doubt but they would have been similarly dealt with.

Nothing could be more reasonable than that Governor Van Scholten should desire that these Africans (about whom the British Government were so strongly interested) should be prevented from going over to St. Thomas's, where they would be exposed to the strictness of the Danish laws; and in some instances become liable to be dealt with, and sold, as slaves. But as he had not hitherto evinced any displeasure or uneasiness at their residing in his Government, nor had ever complained about them until he was solicited upon the subject, I am very much inclined to doubt that the Danish Government had been anxious to get rid of those Africans, as has been stated so confidently; at least I cannot discover in His Excellency's letter, or in the correspondence in general, any just grounds for so absolute an inference. If the Government at St. Thomas's, or even the merchants or other inhabitants, had found these Africans troublesome in their community, it cannot be supposed that they would have found any difficulty in getting rid of them.

I shall therefore submit it as the true state of the case, notwithstanding the assertions that have been made to the contrary, that those Africans who went to St. Thomas's, or were sent thither for hire by their masters or mistresses, must generally

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rally have performed useful services in that very busy sea-port and centre of West India commerce, where a frequent demand and an encouraging price for their labour was to be found. And I will further respectfully state to you, as my opinion, that Governor Van Scholten's letter has been misconstrued, and applied in a way which the worthy Governor could not have foreseen when he wrote it, and when he informed the President of Tortola that "no strange man of colour is permitted by the Danish laws to reside at St. Thomas's and considered as free, unless he obtain free brief" from the Government, or permission otherwise to remain there, in order to prevent the Colonies from being infested with bad subjects from other countries.

It was in conformity with this rule, that the African "Jem," who had been put into gaol, was dealt with afterwards. As his civil condition was not made known to the Danish Government, and as he was therefore looked upon as "a runaway slave," after the time prescribed by law, he was advertised, and sold by public vendue *for one dollar*.

When it is considered that this African "seemed to be mad," (as stated in Governor Van Scholten's letter) and that he could only bring a price of *one dollar* when set up for sale at a public vendue, it is most reasonable that the Governor should look upon him as a very useless, if not a very dangerous member to the Danish community. There is no community in the world, in which a mad Negro, who could be purchased for the sum of one dollar, would not be regarded as a bad member of society. This, however, does not prove that those other Africans who were able to earn from one to three dollars a week at St. Thomas's, and to make presents to their Tortola masters or mistresses, were considered as likely to become a nuisance or burden to the community. There can be no reason to doubt, if they proved to be such, that they would quickly be sent off the island. The inference, then, which has been drawn against the character of the African Apprentices, does not appear to be borne out by the Danish Commandant's letter.

It appears from the Report upon the condition of the Apprenticed Africans of Tortola, page 57, that the sojourning of the Africans at St. Thomas's was disapproved by one of the Commissioners,* and that he "was anxious to prevent their running away to that island or being sent there." This would, perhaps, have been expedient, if their going thither had not been accounted for in "the severe treatment of their employers, or their own wish to be masters of their time." It further appears, that the Commissioner wished to have diverted the Africans from those departments of industry in which they used to be employed at St. Thomas's, to the more eligible and certain mode of subsistence which agricultural labour would have afforded them; and he states it as a matter "not undeserving of" remark, that not one of the Apprentices who thus withdrew from Tortola, ever "hired themselves to agricultural labour for any fixed period."

Although I am of opinion, Sir, that agricultural pursuits would more effectually establish their welfare, than those irregular kinds of industry to which they are said to have given a preference, yet it appears to me that under the existing circumstances they could not have remained long in the condition of hired agricultural labourers on a sugar plantation, in any West India Island that I have known, however advantageous such a mode of living might prove to them, if they were placed under regulations suited to their condition. I cannot conceive how a liberated African could well be placed on a sugar estate, among a gang of field slaves, to perform the same work with them, without being subjected to the same discipline as these slaves, the same authority of the driver, and the same mode of coercion. To make one law for the field slave, and another for the field apprentice, and to mete out different kinds of punishment for the same offence among these different descriptions of persons, could not fail, in my opinion, to produce such disorder and confusion on the plantation, as would ultimately terminate in, or perhaps rapidly lead to the worst consequences; and yet such a regulation, and such a distinction should necessarily be made between persons so distinguished by law, or the Acts of Parliament would become a dead letter.

It therefore appears strange that the Commissioner could have contemplated such an event as the engaging small numbers of these persons with advantage in
agricultural

* Major Moody.

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agricultural labour upon sugar estates, mixed with the slave gang, unless perhaps he deemed it a harmless deviation from the rule prescribed in the spirit of the Act of Parliament, if the liberated Africans should be dealt with in every respect as the field slaves of the plantation. Africans
at Antigua.

Had the captured Negroes, who remained to be disposed of after the selection for the navy and army, been placed at the first upon plantations, in sufficient numbers to carry on the field works of the estate, without being mixed with the slaves; or even now, if all among those whose apprenticeships have terminated or are about to terminate, who may not have learnt some handicraft trade or other useful occupation which would be likely to ensure their future support, were to be so disposed of, (due regard being had, however, to age, infirmity, or sex,) good consequences might perhaps be fairly expected. But, to place among the field gang of a sugar plantation a few stragglers whose periods of apprenticeship might have ended, or who might have run away to a neighbouring colony in consequence of want or maltreatment; such a measure would not, in my humble judgment, be a wholesome one, either with regard to the interest of the planter or the welfare of the Negro.

Under circumstances of such difficulty as these Apprentices had to contend with, it appears to me that it was fortunate, for such among them as suffered from want or harsh treatment, that the island of St. Thomas was so very near, and that they could there find relief from the distresses under which they had to labour at Tortola; and in every case of the kind, unless there were special instructions upon the subject, it would perhaps be no imprudent use of the discretionary authority which a public officer is sometimes called upon to exercise, should he decline preventing the individuals from availing themselves of the means of bettering their condition, which might be presented to them in a neighbouring island, such as St. Thomas's, whose Government, though foreign, was yet on the most friendly terms with Great Britain, and whose soil was hardly separated by the sea from that of Tortola; where, according to the Report of the Commissioner (page 60,) "the labour of the African Apprentices was generally considered of little value," and where, of course, it may be inferred, their exertions would be but little encouraged.

I am aware that resources of this kind are not agreeable to the original intention and spirit of the law which obtained for these Negroes their state of freedom; and that such was the opinion of the late Lieutenant-General Sir James Leith, the humane protector of the African. But it will be seen, upon reference to Sir James Leith's letters upon this subject, that it was the system pursued in the West Indies by Collectors, in the apprenticing of the Africans, and by masters and mistresses afterwards, who hired them out for wages, and treated them as slaves, which was principally condemned by him, and not the "scheme of apprenticing," which was laid down in the Order in Council, (as has been stated in pages 57, 58 of the Tortola Report.) Sir James Leith's objection to the removal of any of these persons to a foreign Island arose out of the well-founded apprehension, that in such situations they would be exposed to the danger of relapsing into a state of slavery; and his reasons, therefore, for disapproving, generally, of the practice of removing apprentices at a distance from the protecting authority of their "legal guardian"* as the law then stood, were the best that could be conceived. I believe, however, that his liberal and benevolent mind would not have inclined him to throw any impediments in the way of such Africans as might suffer under want or misery at Tortola, to seek a temporary retreat therefrom on the adjacent shore of St. Thomas, until some remedy should be prescribed by His Majesty's Government for such contingencies. To permit, in cases of such necessity, a deviation from ordinary rules, would only be consistent with the enlarged views so uniformly entertained by that distinguished individual.

Whatever disappointment, therefore, or regret, may have been felt, because the Apprentices in certain cases were obliged to have recourse to a foreign Colony for temporary relief, or for bettering their condition: some good, however, appears to have resulted from this contingent evil, inasmuch as they were enabled in the opulent town of St. Thomas to afford some proof of industry, while their labour

Connected

* The Collector, or other chief Officer, of the Customs.

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was employed to the best advantage for themselves and their indigent masters and mistresses who resided at Tortola.

Connected with the present subject is that most important part of the business of the Commission, which relates to the Order in Council of the 16th March 1808. Upon this I shall now submit some observations.

In pages 58, 63, 65, 69, 127, 132, 134 of the Reports upon the condition of the apprenticed Africans of Tortola, the defects, real or *presumed*, of the Acts of Parliament and Orders in Council relating to captured Negroes, are largely discussed and commented upon.

That these Acts and Orders in Council might still be improved, any person who is conversant with the subjects will be ready to admit. Perhaps few Acts have appeared upon the Statute Book, of which the same may not be safely affirmed. So far, in this matter, I agree with the Commissioner; but, in other respects his views of the subject are very different from mine. For it appears to me that the Acts of Parliament and Orders in Council (though perhaps requiring some slight modifications) would have been sufficient for attaining the objects contemplated, if they were properly attended to in the Colonies by those persons whose duty it was to carry the instructions they had received from His Majesty's Government into effect. It is to such neglect of duty, and not to any real defects in the Acts or Orders in Council, that the fault should be attributed, if much money has been expended with little advantage to the liberated Africans, or if difficulties are now presented with regard to the future disposal and settlement of them.

It appears from pages 58, 69, 132 of the Report upon the African Apprentices at Tortola, that the Commissioner ascribes the alleged defects of the Abolition Acts and Orders in Council to a want of local knowledge in those persons who "interested themselves" in framing the said Acts and Orders in Council; and he appears, moreover, to think "the idea of regulating by Orders in Council, at a distance of 4,000 miles, matters concerning the control and direction of the labour of the African Apprentices in the West Indies," to be rather chimerical.

It is not a part of my business to enter into any discussion as to the legislative qualifications of the individuals alluded to; such an attempt, on my part, would be as absurd as it would be presumptuous; neither is it necessary for me to state that I do not consider long residence in the West India Islands to be essential in forming the qualifications of persons who may be called upon to make regulations concerning the control and labour of the African Apprentices.

It requires but little acquaintance with the history of governments to know, that wise laws and regulations are framed by men, who have had no *personal* experience of *particular facts* to which such laws and regulations are applied, but who, possessing sound, unbiassed, judgments, and commanding all the means of informing themselves of the truth, can convert the *local experience* of intelligent and faithful officers and other honest persons to the benefit of the commonwealth; and if this is particularly true of modern times, it can make little difference, so far as the wisdom and propriety of the regulations are concerned, whether the colony for which they are intended be 1,000 miles, or 4,000, distant from the scene of legislating, though perhaps the due execution of such regulations would be affected by the *distance*.

Wherefore, omitting every unnecessary remark, I shall hasten to perform my duty in explaining the sentiments I have expressed above, respecting the Abolition Acts and Orders in Council, so far as they relate to the condition of the African Apprentices.

By the 7th sect. chap. 36 of the 47th of Geo. 3, it was provided,—“That it shall be lawful for His Majesty, his heirs and successors, and such officers, civil or military, as shall by any general or special Order of the King in Council be from time to time appointed and empowered to receive protect and provide for such natives of Africa as shall be so condemned, either to enter and enlist the same, or any of them, into His Majesty's land or sea service as soldiers, seamen or marines, or to bind the same or any of them, whether of full age or not, as Apprentices for any term not exceeding fourteen years, to such person or persons, in such place or places, and upon such terms and conditions, and subject to such regulations as to His Majesty shall seem meet, and as shall by any general or special Order of His Majesty in Council be in that behalf directed and appointed.”

By

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By the 16th sect. it was provided and further enacted,—“That it shall and may be lawful for His Majesty in Council from time to time to make such orders and regulations for the future disposal and support of such Negroes as shall have been apprenticed under this Act, after the term of their apprenticeship shall have expired, as to His Majesty shall seem meet, and as may prevent such Negroes from becoming at any time chargeable upon the Island in which they shall have been so bound Apprentices as aforesaid.”

By the Order in Council of 16th March 1808, it is laid down,—“In regard to such male Negroes as from infirmity or age are not fit for military or naval service, or such as shall not be required or taken for the same as aforesaid, and also in regard to female Negroes, the Collector or chief officer of the Customs for the time being is to use the earliest and utmost endeavours to bind them as Apprentices or indented servants to prudent and humane masters or mistresses, *either in the same OR OTHER COLONIES*, to learn such trades, handicrafts or employments as they may seem from their bodily or other qualities most likely to be fit for, and to gain their livelihood most comfortably by after their terms of apprenticeship or servitude shall expire.”

2dly. “In respect to female Negroes, for whom there is in general no employment in the West Indies but in domestic service or the labours of agriculture, the Collector or chief officer of the Customs for the time being is to take especial care that they be not employed in the latter on any account; and he is hereby further directed to bind them Apprentices only to such masters and mistresses as are of good repute for humanity to their domestic slaves, and *for such terms or periods only as may be sufficient for their acquiring the knowledge of their business as servants*, in whatever domestic capacity the master or mistress may assign them to, *with such addition thereto as may reasonably suffice to recompense him or her for the care of their instruction and the charge of their support in the meantime*, relation being herein had to the age and strength of every such female apprentice.”

If it be considered, that the Abolition Act (47th of Geo. 3,) and the Order in Council founded upon it, were promulgated at a period when Great Britain had to contend in war against all the rest of Europe nearly, it will be admitted that the wisest policy could not have suggested a better way of disposing of the young and active of the captured male Africans than by enlisting them into His Majesty's naval and military service, to any extent that the respective commanders might deem expedient. But as it was foreseen, that there would be among those Negroes many who from age or infirmity, &c. would not be fit for being disposed of as above, the plan of placing the latter “as Apprentices to prudent and humane masters or mistresses, *EITHER IN THE same OR OTHER COLONIES*, to learn such handicrafts, trades, or employments as they might seem from their bodily or other qualities most likely to be fit for, and to gain their livelihood most comfortably by after the expiration of their apprenticeships,” was, in my humble judgment, the best possible expedient that could have suggested itself. And then, with respect to that part of the Order which directs the chief officer of the Customs “to take especial care that the female Africans are not to be employed in the labours of agriculture on any account,” at the same time that it permits the apprenticing them for such a period of servitude, in any domestic capacity, as would reasonably suffice to recompense the master or mistress for their instruction and support, nothing, in my opinion, could be better calculated for dispensing equal justice between the respective parties than this proviso in the Order in Council.

It has been said in page 58 of the Tortola Report, that “one of the errors fallen into by those persons who interested themselves in framing the Abolition Act (47th Geo. 3,) and Order in Council, was the over-rating the value of labour performed by persons under such circumstances as the African Apprentices in “the Torrid Zone.” This assertion, however, appears to have been disproved by anticipation in the Act of Parliament itself and Order in Council, for by both of them the long period of *fourteen* years servitude has been permitted, though perhaps the spirit, both of the Act and Order, would prohibit the abuse (of that permission) which afterwards followed. If those Officers of the Customs in the colonies to whom, as agents of the Crown, the execution of this duty was committed, have erred either through ignorance or indiscretion, it is not just to ascribe the evil consequences

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consequences to any presumed defect in the Act of Parliament or Orders in Council. The Order had directed the Africans to be apprenticed to prudent and humane persons "either in the same or OTHER COLONIES." But this direction was not properly attended to, either at Antigua or Tortola; for, instead of making a due selection of masters and mistresses, as could have been done by distributing the apprentices in suitable numbers among the several islands within the respective governments, according to their several resources: and transferring to the Colonies of St. Christopher, Nevis, Montserrat, and Dominica, those Africans for whom eligible situations could not be had in the colony where they had been condemned to His Majesty,—all of them were there retained and disposed of, without proper regard, in many instances, to the ability or character of the persons to whom they were assigned. So indiscreet a disposal of the Africans could not have been anticipated in framing the Act of Parliament and Order in Council; neither could it be imagined that Officers of the Customs, to whom the disposal of these persons was intrusted, would have so neglected the spirit or so misconstrued the tenor of the Order in Council, as to apprentice indiscriminately the great majority of these Africans for so long a term of servitude as fourteen years, without regard to the age, sex, or strength of the individuals, or to the nature of the business in which they were to be instructed.

The Order in Council had not prohibited the employing male Africans in agricultural labour; and accordingly, considerable numbers of them were apprenticed at first to owners of plantations. If these were afterwards, for the most part, delivered over by their masters, before the arrival of the Commission, and are now employed otherwise than as agriculturists, any inconvenience that may result therefrom should be attributed to some other cause, rather than to a defect in the Order in Council. And if it were of much consequence to ascertain the point, I would venture to submit, that upon inquiry, the matter would not be traced either to any inferiority on the part of those persons in labours of agriculture, or to any distinction that was observed in their favour, in consideration of the law, (previously to 1821) with respect to the mode of coercion or general treatment.

With regard to the prohibition laid down in the Order, against employing female Apprentices in labours of agriculture, I have already stated it to be my opinion, that, under the then existing circumstances, nothing could be more consonant to wisdom and justice than such a prohibition. For although I do not perceive any reasonable objection to the employing female Africans in the lighter branches of Tropical agriculture, if they were placed under certain regulations, and kept distinct from the slave gangs; yet, as things were in 1808, when the Order in Council was issued (and as they are even at present) it would have been inconsistent with "the benevolent intention of the Act" of Parliament, and would moreover have betrayed an ignorance of the discipline and practice on slave plantations, if such a prohibitory clause had been omitted in the Order. Indeed, if it could be shown that abuses have not existed in those cases where female Apprentices, contrary to the Order in Council and indenture of apprenticeship, were employed in labours of the field: and if it should appear that such females had been dealt with agreeably to the spirit of the law, instead of being generally treated as slaves,—then, such a proviso in the Order might well be considered unnecessary, if not even objectionable.

As to the question, whether it would have been a wise act of policy at the first to place all the Africans who remained to be disposed of, after the selection for the navy and army, on plantations, without regard to age or sex,—if it were my duty to offer an opinion upon this point, I would decidedly object to the expediency of such a disposal of them, unless these plantations were the property of the Crown, and the number of liberated Negroes so placed would be sufficient to carry on the works of the estate without the co-operation of slaves. But moreover, if it be supposed that all the captured Negroes now residing at Antigua had been placed originally on a sugar plantation, purchased in that island by the Crown for the purpose, and that they were employed in raising those staple commodities which are considered the wealth of the West India Colonies,—is it not highly probable that the planters would in general have shown more dissatisfaction, had such a plan been adopted by the British Government and carried into effect through the several islands, than has been already expressed by the Legislature of Tortola, in their Petition to His Majesty against the present system.

Without

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Without presuming to offer any confident remarks upon a subject where the reasoning must at present be conducted upon grounds of probability merely, and without examining for the present the position laid down in page 133 of the Tortola Report, respecting the superior advantages which it is alleged would have accrued to the Africans "themselves, the Colony, and the parent State," if those persons had been apprenticed to planters, and employed in raising the staple commodities of the island, instead of being indentured to handicraft trades and domestic occupations; I shall submit to you a view of their present condition, comparatively with that which I believe would now exist had the Africans been all apprenticed to planters and employed only as agriculturists on sugar estates.

Africans
at Antigua.

Although it is not to be doubted that agricultural employments, duly regulated, would tend more to establish the twofold object of productiveness on the one side and welfare and comfort on the other, than the drudging occupations in which so many of the Africans have been employed, yet I am far from thinking that the condition of the Africans, regarded in the aggregate, is not much better now than it would be, if they had all, or most of them, been brought up as agriculturists, under such circumstances as those were, who had been so employed.

In the present state of the matter, as constituted by the Order in Council, and directed by the indenture of apprenticeship of 1821, the captured African is either a handicraftsman, a sailor, a domestic servant, or a drudge, (there are several among them who have acted in more than one of these capacities.) In the space of a year, such an individual may, by proper rules, be made a useful field labourer also, should it be desirable to do so. This I assume as a truth, which I think will not be denied by any person who is acquainted with the simplicity of West Indian agriculture.*

But if it be supposed that the Apprentice has been taught the trade of cooper, carpenter, blacksmith, or mason, his capabilities as a useful member of society, even upon a sugar estate, are much greater than those of the most effective man among the able-bodied gang employed at holing in the cane piece; or if he has been instructed in the business of a sailor, (a branch of industry which appears to me of great utility in the West India Islands,) his pretensions to future support are far superior to those of any field worker, and his labour, or that of the cooper, carpenter, &c. will be allowed to be as productive, even in reference to plantation wealth, as that of the Negro whose employments are merely agricultural; for, without the services of such workmen as the cooper, sailor, &c. those staple commodities of the West Indies, in the production of which the entire merit of the field labourer lies, would be deprived of that exchangeable value which renders the West India Islands of importance to the Colonist or the mother Country.

Whatever, therefore, may have been the treatment experienced by Apprentices during their periods of service: however neglected may have been the spirit of the Order in Council, and however violated the contract entered into by indenture: † all those Africans at least, who have been instructed in useful trades and occupations,

* What I have here submitted appears to clash with the opinion of a predecessor in the Commission, as delivered in p. 71 of the Tortola Report. In speaking of an African, 25 years of age (of whom his master, Mr. Belisario, had given a very "excellent character," (Tortola Schedules, p. 28.) and which character, it is stated, was never forfeited by the African;) the Commissioner thus observes:—

"As a domestic, Government cannot much promote the welfare of John Sano; but as an agriculturist, he could be provided for immediately——."

I cannot conceive in what way a Negro of 25 years of age is become incapacitated for agricultural life, from the circumstance of having served an apprenticeship of seven years in domestic service, or as a drudge. It cannot require great pains, nor length of time, to instruct such a person in the use of the hoe and bill-hook, to make a cane hole, lay the cuttings, or weed the canes. Whenever the experiment shall be fully tried, under such regulations and encouraging circumstances as His Majesty's Government would be pleased finally to adopt, it will, in my humble judgment, be found extremely easy to make useful agriculturists of all such Africans as "John Sano."

† It appears from a Report of the Commissioners (Messrs. Moody & Dougan,) dated 4th June 1822, that the sum of £. 761. 8. currency was paid by the Collector of the Customs at Antigua, at the expense of the Crown, to a lawyer, "for drawing out indentures for 141 African Negroes, at 12 dollars for each indenture." The entire number of indentures produced to the Commission of Inquiry, in 1824, was 71, and of these several were imper-

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pations, have a fair prospect of being able to acquire a comfortable livelihood after the expiration of their fourteen years servitude, when the bodily strength of many of them will be on the decline, and their labour as field workers would be but little valued. If then, instead of the present state of things, as produced by the Order in Council and Indenture of Apprenticeship, it be supposed that all the Africans, who remained after the selection for the army and navy, had been apprenticed, without distinction or regard to sex, age, or strength, to planters, to be employed in agricultural labour, (which, according to the Tortola Report, page 127, &c. would have been the most eligible plan,) what would their condition be after the expiration of the fourteen years servitude, admitting even that their treatment during that space of time was the best possible.—All who were more than adult when apprenticed would, at the end of that period, be skilled in the business of Field Negroes, without the ability to perform the labour; their best days already passed, their strength would be unequal to the heavier kinds of field labour; and being no longer fit to keep pace with the youthful and vigorous, they would be hired only as labourers in the second gang, to weed the canes or pull the grass, &c.—or, what is by much the most likely, would be thrown upon the hands of Government for future provision and support; for few masters, even the best and most liberal minded, unless they were also most affluent, would retain their “worn out” * Apprentices any longer in their service, if they could without difficulty hand them over to the British Government for future care and subsistence.

If such a fate should await the declining years of the male African, who had been employed only as a field labourer during his long apprenticeship, what would the condition of a female apprentice be who had been so employed, and who perhaps might have two, three, or more children to support at the expiration of her term of servitude.

With respect to the question of agricultural industry, so far as it has been applied to the captured Africans, I would respectfully submit, that neither Antigua, Tortola, nor any other of the *Leeward* Islands, could, under the circumstances hitherto existing, present such a body of facts as might be considered grounds for any positive conclusion for or against the character of these persons, in reference to agricultural industry. Much has been said upon that subject in the Report upon the African Apprentices of Tortola; and great stress has been laid upon those written answers of certain respectable inhabitants of that Island, (referred to in pages 21 and 22 of this Report,) tending to show that the general conduct of the Apprentices of that Island was not good, and that in laborious and steady industry they were deficient. I have already explained my sentiments respecting information collected in that way, and therefore will only observe here, that wherever it was my duty to inquire into the condition of the captured Negroes, there appeared to exist among them examples of industry and general good conduct as numerous as could be expected from any other persons placed in such circumstances. The many instances to be found in the Antigua and Tortola schedules, wherein masters and mistresses have spoken in the most favourable terms of their Apprentices, are amply sufficient for proving that these persons are by no means deficient in habits of industry or the love of bettering their condition. The question is one which admits not of demonstrative reasoning, and therefore it cannot be asserted positively that an African Apprentice, who has behaved himself properly during a period of seven, ten, or fourteen years, will continue to do so when discharged from the further control of a master. But if it be safe to infer from the past good conduct of any number of individuals, what their future behaviour will in all probability be, if they are fairly tried, I would calculate upon it as no doubtful event, that all those Apprentices who have behaved well hitherto, and laboured diligently in the service of their masters, will persevere in a similar line of conduct when their apprenticeships have terminated;—and that if His Majesty's Government should be pleased to direct the able and active among them to be employed in agricultural pursuits, little difficulty would be experienced in such a plan for settling them.

Arguments

fect; but this defect was in point of fact of little consequence, for, whether the deed was regularly filled up and duly signed by the contracting parties, or not, it was of little or no use as a legal instrument, since the bond in the indenture was not otherwise regarded, in general, than as a dead letter.

* See the Note in page 21.

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Arguments drawn from a consideration of Physical causes, Climate of the "Torrif Zone," &c. have been urged against the hope that these persons, when free, will steadily apply themselves to laborious pursuits. I do not conceive it would be right for me now to enter into any discussion of that nature, nor to offer any opinion respecting the expediency of continued coercion, or of the kind and degree of control that might be best fitted for this class of people, in order to render their labour most profitable to themselves and to the community. You will deem it more to the purpose, Sir, that I should state the fact—that in those instances which have come under my observation, wherein Apprentices were allowed to seek their own subsistence, they never appeared deficient in the necessary exertions. Some peculiar cases, indeed, have occurred, where individuals, in consequence of sickness or some other casualty, stood in need of temporary relief; but such contingencies, although they show the expediency of making some certain provision for cases of distress, cannot however affect the general character of the Africans with respect to laborious industry. Those apprehensions, therefore, which some persons have expressed as to the future conduct of even the best behaved of the Apprentices, when they become free from the further control of masters, do not appear to me to proceed from any observation of facts which would prove them to be rationally founded. It is a common saying in the West Indies, that Negroes in general are remarkable for more zeal and laborious exertion during the day or the hour that is given to the cultivation of their own grounds, or to other pursuits of private profit, than when they are engaged in the business of their masters or proprietors. In every community the general opinion upon any subject is usually collected from what is commonly said therein; and as such statements are never intended there in the way of commendation of the Negro character, they tend the more strongly to show, by comparison of circumstances, that a captured African, who had fulfilled his duty to his master during his apprenticeship, would not be wanting in laborious industry when he is called upon to work for his own support and emolument.

Africans
at Antigua.

During my residence in the West Indies, I never observed among the labouring classes, any persons who worked less than the slaves of the chain-gang, who were employed in repairing the streets; and certainly, if any persons are subject to strict coercion, the Negroes who form that gang are manifestly so.

It is remarkable, moreover, that all those Africans whose apprenticeships had terminated, preferred the privilege of being allowed to seek their own subsistence, to remaining any longer in the service of their masters or mistresses.*

Why this feeling should prevail among persons in their "backward state of knowledge and civilization," or why men, whose ideas of freedom are so very confined and so free from romance, should prefer an uncertain mode of subsistence to the certainty of rations in food, clothing, &c. such as they formerly received, I am unable to account, otherwise than by supposing, that they find their condition on the whole to be improved by the change. A desire of being free from control, and the power of disposing of their time and labour in the way that should appear most agreeable to themselves, would, no doubt, be sufficient to induce men in every *Zone* to prefer for a time, a precarious mode of living accompanied by freedom, to more certain means of subsistence if attended with control. It is not likely, however, that such persons as these African Apprentices would long persevere in such a choice, if in their new mode of living they experienced frequent want or misery, or did not find themselves as morally happy and as physically comfortable as they were when maintained by their masters or mistresses.

It has been treated of as a hardship upon the inhabitants of certain West India Islands, that such a class of persons as the captured Africans should have been introduced into the colonies, or permitted by His Majesty's Government to remain there. Hoping that it will not be deemed irrelevant to inquire briefly into the grounds

* An example of this kind occurred at Nevis, as early as July 1822, where five African Apprentices, upon the expiration of their indentures, applied to the Collector for certificates of their civil condition, stating that they were capable of providing for themselves, and refusing to continue any longer in the service of their late mistress, although the latter was one of the most affluent persons in the Colony. (Nevis Sched. and Tortola Sched. page)

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grounds of such complaints, I shall endeavour to show how far they are to be looked upon as deserving of serious attention.

At the same time that I entirely concur in the opinion, that some hardship exists in the matter, *so far as concerns that class of proprietors whose property is vested solely in slaves, or whose income depends upon the wages received for the hire of their slaves*, I must however say, that a similar grievance cannot be felt by the higher order of slave proprietors, who, as owners of the soil, derive their income from the production of those staple commodities with which the liberated Africans are not at all likely to meddle in the way of competition.* Indeed there appears to be some unreasonableness or inconsistency in the arguments which I have read upon this subject, both in the Petition of the Legislature of Tortola, and in the Commissioner of Inquiry's Report concerning the Apprenticed Africans of that Island.

The principal reasons assigned in these documents against the expediency of permitting the Africans to remain in the colony, after the expiration of their indentures, are as follow :

- - - That they would neither be qualified nor disposed to apply themselves to agricultural pursuits, in raising those staple commodities upon which the prosperity of the colony depends. - - -

- - - That, even if they were competent and willing to perform the business of agriculturists, and should offer their services as hired labourers, it would be at higher wages than planters would think it advisable to give under present circumstances. - - - And lastly, that danger or expense will result to the colonial community if this class of persons shall be permitted to remain among them. - - -

Such are the reasons urged by the Petitioners in praying for the removal of the captured Africans from the colony. The Commissioner treats the subject more diffusely ; but his arguments tend to a like conclusion ; and he states by way of illustration, as a fact, that " the labour of the African Apprentices of Tortola did not increase the quantity of the staple articles of sugar and cotton, to any positively certain extent worth specifying ; certainly not equal to the labours of 10 able-bodied slaves, notwithstanding the several thousand pounds that had been paid on their account by the treasury of Great Britain."

(p. 127, Tortola Report.)

I do not conceive that it makes any part of the business of the Report to inquire what the views of Government were, when it was deemed expedient to encourage and liberally reward the captors of slaves ; but it appears to me, that it was not pecuniary profit, nor the quantity of sugar or other staple commodity which could be raised by the labour of the captured Negroes, the British Government were concerned about, when it was resolved that those persons should not be dealt with as slaves, after being forfeited to His Majesty.

It was not prohibited, however, either by the Act of Parliament or Order in Council, to employ the *male* Africans in agricultural labour ; and as some captured
Negroes

* It is evident that the wages of hired Slaves, whether mechanics, domestics or drudges, must be diminished, in every small colony where considerable numbers of captured Africans have been settled ; and that such diminution of wages will be proportional to the increased supply of hands presented by the Africans. In consequence of the competition which will naturally take place in the market for labour, where the demand for such working persons does not proportionally increase, not only the daily profit which an owner may have in his hired Slave, but also the entire value or selling price of him, will be considerably lessened. It might often happen that a Slave of this description should not be able to find adequate employment ; and in such cases the consequence would inevitably be want and distress, either to himself or his owner, or perhaps to both. The only remedy under such circumstances, would be to sell the Slave, if a purchaser could be found ; but such a resource may not always be readily had. There are few persons who, wanting to hire a mechanic, a sailor or a domestic servant, would be willing to pay from 3 to 10 dollars, &c. a month for the service of a Slave in any of these capacities, when he can find among the captured Africans persons who could execute the business as well for half the wages. An instance of this kind happened to come particularly under my observation : a person who had hired the services of two domestic Slaves, paid the owner of one of them six dollars a month, besides the weekly allowance paid to the Slave himself ; finding himself badly attended by these two persons, he afterwards engaged one of the Africans in his service, and found his attendance more valuable than that of both the former together.

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Negroes (females as well as males) have been so employed, it would be worth the inquiry to ascertain why those are not, at present, profitably engaged in that way. Africans
at Antigua.

The local experience of the persons whose opinions have been now referred to, cannot be doubted; and that they have expressed the sentiments which they feel, respecting the apprenticed Africans, will not be questioned. But, notwithstanding this, I cannot perceive throughout their arguments any satisfactory proof given, that the general interests of the colony have suffered by the introduction of this class of persons, or are likely to suffer if they should be allowed to remain.

The Petition itself fully proves the fact that the petitioners wish these persons removed from among them; but neither the petition nor the Commissioner's report appear sufficient to show that there is not something unreasonable in the request, and some inconsistency in the arguments when compared together and with facts.

It is assumed by the petitioners as the leading objection to these liberated Africans, that they would not apply themselves to "*agricultural purposes*," after their indentures have expired; in which position the Commissioner appears to agree with them—in his report; otherwise, he says, the request contained in the petition would be absurd, since even now there is land thrown out of cultivation and used as pasturage, which would be more profitably employed, were it not for the already existing scarcity of labourers—(Tortola Report, pp. 125–128.) But the position itself remains to be proved, so far as the leeward islands are concerned; for the Africans have not yet been sufficiently tried there at agricultural industry, or under such circumstances as would warrant the assumption. Indeed all those instances that came under my observation, where African Apprentices had garden grounds, or any other peculium allowed them, would lead to a different conclusion. The accounts that were given of these, show that they were as attentive to their husbandry as any of the slaves of the island could be; and some, who were placed in favourable circumstances, were able to lay by part of their earnings, or to acquire some little property in small "stock," &c.

Whether the motives, therefore, which suggested the petition may appear "absurd" or not, the prayer it contains does not appear, upon examination, to be very reasonable. If it be admitted, (as in page 128 of the Tortola Report,) that the demand for agricultural labourers at a low rate of wages is greater than the supply, it seems unintelligible how any colony in such circumstances could object to a class of labourers like the African Apprentices; and upon such grounds as those alleged in the Tortola petition and report—for, from the fact that there is good land already thrown out of tillage for want of hands to cultivate it, it must be evident, that if the captured Africans had never been introduced into the island, or were now to be withdrawn from thence, still further portions of such land would necessarily be left without cultivation; and this would be the case whether the Apprentices ever were employed in agricultural labours, or were confined merely to handicraft trades and drudging occupations.

The prosperity of a sugar colony does not entirely depend upon the services of the field labourer; every necessary department of industry must have its portion of workmen, in order to give effect to the labour of the husbandman; and, therefore, in every slave colony, where the demand for labourers in the aggregate is greater, to any remarkable degree, than the supply, it must of course be desirable to the colonial community at large to receive the requisite accession to their number of working persons, although the interests of some individuals may be affected thereby, as has been already remarked—(page 40.)

Such being the way in which my humble judgment views the matter, I would respectfully submit to you, as the fact,—that every African Apprentice, who lives not idle, but labours diligently in his master's service at some necessary occupation, whether as a mechanic, a sailor, or a domestic, contributes a fair proportion to the prosperity of the colony; and, therefore, although it should be proved that the African Apprentices of Antigua or Tortola did not (by field labour) raise as much of the staple articles of the colony as was produced by the labour of ten able-bodied slaves (as stated in the Commissioner's report with reference to Tortola,) yet it must be evident that any number of Apprentices, whether 10, 100, or 200, who performed services of indispensable utility in the colony, did virtually contribute as much to the production of wealth as if they had been employed solely

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in cultivating the ground, inasmuch as they fulfilled duties in the colonial society, which, in their absence, should be performed by so many slaves withdrawn, immediately, or consequentially, from the labours of the field.

On a well ordered sugar plantation, where the entire number of *working* Negroes should average 280 throughout the year, about 210 of these are employed in agricultural labour, viz. 80 able-bodied field labourers to hole the ground, cut the canes, &c. and 130 for the lighter kinds of field work. The remainder may be considered to consist of about 20 tradesmen (coopers, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, &c. ;) 25 domestic servants, nurses for the sick, &c. ; 12 watchmen to guard the canes and negro grounds ; and 13 stock-keepers or herdsmen, mule-boys, &c.

At the period of the abolition of the Slave trade, it was generally apprehended on the part of the British planters, that they would no longer be able to compete with foreign colonies in the sale of their staple produce ; as the latter, by still retaining the advantage of importing Slaves, would be better and more cheaply supplied with labourers, and could therefore afford to undersell the British planter in the general market of Europe. Thus also, each particular colony, as a competitor with its neighbours in the home market, would consider its separate interests affected in proportion to the plenty or scarcity of hands afforded for the cultivation of the land and to the natural fertility or productiveness of the soil.

According to the apprehensions then entertained, and to the reasonings founded upon them, it must have been regarded as a peculiarly happy event for any West India island, which suffered under a want of cultivators, when from 200 to 500 African Slaves, captured on board some foreign vessel by a British man-of-war, were brought into its harbour (as happened from time to time at Antigua and Tortola) to be distributed among those inhabitants who stood in need of a supply of working persons. If it is considered, moreover, that the labour of the captured Africans was to be had during a period of ten or fourteen years for the mere expense of their maintenance and instruction ; and that the master, who receives five, ten, or twenty Apprentices, instead of having to pay a sum of from 20 *l.* to 50 *l.* sterling for each (as prior to the Abolition Act he should have done,) besides the capitation tax, is thus enabled to invest so much of his capital in some other way, in the improvement of his estate ; it will then be manifest what little real ground of complaint the higher orders of the colonial society can have against the introduction and settlement of the captured Africans among them ; whether the latter were employed in agricultural labour or not, if services were performed by them, so necessary or so useful in the community that an equal number of Slaves would be required for the performance, in the absence of the Africans. From the inquiry into the condition of the apprenticed Africans at Antigua, it appeared that the great body of these persons *did* perform services of such a description ; and, therefore, it might be calculated upon, as a natural consequence of the removal of any given number of Apprentices from the colony, that, just so many labourers should be withdrawn from the cultivation of the soil. A similar inference might be made respecting any other colony where captured Negroes are so settled, and where the demand for labourers in the aggregate is greater than the supply.

When the subject is thus examined, it will not appear unreasonable, if owners or directors of plantations, wishing to receive any number of the Africans as Apprentices, were required to have them instructed in handicraft trades, or to employ them about the sugar works, or as domestic servants, rather than among the field gangs ; and particularly if the plantation was extensive (such as that above represented,) where the field gangs are supposed to exceed 200, and the Negroes employed at other occupations on the estate amount to the number of 60, 70, or 80.

Neither should it be regarded as matter of great partiality or special favour to this class of Negroes, if the planter consented to receive the Apprentices upon such conditions ; since he is aware that he is not to pay any price for them, but is to have their services for the mere cost of their maintenance ; and that after ten or fourteen years servitude, when they shall have amply recompensed him for the care and expense bestowed upon them, he will not be bound by law to protect or support them, though in their decline of life, as he would be obliged to do in case they were his Slaves.

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With respect to the question of expense or danger resulting to the colonial community from this class of persons, the apprehensions expressed upon this subject appear not to arise from any experience of the past, or rational anticipation of the future. Hitherto, instead of being any charge upon those colonies where they have been settled, the reverse has taken place. They have been a source of no little profit to such colonies; and much money from the Treasury of Great Britain has been circulated in the small communities of Antigua, Tortola, &c., which never would have found its way into these islands, had not the captured Africans been settled among them. In the next place, when it is considered that the colonies have *the security of an Act of the British Parliament*, that the Africans are not to be made chargeable upon them hereafter (5 Geo. IV. chap. 113, sect. 31,) all fears upon that head, it may be presumed, can safely be dismissed.

Africans.
at Antigua.

As to any danger that could arise to the community from these liberated Africans, I cannot perceive that any serious apprehensions need be entertained upon the subject. At least so far as Antigua is concerned, where this class of persons bear so small a proportion to the entire population; and where the number of white inhabitants, according to the census taken in 1821, amounted to 1980, of whom 877 were males of such age as rendered them liable to serve in the militia; while the number of free coloured and black men liable to militia duty was 881. As a matter of policy, perhaps, it may appear to some colonies objectionable to increase the proportion of their free black inhabitants. But, in an island of such territorial extent as Antigua (with a Slave population of 31,064, according to the Triennial Registry taken in 1821,) an accession of 253 captured Africans, with their 87 children, ought not, even in that point of view, to excite much alarm.

Upon one point more which appears to me to be important in the business of the Commission, I shall now take the liberty to explain my sentiments.

Among the alterations which have been made in the laws relating to captured Negroes, by the enactment of the 5 Geo. IV. c. 113, those that concern Africans placed out as Apprentices, appear to be of very especial consequence. 1st, In limiting the term of service in future apprenticeships to seven years at the utmost (as laid down in sec. 32,) instead of fourteen years, which was the limit formerly prescribed in the Act of 47 Geo. 3. 2dly, In empowering and requiring the Judge of the nearest Vice-Admiralty Court to hear and summarily decide upon the complaints of African Apprentices, and to fine the master any sum not exceeding 100*l.*, in case the charge of maltreating his Apprentice be satisfactorily proved against him.

Before this Act had been passed, the law, so far as the African Apprentices were concerned, appeared to be very undefined in the colonies; as the Magistrates in some islands declined to interfere in matters of complaint between these Apprentices and their Masters, assigning reasons for their non-interference, which afterwards were declared "valid and sufficient" by His Majesty's law officers in England; while in other places, Magistrates not only did take cognizance of such cases, but assumed it as a warrantable authority sometimes to order the Apprentice to be punished (Appendix D.)

Under such circumstances, it was very desirable that the law upon the subject should be defined, and made general through the several islands where these persons were apprenticed.

With respect to the change made in the term of apprenticeship, the law appears to me much improved by the substitution of seven instead of fourteen years, as the limit in the term of servitude.

But I humbly submit, at the same time, that it could have been further amended in this particular. For there are numerous instances, wherein even seven years might be considered too long a period; while in many others, fourteen years service would not be too much to compensate for the maintenance and instruction of the Negro. You would, I presume, consider it right that a distinction should be made between adult Negroes of 20 or 30 years of age, and children under 7; between such Africans, for instance, as Farra Pierre, (Schedules, p. 92-93) a civilized and intelligent man, whose services as an active sailor would entitle him at the period of his capture to 10 dollars a month wages, and the young or sickly Negro boy, upon whom care and expense must yet be bestowed, before his services can be of much utility.

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Apprenticed

Wherefore, although the law in its amended state has remedied the abuse which the 47th of Geo. 3. had not anticipated, and which followed in consequence of the (Act) leaving it to the discretion of Collectors to indenture the Africans for any term not exceeding fourteen years; yet, in presenting this remedy, it would have been expedient not to restrict the term of apprenticeship to seven years, without distinction of age. There are very few persons who would take a young African under the age of seven years as an apprentice for so short a period of service; at the same time that most masters would gladly receive the active adult for even a shorter term.

In page 132 of the Report upon the Apprenticed Africans of Tortola, the following suggestion is offered by Major Moody to Earl Bathurst:

- - - "To guard against the further ill effects of local ignorance in persons residing in England, and also against local prejudices, I submit that any remedies proposed, should in the first instance be submitted to the local authorities for their report thereon; after which, they may be finally acted upon by an Order in Council, with more chance of success than has hitherto been the consequence of such Orders." - - -

Immediately after, in the same page, observing upon the 24th Section of the Act for consolidating the Slave Laws (which has placed the African Apprentices under the protection of the Court of Vice-Admiralty) he makes the following remarks:

- - - "It does not appear that any Member of either House of Parliament considered himself as possessing sufficient practical knowledge, to make any observation on the 24th Section of the Act 5 Geo. 4, Ch. 113, obviously intended for the benefit of the African Apprentices." - - -

- - - "Yet, my Lord, had there been any Member possessing the necessary practical knowledge, he would have seen that such an enactment tended to increase, rather than diminish the evils experienced, with reference to the poor African Apprentices." - - -

It is not for me, Sir, to meddle with a question of "practical knowledge," upon which, according to Major Moody's statement, all the Members of both Houses of Parliament are still to be informed. I might, indeed, be justly considered presumptuous, were I to interfere in such an issue. I trust, however, that you will deem it a part of my duty to state to you my sentiments respecting the provisions contained in the 24th Section of the aforesaid Act.

The regulation laid down by this Act, in transferring from the magistrates and the Collector the hearing and deciding of complaints wherein these Apprentices are concerned to the Judge of the Court of Vice-Admiralty, appears to me, under all the circumstances, to be a salutary enactment;* although some specific changes may yet be required, in order to render it fully adequate for attaining the object it contemplates; for, in the first place, the Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court, holding a high judicial situation under the Crown, is less liable to act under the influence of any bias that might arise from personal acquaintance with the parties, whose conduct should become the subject of investigation, and therefore, must be better fitted for giving to such complaints the necessary *hearing*. And secondly, because it can be shown from *local* experience, that the clause in the Act which authorizes the Judge of the Vice-Admiralty Court to decide summarily in these cases, is better calculated than the rule formerly in practice, for insuring an equitable as well as a speedy issue. The abstract principle, of summary decisions, or trials without jury, no one who is accustomed to English laws and English courts of justice will attempt to advocate. In special cases, however, like the present, exceptions may perhaps be made with advantage in favour of such a mode of administering justice. So far at least as concerns the African Apprentices of Antigua, it would appear to me that this provision in the new Act was founded upon information derived from sources of sound local experience.

The objection which has been made to that part of the clause which authorizes the infliction of any pecuniary penalty *not exceeding* one hundred pounds, may also be very easily set aside. For though the *name* of the penalty may prevent some persons from taking African Apprentices into their service, or may be used as a pretext

* Note in Appendix (F.) pp. 59, 60.

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pretext by others to get rid of Apprentices, who from infirmity or the incumbrance of children may have become unprofitable servants, it will not at all influence the better order of masters or employers; nor can I see any reason why it should, so far as the amount of the fine is the subject of consideration; for the law as it now stands is hardly different in that respect from what it was formerly, according to the covenant in the indenture, whereby the master was bound in a penalty amounting to double the sum at which the Apprentice would be valued if sold as a Slave, not to maltreat the said Apprentice, nor omit to fulfil his engagements in every respect to him. But even if it were admitted, that such a penalty for maltreating an Apprentice had not been appointed prior to the enactment of the 5th of Geo. 4, chap. 113, and that masters were not as strictly accountable for their conduct to these Apprentices by the covenant entered into by indenture prior to the 1st of January 1825, (when the 5th of Geo. 4. came first into operation,) as they now are in consequence of the promulgation of the Act, yet I would consider myself warranted in affirming, that no "respectable master" would seek to get rid of his Apprentice, from an apprehension that his conduct to the latter would ever subject him to the censure of the Court of Vice Admiralty; and also, that there is little reason to fear that a Judge of that Court will abuse the authority vested in him by imposing on any master such a penalty as one hundred pounds, unless a case of extraordinary cruelty was proved against him.

Africans
at Antigua.

In stating this, I am not ignorant that Judges are liable to error as well as other men, and that instances often occur where great authority vested in an individual may be unduly exercised. So far, however, as the matter relates to the African Apprentices of Antigua and the Vice-Admiralty Court of that Island, there is every reason to expect that justice will be wisely and impartially dispensed between master and apprentice as long as the office of administering it is filled by a person so universally esteemed for abilities and integrity as Doctor Nugent, the present Judge of that Court.

With reference to the plan submitted by Major Moody, viz. that any measures in future proposed respecting the Africans, "should, in the first instance, be submitted to the local authorities for their report thereon, after which they might be finally acted upon by an Order in Council," permit, me, Sir, to observe, that there are strong reasons for presuming that such a mode of proceeding would lead to no beneficial result, further than what might be produced by the act of courtesy itself to the "local authorities." Upon the subject of the future disposal and settlement of the African Apprentices, considered as a question of colonial policy, it is already sufficiently evident from the Tortola petition, &c. what the substance and tenor of the Reports would be which His Majesty's Government would be furnished with from the West India Islands, if the above-mentioned plan proposed by Major Moody should be adopted.

(signed) *J. P. Gannon.*

To R. J. Wilmot Horton, Esq.
Under Secretary of State for Colonies and War,
&c. &c. &c.

Appendix (A.)

	TRADES OR EMPLOYMENTS									
	Carpenters.	Coopers.	Shipwrights.	Cabinet-makers.	Masons.	Blacksmiths.	Goldsmith.	Gunsmith.	Printer.	Tailors.
Trade or Employment, according to the Indentures produced before the Commission or the Parliamentary Return printed 1821 -	10	10	2	2	10	7	1	1	1	3
Trade or Business really taught, as collected at the Examinations of the Africans and other parties by the Commission - -	6	4	1	1	4	7	1	-	-	-
Actual Employments at the period of the Examinations (in 1824) - - -	2	3	1	1	2	5	1	-	-	-

Appendix (A.)

OF THE MALE AFRICANS.											EMPLOYMENTS OF THE FEMALE AFRICANS.					
Shoemaker.	Sailmaker.	Sailors, Fishermen, and Boatmen.	Agriculturist.	Barber.	Butcher.	Domestics.	Bakers.	Cooks.	Grooms.	Porters, Drudges, &c.	Woodcutters, Herdsmen, &c.	Domestics.	Cooks.	Sempstresses.	Washers.	Hucksters, and Hawkers of Wares.
-	1	16	-	1	1	17	3	3	5	-	-	104	-	-	2	-
1	-	28	1	1	-	22	2	17	3	-	-	36	10	18	67	1
-	-	14	-	-	-	25	1	8	7	30	2	36	2	10	39	6

Appendix (B.)

Appendix
(B.)COMMUNICATIONS of the Clergymen of *Antigua*, to the Commissioners of Inquiry, respecting the Religious and Moral condition of the Apprenticed Africans.

From the Rev. *James Curtin*, Missionary from the Society for the conversion and religious instruction of Negro Slaves, &c.

Gentlemen,

Antigua, April 21st, 1824.

IN compliance with the request in your letter of the 17th instant, I have the honour to furnish you with such Answers as I can give to your Queries respecting the African Apprentices.

With regard to their marriage, I beg to state, that some years ago I received directions from the venerable Society for the conversion of Negroes, &c. to the following effect, viz. That when an unbaptized person or heathen came to me to be baptized, she or he is to declare whether they had one husband or wife at the time of their baptism; and in that case the parties were to be considered as married, without any further ceremony after baptism.

The African Apprentices, as *free people*, can not at this time be joined in matrimony with Slaves (in any other way than that I have alluded to) it being against the laws of this island for any of our beneficed clergy to marry a free person to a Slave. Very few indeed of the Africans are as yet sufficiently instructed to understand the meaning of the holy ordinance of matrimony. And from the evil habits which they acquired in their own country, it will take some time before they are sufficiently civilized to form that contract.

There is a schoolmaster from the abovementioned Society regularly in attendance at our Mission Chapel in St. John's, from the hours of 9 to 3 P. M. throughout the week, except Saturdays, and then till 12 o'clock, when he catechizes under my inspection, and that without fee or reward, except what he receives from the Society; and thither the Apprentices as well as the slaves and free poor children are invited to come, by bringing a note signifying the consent of their respective masters or mistresses.

The Africans in general appear to me to be more untractable than our Creole Negroes; and this untractableness is not diminished by their notions of not being equally liable to coercion. They therefore require to be kept under strict discipline. To devise the best mode of employing them to their own advantage, as well as to the advantage of the community, is a subject of very serious consideration. As they are naturally adverse to labour, and prone to evil, it is manifest that compulsion will be requisite, particularly in their uncivilized state; and for this purpose some of the dismantled estates may be easily purchased by Government, where they may be placed under proper officers, and employed in useful labours, till in process of time they acquire habits of industry and sobriety; and then some portions of land may be parcelled out, to the most deserving, at small rents; and they may be placed on the same footing with the other free Negroes in the colony.

As I believe the Negroes in this island are not behind any other Negroes in point of religious and moral improvement, of course the Africans have a proportional opportunity of improving from the general good behaviour of the blacks, free or slaves in this island; and therefore it should, in my opinion, be left optional to themselves to be removed, except in cases of crimes which may endanger the community. With my best wishes for your success in the laborious duties of your arduous undertaking.

I have the honour to remain, &c. &c.

(signed) *James Curtin*.

Enclosure in the foregoing Letter.

A.

RETURN of African Apprentices, and their Children, who have been baptized in *Antigua* by the Rev. *J. Curtin*, Missionary, &c. from 17th of October 1813 to 19th of April 1824.

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	ADULTS :		CHILDREN :	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
As well as I could learn, at the time they were baptized, they resided as follows: viz.				
In the parish of St. John - - - - -	4	27	18	26
— - - St. Paul - - - - -	- -	1	- -	1
— - - St. Peter - - - - -	- -	- -	- -	1
— - - St. Mary - - - - -	4	1	1	2
	8	29	19	30

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Appendix
(B.)

B.

RETURN of African Apprentices who have been married by the Rev. James Curtin, Missionary, &c. from the month of October 1813 to the month of April 1824 inclusive.

SEXES OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	TO WHOM MARRIED:		
	To free Black or Coloured Persons.	Other African Apprentices.	To Slaves.
<p>I find on my books the names of some female African Apprentices, whom I consider as being married agreeably to the directions received from the Society for the Conversion of the Negroes, &c.; and of that description there are 7 females baptized as <i>married</i>, the others were baptized as <i>single</i>. This I shall explain in the annexed Letter. And here I beg further to observe, that all ministerial duties performed for them by me, are <i>gratuitous</i>, without fee or reward.</p> <p>Male African Apprentices married to - - - -</p> <p>Female - - - - - - - - - -</p> <p>I have not inserted in my Register whether the husbands, whose names they gave me, were free or not, nor of what complexion.</p>			

N. B.—I find, as far as I have learnt, that of the above number baptized by me within the above period, one adult male, five adult females, five male children, five female children, have departed this life. Some also have left, or have been given up by their respective masters or mistresses. I cannot say where they are.

(signed) J. Curtin.

C.

RETURN of African Apprentices who are in Society, or who attend Religious Worship with the Rev. J. Curtin, in Antigua, at this time.

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	In Society:		Attend Chapel and School.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
<p>Few or none of the African Apprentices attend at the Mission Chapel under my care for religious instruction, except when the adults are preparing for baptism. Of late a few of their children attend at the school in St. John's - - - - -</p>	-	-	3	-

D.

RETURN of African Apprentices who, having been admitted into the Society of the in Antigua, have afterwards been expelled for immorality.

RESIDENCE, &c.	MALES.	FEMALES.
<p>I have not expelled any of those whom I have baptized; but am told some frequent other religious congregations, as best suit their convenience or inclination; and I always direct my converts to attend their respective parish churches.</p>		

(signed) J. Curtin.

50 PAPERS RELATING TO CAPTURED NEGROES; VIZ.

Appendix
(B.)

From the Rev. James Coull.

Gentlemen,

Antigua, April 28th, 1824.

BY some mistake I was not honoured with your very polite letter of the 17th instant till the 25th. As there are but few African Apprentices in either of my parishes, I have baptized only one woman and two infants. And I have never been applied to, either to baptize or marry any other.

I require that adult Negroes who apply to be baptized, should know the Lord's Prayer, know something of the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments of God, as, when they are baptized, they promise to obey them. I baptized 6 African Apprentices on the 12th of April 1818, at Castries, in the island of St. Lucie, at the request of Mr. Robinson, the then Collector of the Customs there, on representing the necessity of trusting to their godfathers and godmothers having them instructed, as they would not have me then to baptize them, when they had got some little knowledge of the Christian religion.

The Roman Catholics baptize adult Negroes, I understand, in this manner, considering them as infants, in which light only the African Apprentices can be baptized by the Ministers of the Established Church or of the Sectaries.

I am sorry to inform you that I have found an adherence to their African superstitions universally prevalent among the adults, and the greatest difficulty in persuading them to relinquish them, and to worship a God of mercy instead of a God of terror. Since the abolition of the Slave trade, and the decrease of Obeah men, most of our black population are baptized, and attend either the Parish Church, the Moravian or Methodist Meeting-houses.

We are at the greatest loss for catechists to instruct them, particularly the African Apprentices, and even then their progress would be slow. It is only from the rising generation we can hope for any great improvement in religious knowledge, by being early taught to read the Testament, the Bible, and religious Tracts. As our churches are open to, and pews in them for our black population, many of them occasionally attend divine service. And as they are all considered as belonging to the Established Church, they attend when they please, or get themselves considered as in the society of the Moravians or Methodists, as we have no society.

I have, &c.

(signed). James Coull.

(H. M. Comm^{rs} of Inquiry.)

Enclosure in foregoing Letter.

A RETURN of African Apprentices, and their Children, who have been baptized in Antigua by the Rev. James Coull, A. M. from April 23d, 1820, to April 28th, 1824.

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	ADULTS :		CHILDREN :	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1820: April 23. Damon, the infant son of Grace, residing with Miss Stilling on J. A. Garden's estate - - - - - }	-	-	1	-
Sally, and her infant daughter Margaret, residing with Mrs. Rogers on Hawes's estate - - - - - }	-	1	-	1
TOTAL - - - - -	-	1	1	1

In the Returns B. C. D. - - - - Nil.

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Appendix.
(B.)

From the Rev. Geo. Collins.

Antigua, Parsonage House, St. Philip's, 28th April 1824.
Dec. 6th, 1822, Middle Ground :—Louiza, a Negro Woman, apprentice, baptized by me.
(signed) *Geo. Collins,*
Garrison Chaplain, Antigua.

- 11th. At the Parsonage House of St. Philip's parish, this morning were baptized the following black Women:

Rebekah - - - - an apprentice, whose time has expired, her husband belonging to the 1st W. I. regiment.

Bess - - - - an apprentice, whose time has expired, wife of a pensioner of the 1st W. I. regiment.

(signed) *Geo. Collins,*
Garrison Chaplain, Antigua.

By proper authority, married this day, Pierre Harry, a military labourer, to Frances, a baptized woman African apprentice, in presence of Mr. John Latimer. The said woman Frances was some time since baptized by me, in the presence of Mr. J. Latimer.

(signed) *Geo. Collins.*

IN the parish of St. Philip; of which I am rector, there is a Church and Chapel of Ease. The church is at Willoughby Bay, close to the sea; the chapel is at Belfast; in both of which I officiate, and both are open, and have been since I was collated to this living, a period of about 21 years, to persons of all classes and colours, whether free or slaves; but I know of no African Apprentices who attend either.

(signed) *Geo. Collins.*

From the Moravian Missionaries.

Gentlemen,

St. John's, Antigua, 11th May 1824.

IN compliance with your request, which we had the honour to receive on the 17th April, we give you the number of African Apprentices under our care, who attend the meetings for religious instruction, kept three evenings in the week.

We have the satisfaction to know that many of those who attend divine service regularly, gain religious knowledge, improve in their morals, and give satisfaction to their employers. On the other hand we have the grief to see that some neither value nor make a proper use of the privileges granted them; others are dull, and cannot understand what they are told of spiritual things. We find by experience, that they are like children, who, by constantly attending a school, gain the knowledge intended for them. We, on our part, cannot see what more can be done for them by us than what has been, and still continues to be done for them.

Much depends upon their masters and mistresses, in allowing them time to attend Divine Service, and giving them an opportunity to learn to read.

We have the honour, &c.

(signed) *Christian F. Richter.*
John Gotlob Procop.
Geo. Robins.

To the Commiss^{rs} of Inquiry.

A.

Enclosure in foregoing Letter.

A RETURN of African Apprentices, and their Children, who have been baptized in Antigua by the Moravian Missionaries, from to

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	ADULTS:		CHILDREN:	
	le.	Females.	Males.	Females.
In St. John's - - - - -	24	43	18	9
At Green Castle - - - - -	1	1	—	—
At Archbold's - - - - -	1	1	—	—
TOTAL - - - - -	26	45	18	9

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Appendix
(B.)

B.

RETURN of African Apprentices who have been married by the Moravian Missionaries,
from 1st January 1817 to 1st May 1824.

	To Free Black, or Coloured.	To other African Apprentices.	To Slaves.
Male African Apprentices married - - - -	- -	8	2
Female - - - - - - - - - -	2	9	13
TOTAL - - - -	2	17	15

C.

RETURN of African Apprentices who are in Society, or who attend Religious Worship
with the Moravian Missionaries in *Antigua*, at this time.

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	In society.		Who attend Chapel or School.	
	Males.	Females.	Male.	Females.
In St. John's - - - - -	12	13	14	32
Green Castle - - - - -	1	1	—	—
Archbold's - - - - -	1	1	—	—
TOTAL - - - - -	14	15	14	32

D.

RETURN of African Apprentices who, having been admitted into the Society of the
Moravians at *Antigua*, have afterwards been expelled for immoralities.

RESIDENCE OF THE AFRICAN APPRENTICES.	MALES.	FEMALES.
- - - - -	- -	2

Honoured Sirs,

Grace Hill, April 29th, 1824.

IN answer to your request of the 17th instant, which I had the honour to receive some days after, I ask leave to say, that Grace Hill being situated in such a district of the island, to which but few probably of the African Apprentices come to live, both myself and my predecessors, according to our church book, never had the favour to baptize nor to marry any of these Apprentices; neither do I know that any of them who might have been baptized in other churches are now attending our church, or members thereof, and of course am not able to fill up the form you were pleased to send me.

With the highest regard, &c.

Samuel Bruemer.

To H. M. Commissioners of Inquiry.

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Gentlemen,

Newfield, Norwich Division, Antigua, April 30, 1824.

Appendix
(B.)

I HAVE had the honour of receiving your favour of the 17th instant, requesting me to furnish you with information concerning the African Apprentices who may have been baptized, &c. by the Missionaries of the church of the United Brethren in Antigua: In compliance with your request, I have examined our church books, and find that only one of the above-mentioned Apprentices has been baptized here at Newfield since the beginning of this station, December 6, 1818, as specified in the enclosed form you were so good as to forward to me.

I have, &c.
(signed) John Taylor.

Enclosure in the foregoing.

Return A.—1 female resided at Newfield.
— B.—1 female African, married to a slave.
— C.—Nil.
— D.—Nil.

Appendix (C.)

EXTRACT of a REPORT of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Captured Africans, on certain Accounts and Expenses incurred for the care and Maintenance of African Apprentices in charge of *George Wyke*, Esquire, Collector of His Majesty's Customs at *Antigua*. Dated Tortola, 4th June 1822.

Appendix
(C.)

" I do hereby certify, That the number of African Apprentices who have been in the Hospital, and supported at the expense of *George Wyke*, Esquire, Collector of His Majesty's Customs, have averaged at least *Twelve*, from January 1819 to January 1820.

" St. John's, Antigua, }
April 27, 1820. }

(signed)

W. West, M.D."

A RETURN of the Number of Africans who were on the Collector's Hospital List, at the conclusions of the several years 1820, 1821, 1822 and 1823; with Sums total of the Expenses of each Year respectively, for the Maintenance, Medical Attendance, &c. of those Africans.

		£.	s.	d.
1821:	To providing for 30 Africans, as above, for quarter ended } 10th Oct. 1821 - - - - - }	299	-	5
		£.	s.	d.
1822:	To 29 Africans - - 5 January - - - - -	253	-	-
	To 22 - D° - - - 5 April - - - - -	206	-	-
	To 20 - D° - to - 5 July - - - - -	159	-	3
	To 23 - D° - to - 10 October - - - - -	185	1	9
		803	2	-
1823:	To 29 - D° - to - 5 January - - - - -	182	18	8½
	To 49 - D° - to - 5 April - - - - -	353	3	3
	To 63 - D° - to - 5 July - - - - -	416	15	6
	To 69 - D° - to - 10 October - - - - -	439	17	10½
		1,392	15	3½
Currency - - -		£.	2,494	17 8½

(True copy.)
(signed)

William Barrow,
Secy, &c.

(signed)

Geo. Wyke,
Collr.

54 PAPERS RELATING TO CAPTURED NEGROES; VIZ.

Appendix
(C.)

Antigua.

AN ACCOUNT of Disbursements, for Food, Clothing, Medical Attendance, for certain Africans unavoidably placed under the care of the Collector of His Majesty's Customs at this Port; for the Quarter ended the 5th January 1824.

1823:		£.	s.	d.
October 13.	To allowance for 68 Africans, at 5s. 3d. each	17	17	-
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	13	6
-	To extra for Susannah and Caroline	-	9	4 ½
21.	To allowance for 68 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	17	17	-
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To extra for Susannah (very sick)	-	5	3
-	To d° - for Hun, lying-in	-	12	6
27.	To allowance for 69 Africans, at 5s. 3d. each	18	2	3
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To extra for Susannah	-	5	3
-	To allowance for Sophy, lying-in	-	12	6
November 3.	To - d° - for 69 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	2	3
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To extra for Susannah	-	5	3
-	To allowance for Bolt, Sam, and Harry	-	15	9
10.	To - d° - for 71 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	12	9
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To extra for Susannah	-	5	3
17.	To allowance for 72 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	18	-
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To extra for Susannah (very sick)	1	7	-
-	To vinegar for Trimmer	-	2	3
18.	To a coffin for Susannah	3	3	½
-	To shroud and wrapper for d°	1	7	-
-	To Minister, clerk and grave digger, d°	2	15	6
-	To Midwife, delivering Sophy & Ann	3	12	-
-	To clothes for Rachael	1	16	-
24.	To allowance for 70 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	7	6
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
December 1.	To allowance for 70 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	7	-
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
8.	To allowance for 73 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	19	3	3
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To five days allowance for "Tom," released from gaol	-	3	-
15.	To allowance for 70 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	7	-
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To allowance for Maria	-	5	3
22.	To allowance for 70 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	18	7	6
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
26.	To 55 lbs. of sugar, a' 7½d. per lb.	1	14	-
-	- 74 lbs. beef - 1/3	4	3	-
-	- 7½ pints rum, 1/	-	7	6
-	- 148 lbs. bread 1/	7	8	-
29.	To allowance for 74 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	19	8	6
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To flannel, for Terence, per Doctor's order	1	4	-
-	To the Rev. S. Harman, for christening 66 Africans, as per list	29	14	-
1824:				
January 3.	To clothes for Eliza	-	17	-
5.	To allowance for 77 Africans, a' 5s. 3d. each	20	4	3
-	To sundries for Sick House	1	14	-
-	To J. Campbell's bill for cloth. &c.	52	6	2
-	To bills for making up clothes for the African men and women, and children, as per list	12	10	-
-	To a quarter's rent of Hospital	30	-	-
-	To Thomas Fisher, for box to keep the papers, books and indentures of these Africans, as per bill	3	12	-
-	To nurse, for 13 weeks, at 2 doll ^s per week	11	14	-
5.	To Dr. Crichton's bill	31	6	-
-	To flannel for Eliza Morton	-	16	-
		£.	469	11 11

Custom House, St. John's,
5th January 1824 }

(signed)

Geo. Wyke,
Coll^r.

I DO hereby certify, That all purchases necessarily made, have been entered into on the most reasonable terms on behalf of His Majesty's Government, according to the existing prices of the day; and the disbursements set forth have been justly and faithfully made.

(signed)

W^m Simpson,
Coll^r's Clerk.

MR. GANNON'S REPORT ON APPRENTICED AFRICANS. 55

Antigua.

Appendix
(C.)

A RETURN of the Increase and Decrease of Africans on the Collector's List, to be provided for during the Quarter ended 5th January 1824.

DATE.	NAMES.	PARTICULARS.	Number, Increase.	Number, Decrease.
1823:				
Oct. 13.	Will - -	Released from prison - - -	1	—
28.	Sophy - -	Delivered of a Child - - -	1	—
Nov. 10.	Richard - -	Apprenticed to Mr. Bayley - - -	- - -	1
-	Bolt, - -	Apprenticed to Mr. Stewart, and on his demise taken back by the Col- lector - - - - -	3	—
-	Sam Groom - -			
-	Harry - -			
17.	Ann - -	Delivered of a Child - - -	1	—
24.	Susannah - -	Died 19th November last - - -	- - -	1
-	Harry - -	Placed with Mr. M'Cord, blacksmith - - -	- - -	1
Dec. 1.	Roy - -	Committed to prison by Hugh Ed- wards, Esq. - - - - -	- - -	2
-	Charley - -			
-	Grace and her child - -	Apprentice to the late R. Smith, and on his demise taken back by the Collector - - - - -	2	—
8.	Octavia and her child - -	Apprenticed to Miss Stilling, and taken from her, being unable to provide for them - - - - -	3	—
-	Jenny - -			
-	Moco Tom - -	Released from jail - - - - -	1	—
15.	Mary Glover Harry Hart - -	Put out to Samuel Pearson - - - - -	- - -	2
-	Smith - -			
-	Smith - -	D° - to John Ord - - - - -	- - -	1
-	Maria - -	Taken from Mr. Chatfield - - -	1	—
-	Moco Tom - -	In confinement - - - - -	- - -	1
22.	Trimmer - -	Put out to W ^m Lee, Esq. - - -	- - -	1
29.	Terence - -	His time is out, but was in a starving condition, and in a decline - - -	1	—
-	Frederick - -	Taken from Mr. Frye - - - - -	1	—
29.	Cox - -	Taken from Mr. Chipchase, being <i>old, infirm, and worn out</i> - - -	1	—
-	Richard - -	D° - from Mr. Bailey, by Doctor's order (sick) - - - - -	1	—
1824:				
Jan. 4.	Harry Hart - -	D° - from Mr. Pearson (d°) - - -	1	—
-	Harry - -	D° - from Mr. M'Cord, who would not sign indentures - - - - -	1	—
-	Moco Tom - -	Released from confinement - - -	1	—
			20	10

On Collector's List 10th Oct. - - - - - 67

Increase since - - - - - 20

87

Decrease by indentures and death - - - - - 10

TOTAL - - - - - 77

(signed) Gen. Wyke, Collr.

56 PAPERS RELATING TO CAPTURED NEGROES; VIZ.

Appendix (D.)

Appendix
(D.)

Sir,

St. John's, 10th September 1822.

WE are honoured with Your Excellency's Letter of the 30th ultimo, and its several inclosures.

We beg to report to your Excellency, that the English statute of 5th Eliz. ch. 4. having passed previously to the establishment of this colony, is in force in it as far as it can be made to apply, but that the more important enactment of 20 Geo. 2. ch. 19, does not extend to it.

In the case alluded to by your Excellency, Mr. Blaney was required to give bail for his appearance at the court of King's Bench and Grand Sessions, to answer an indictment for *immoderately correcting* his apprentice; and it was argued before, and decided by the Judges of the Common Pleas, on the Habeas Corpus, that African Apprentices could not be legally dealt with as Slaves, but were, in the absence of any local enactment to the contrary, to be regarded as on a footing with Apprentices in the mother country whom the master had, by the *common law*, a right of correcting with *moderation*; and that the measure of the punishment was a fit question for the determination of a jury.

The order which your Excellency thought it advisable to make, relative to the punishment of this class of persons, was not intended to affix any thing like a stamp of legality upon the summary and ignominious punishment of them by the magistracy, but had for its object, as we presume, merely to put a stop to the oppressive practice which had prevailed of inflicting punishment of this description upon them at the mere will or caprice of their masters, without the intervention of any legal authority; and in making this salutary order, your Excellency very judiciously took for your guide the provisions of the 20th Geo. 2. ch. 19, with a view to place them, in future, as nearly as local circumstances would permit, on a footing with Apprentices in England.

We do not consider that the magistrates have, in *strictness of law*, any right to order African Apprentices to be punished as they are in the habit of doing; but as there is no local enactment which bears upon this particular class of the population, (the law alluded to by the Attorney General of St. Christopher's applying solely to white servants,) and they are, in point of condition and morals, so greatly inferior to the Apprentices in England, the magistrates hold themselves warrantable in applying the principle of the 20th Geo. 2. ch. 19, to them, until the discipline to which they are to be subject shall have been better defined by an act of the island.

Feeling that the peculiar condition of the African Apprentices called for some legislative provision, the Solicitor General, shortly after the trial of Mr. Blaney, moved for, and obtained leave to bring into the House of Assembly, a Bill for extending the 20 Geo. 2. ch. 19, with some modification, to this island; and he has hitherto deferred proceeding with it, from an expectation of the return of the special Commissioners from Tortola, whose sentiments he is desirous of obtaining on the subject of its details; should those gentlemen, therefore, have abandoned their intention of revisiting this island, the progress of this Bill will not be any longer delayed; but, in that event, your Excellency might, perhaps, think it important (while it is going through its different stages) to communicate with them upon it, so as to enable us to frame the provisions as nearly as possible in accordance with what may appear to be the wishes of His Majesty's Government.

We have the honour, &c.

(signed) *Paul Horsford,*
Attorney General.(signed) *William Musgrave,*
Solicitor General.

To

His Excellency Major General }
Sir Benjⁿ D'Urban, K. C. B. }
&c. &c. &c. }

(Appendix (E.))

Appendix
(E.)

Gentlemen,

Custom House, Antigua, 21st June 1824.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st of last month, and beg leave to explain, that the cause of delay in my reply has been a great pressure of business in my office (just about the time of its receipt,) and your quitting this island for Tortola (to return in a short time.)

Upon the subject of your letter alluded to, viz. the immediate liberation from my control of the two persons named therein, "James Wright" and "Rachael Gallien," (who have been by me brought before the court of Vice Admiralty, and condemned as forfeited to His Majesty under the "Abolition Acts;") which measure you recommended from their being "able to find a livelihood for themselves;"—

I beg

MR. GANNON'S REPORT ON APPRENTICED AFRICANS. 57

I beg leave to say, Gentlemen, that I have ventured to this time to keep both these people still upon my list, notwithstanding your recommendation, until I offered to you such reasons for this measure as I think might induce you to concur in opinion with me upon the policy of keeping them upon my list, and under my control, until the pleasure of my Lord Bathurst, as to the allowing the whole of the Africans who are at present unindentured, and who are fully capable of maintaining themselves, to take the remainder of their time unexpired (to complete the 14 years from their first arrival in this country) to their own occupation for support.

Appendix
(E.)

By such indulgence granted, great expense to H. M. Government would be saved; but by the partial liberation of the two persons whom you have recommended for that measure, great, very great jealousy and discontent will be the consequence with all the others who are capable of getting their own support; for, although the distinction which you draw of "James Wright and Rachael Gallien" being "Creoles," while the others are Africans, yet it will not by any means satisfy the latter that their right to be liberated from all control is not equally great with that of the man and woman in question; and I feel it my duty to state to you, that the Africans now unindentured, and who are upon my hospital list for support, are so nearly uncontrollable by me, that I have the utmost difficulty in maintaining any authority with the greatest part of them; indeed with some of them I am unable to keep any command at all, for it has recently occurred in two instances, that two respectable females in this island have applied to me for taking two of the African women as apprentices, and when I was about to apprentice them, the Africans have positively refused to be bound out, and declared their fixed determination not to serve any one.

I am really at a stand to know what to do with the unapprenticed Africans now under my immediate care and support; and from the turbulent and unruly conduct of a great many of the Apprentices*, it is with the utmost difficulty that their masters and mistresses can be prevailed upon to keep them.

My list of those now under support by me has swollen considerably of late, from a variety of causes, rendering my taking the immediate care of them upon me unavoidable.

I hope you will do me the justice to acquit me of any intended disrespect to you, when I state the fact, that the Africans in this island have become more turbulent, insolent and unruly, since the arrival of your Commission with us, than they were before; and in stating this to you, I do not by any means intend to convey an idea that your Board has done otherwise than endeavour to impress upon the minds of the Africans the necessity of obedience and orderly behaviour, yet, from the circumstance of the magistrates of this island refusing to hear any complaints† either from master or mistress, under the plea, that while you are in the island you are the proper persons to whom all complaints of that nature should be made (as you have been appointed magistrates by the late Governor) the Africans seem impressed with a notion that they are above all control, and cannot be made to conform to orderly and obedient conduct.

If, however, after this explanation, you shall still be of opinion that the man and woman named in your letter should be immediately allowed to take themselves from my control and support, and you will do me the honour to communicate your wish, I will instantly follow your suggestion‡.

To the Commissioners of Inquiry,
&c. &c.

I have, &c.
(signed G. Wyke,
Collr.

* It will be seen, by referring to the Schedules of Examinations, that this report of the Collector is not supported either by the accounts given by himself of the great majority of the Africans who were retained under his own direction, or by the accounts given by masters and mistresses of those Apprentices who were living in their service.

† There appears to be a contradiction between this statement respecting the magistrates, and another which occurs upon the same subject in the Collector's next letter, dated 28th June 1824.
(Appendix (F.) p. 59.)

I had myself (about this time) the opportunity of knowing that magistrates *did* hear the complaints of masters or mistresses, notwithstanding the reason assigned in the above letter for their not interfering. A female African, who had received at the examinations a very good character from her mistress, (Schedules, p. 19, N° 18,) called at the office of the Commissioners, and begged their protection. Her mistress (she said) had threatened to call in a magistrate, and submit a complaint against her. The African appeared frightened by the threat, and entreated the interference of the Commissioners.

The Collector was requested to send the Apprentice home to her mistress, and settle the matter peaceably between the parties. Shortly after, however, I was informed that the Apprentice was sent to prison upon a *charge of insubordination*, where she was confined for several days.

Upon the occasion now mentioned, I learned that sometimes a magistrate would attend at the private house of an individual to hear such complaints. I asked the Collector if it was usual for magistrates so to act, and he said it was sometimes done, in cases where a lady was the complainant.

‡ On receipt of the above letter, it was proposed by me that the Commissioners should reply to it, by confirming the recommendation which had been addressed by them on the 31st of the preceding month, for liberating the two Mulattoes in question. I also proposed, with a view to prevent

Appendix.
(E.)

prevent future omissions on the part of the Collector, to enclose the following extract of a letter from R. J. Wilmot, Esq. to the former Commissioners, dated the 9th of September 1822:—

“The power of officially executing your recommendation is in the hands of the Collector; and to prevent all possibility of misunderstanding, Lord Bathurst has directed a letter to be written to the Board of Customs, to instruct their Collectors to carry into effect your recommendations without observation or delay.”

This mode of doing business appeared to me to be such as would meet the approbation of the Secretary of State. My Colleague, however, seemed to think it would be too *harsh*; but he did not rightly explain the mode of proceeding which he might have thought to be wiser.

On the morning of the 26th August, as I was proceeding to the Court-house where the Office of the Commission was held, I was addressed by the above-mentioned captured Creole, James Wright, informing me that he had been sent to me by the Attorney-General upon the subject of a complaint which he had to lay before the Commission. I directed him to the office as the proper place to hear it.

At about eleven o'clock, the Attorney General attended with James Wright. The latter being sworn, deposed to the following effect, viz. That he had been put in irons sometime before by order of the Collector, and confined at the Custom-house;—that he was held in confinement from Saturday evening to the Monday morning following, during which time he was fed with bread and water only, and was chained and held fast by an iron bolt “like that used in the cage;” he deposed also, that he had been detained by the Collector in working about his residence at the Custom-house at Parham, and in the town of St. John;—that for some weeks past he has been living in the country at his own place with his family, but was under apprehension at present of further maltreatment, as there were men looking out for him by order of the Collector; he had therefore called on the Attorney General this morning at ten o'clock, and laid his case before him, and was referred by the Attorney General to the Commissioners.

The Attorney-General then stated to the Commissioners,—that James Wright had applied at his office in the morning, and laid his case before him; had not the Commissioners been in the Island at present, he would have felt it his duty, in his official capacity, to bring this case of Wright under consideration elsewhere, as one that loudly called for redress;—declared that it was not for Collectors to exercise such arbitrary power as the punishing persons of Wright's description, and particularly in such a way as that in which Wright was punished.

As soon as this examination was taken, a letter was addressed to the Collector, informing him that such a complaint had been laid against him.

On the day following, it was reported to the Commissioners that the Collector was indisposed, and would not be able to attend on that day; and on the 28th he addressed a letter to the Commissioners, requesting to be informed of the specific charge made against him by James Wright, and expressed his wish to answer to it at an early period. This however was not done till the 1st September, the day after the arrival of Earl Bathurst's dispatch, recalling the Commission from Antigua.

On the 1st of September, the Collector and the Attorney General attended at the Office of the Commission, upon the case of James Wright. The Collector admitted the “putting Wright in irons,” but denied the charge of cruel treatment; and he produced Doctor Crichton (the physician who attended the Africans,) and Mr. Parkhurst the Comptroller, and other Officers of the Customs, who deposed that Wright had not been cruelly treated, and that the Collector's treatment of the Africans was good.

As the matter had been gone into thus far, it appeared right that an opportunity should be afforded for the Collector to cross-examine Wright upon the substance of his depositions. On the 9th September, a message came from the Collector, to ask if the Commissioners were prepared to hear the cross-examination of James Wright. It was the Colonial Assembly day; the room in which the Office of the Commission was held belonged to the Council and Assembly, and on such days it was usual for the Commission not to occupy the room. However, as my Colleague stated, that after the mail boat (which had come into the harbour) was despatched he would proceed no further in that case, I agreed that the business should forthwith be gone into, and the Collector was informed that the cross-examination would be heard immediately. Before he arrived, my Colleague expressed his disinclination to proceed any further in the matter.

The Collector soon after arrived at the office with James Wright, who now appeared somewhat intoxicated. This circumstance would have afforded sufficient grounds for deferring at present the further hearing, even if my colleague had not already expressed his unwillingness to proceed further in this business. For my part, I stated my willingness that the case should be fully gone through, and if not on that day, at any other time, and that I would deliver my opinion upon its merits after. My Colleague declined proceeding to any thing definitive upon the subject, and the case remained in that state.

The Attorney General addressed a long letter to the Commissioners, in which he submitted some observations upon the case of James Wright, and upon the evidence which had been delivered by the Collector's witnesses.

On the 14th of September the public business of the Commission at Antigua was closed. On the 22d of that month the Collector addressed the Commissioners separately, enclosing a further statement upon the case of James Wright, and concerning the Attorney General; and he requested permission to have it entered in the office of the Commission, as an “annex” to the statement already made by him before the Commissioners. The public business of the Commission had been closed on the 14th. This request of the Collector was not complied with by me. His additional statement I enclosed and returned to him.

It may be right to observe here, with reference to the complaint of maltreatment laid before the Commission by the captured Creole, James Wright, that, in the zeal of the Attorney General on the part of Wright, and in the Collector's tenaciousness in holding that person under his control, some private feelings of these parties towards each other appeared to be manifested. Unhappily for the poor Negro he afforded them a subject, and became as it were an instrument for the expression of those feelings. Viewing the matter in this way, I endeavoured, as far as depended upon me, to redress the wrongs of the captured Negro, at the same time that I took care these conflicting parties should not unduly avail themselves of the Commission, or look upon it as a proper arena for their private contentions.

Appendix (F.)

Gentlemen,

Custom House, St. John's, Antigua, 28th June 1824.

I do myself the honour of laying before you the case of one of the African Apprentices, under indenture to a Mr. Green of this town; and as this apprentice's conduct is so extremely bad, and she sets me so completely at defiance, I take the liberty of stating the case to you, and of begging you to favour me with your advice, how I am to act under all the circumstances.

Appendix
(F.)

On Friday last this female apprentice, "Lydia" by name, came to me with a complaint of ill treatment from her master. I immediately sent for Mr. Green, her master, and as there was much contradiction between master and apprentice, I sent one of my officers (Mr. Greaves) up to the sitting magistrate, to beg he would be good enough to investigate the matter, with a view of giving the African the fullest protection against ill treatment*. Mr. Shiel, the sitting magistrate for the week, after the most patient investigation, ordered the apprentice home to her master, and declared her conduct to have been highly improper, and thought she deserved punishment, but none was given. And on the following day, the apprentice came to me again, to complain of having been improperly *beaten*. Upon this further complaint, I sent her up to the sitting magistrate again on Saturday, with one of my officers, (Mr. Page) requesting that the case might be fully investigated, and that the master of this apprentice might be bound over for trial at the next sessions†, should it appear that he had ill treated the African; and Mr. Shiel, the magistrate, having gone fully into the merits of the case, dismissed it as being frivolous and vexatious‡, and admonished the apprentice against further ill conduct, and ordered her back to her master's service, which order she did not think proper to comply with; and she this day came again to me, when she positively and insolently refused to obey me; upon which I then sent her up to her master, by the nurse of my African hospital. Upon her being carried up to her master, she took up a stone, and beat her head so violently with it, (and declaring that she would not remain with her master) that the nurse brought her down to me with the blood *streaming* from her head. The master of this apprentice soon after came down to me, to request me to take back the apprentice, and destroy the indentures§, but which I will not venture to do but *under* your sanction, as my numbers upon the hospital list are already so large, and "Mr. Wilmot Horton's" letter to me, by Lord Bathurst's order, signifies that I am not to take the apprentices from their masters or mistresses without the most urgent necessity. In the last letter which I had the honour to address to you, I stated the insubordination of the Africans of late, and I am very sorry again to trouble you on the same subject; but it is my duty to state to you, that my difficulty is very great in the management of the Africans, and which I fear will daily increase, from the general spirit manifested by them of *late* ¶.

I think it right to send the African woman Lydia, as well as her master Mr. Green, up to you, to the end that you might hear their story, and which may assist in the recommendation to me which I now pray for from you¶.

I have, &c.

(signed) Geo. Wyke.
Collr.To the Commissioners of Inquiry,
&c. &c.

* This is at variance with a prior statement of the Collector, in his letter of the 21st June 1824 as has been already observed in the 2d Note upon that letter, page 57, in Appendix (E.)

† Upon some occasions, prior to this, I had asked if masters could not have been obliged to support their Apprentices, and otherwise fulfil the contracts they had entered into by indenture; but was informed, that such an attempt would be fruitless, and that no jury would seriously entertain the subject.

‡ Every complaint made by an African Apprentice to a sitting magistrate, that I have heard of, was pronounced either deserving of punishment, or "frivolous," &c. (Schedules, p. 55, and p. 71, Nos 14 and 50.)

§ Upon examining into the particulars of this case, I found that the master had not signed indentures.

¶ The Collector would signify, that the alleged insubordination of the Africans was to be ascribed to the Commission of Inquiry.

¶ The above letter will afford some explanation of the manner in which complaints between masters or mistresses and their African Apprentices were treated at Antigua.

After the Commission was opened in that island, the Apprentices sought protection in some instances by applying first to the Commissioners; in others, they applied as heretofore to the Collector, who usually sent them first to a magistrate (as in the case above recited in his letter) and afterwards perhaps to the Commissioners of Inquiry.

It appears right to advert to one of these cases, where an Apprentice applied for redress to the Commission. The Notes of the Evidence delivered by the several parties at the investigation before the Commissioners, will be found in the Schedules, p. 54, 55, N^o 14. The other papers relating to the subject were sent to the Colonial Department, inclosed in a letter from the Commissioners to R. J. Wilmot Horton, Esq., dated Antigua, 6 April 1824. A brief statement of the case will therefore be sufficient here:

A female African, named Caroline Dewar, an Apprentice of Mr. James Norman, Searcher of the Customs, called at the lodgings of one of the Commissioners, at an early hour on the Sunday, and complained that she had been beaten by her master and mistress, and confined since the Thursday previous; she had escaped this morning by breaking through the partition, and was going to Parham to the Collector, to complain, but having gone about half a mile, was taken ill with fever, and came back;—went afterwards to the lodging of one of the Commissioners. Her name was taken down by

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(F.)

the Secretary, as well as that of her master; and she was desired to attend at 10 o'clock on the Tuesday morning following.

The Collector was requested to inform Mr. Norman of the complaint that had been made by the Apprentice.

At the investigation, as the Apprentice charged her mistress with having treated her with severity, it appeared but just that the mistress should be allowed an opportunity to answer; and it was suggested, that it would be right for her to attend along with Mr. Norman, her husband. She attended accordingly, and was informed that it was entirely from the consideration of justice—and of its being due to her to be allowed an opportunity to explain the charge of ill treatment alleged against her, that her attendance before the Commissioners was required. But, notwithstanding this, I afterwards heard that it was talked of as harsh proceeding on the part of the Commission to desire the attendance of Mrs. Norman.

It appeared in the early part of the investigation, that Mr. Norman and the Apprentice had been previously before a magistrate about the matter; and Mr. Norman referred to this circumstance as a ground for the Commissioners to decline proceeding in the present investigation. Such a ground, however, was not admitted by the Commissioners. The examination was gone through, and Mr. Norman was informed that any further evidence he might wish to produce, either then or at any other time, would be heard and received by the Commissioners.

It was therefore a matter of some surprise to me, afterwards to perceive in an affidavit under the signature of Mr. Norman, (which with other papers upon this subject had been inclosed to the Commissioners from the Collector) a statement, in which was alleged that the Commissioners had not afforded him an opportunity to bring forward all the evidence he could produce. Sometime after, upon some occasion that occurred, I directed Mr. Norman's attention to this matter; and he appeared desirous that the error should be corrected; a circumstance, which appears to me to deserve particular attention, as it will be of importance in showing the value of evidence which sometimes is obtained by written testimonies or affidavits, when the witnesses are not cross-examined upon their depositions. It serves also to show, what ought not, in my opinion, to be left unnoticed here, namely, the simplicity of Mr. Norman's character, who, whatever may have been his conduct in the case above recited, appeared to me from all that I could observe, to be a good-natured man, who would be incapable of exercising any cruelty towards his Apprentice. Both himself and Mrs. Norman, in contradiction to the complaint of the Apprentice, denied positively that they had beaten her.

Sometime after the investigation of the above case of complaint, the Commissioners received a letter from the Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, dated 1st March 1824, with two inclosures, viz a copy of a letter which had been addressed to him by Mr. Hugh Edwards, a magistrate of the town of St. John, upon the subject of the above case; as also a copy of His Excellency's answer to the magistrate's letter.

It appeared from the Magistrate's letter, that he had taken up some erroneous ideas as to the business of the Commission, and that he imagined the Commissioners ought not to inquire into the condition and treatment of Apprentices who had previously appeared before a magistrate in cases of complaint between master or mistress and apprentice. The Governor, however, in his reply to the magistrate's complaint, showed that his view of the subject was different.

I heard afterwards that the matter was brought forward again by the Magistrate before the Bench of Justices, and that *they* also informed him that the opinions entertained by him respecting the business of the Commission were erroneous.

Besides copies of the correspondence above referred to, a copy of the Commissioners' answer to the Governor's communication upon this subject was sent, as I conceived, to the Colonial Department in the despatch of April 6, 1824. But since my return to this country, I have been informed that, this last mentioned paper was not to be found among the others which had arrived. It can, however, be now supplied here, as the original draft made by me remained in my possession after its contents had been copied. It is as follows:

Sir,

St. John's, 8th March 1824.

WE have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Excellency's letter of the 1st inst. enclosing for our information a letter addressed to your Excellency by Mr. Hugh Edwards, a sitting magistrate of St. John's, together with your Excellency's answer thereto.

The great degree of interest which has on all occasions been evinced by your Excellency in promoting the objects of this Commission, is entitled to the warmest thanks of the Commissioners.

In reference to the case submitted for your Excellency's consideration by the sitting Magistrate of the 14th of February last, we beg to say that we perfectly agree to the opinion delivered in your Excellency's answer, namely, that it is our duty as Commissioners to inquire into the state and condition of all African Apprentices, without considering whether any of them had ever been examined before a magistrate or not, and that upon the examination of the Apprentice Caroline and her master, we acted conformably to the tenor of our instructions.

By His Majesty's Commission we are directed to inquire into and ascertain the present numbers, names, situations, and circumstances of all Africans liberated from Slavery in His Majesty's West Indian Colonies and South American Settlements, under the provisions of any of the Acts of Parliament for abolishing the Slave Trade, and to report the information we shall collect, together with our opinions, thereupon.

This, Sir, is the duty we have to perform, and we trust that in the execution of it we shall never forget that we owe it to His Majesty's Government not to furnish any just cause of complaint against the manner of conducting our proceedings.

If a Magistrate will, without grounds, entertain an opinion that an undue interference with his duties is exercised by us, we are not on that account to deviate from the line of our instructions.

It is not the investigations, "re-investigations," or decisions of Sitting Magistrates that we are ordered to report upon, (though such investigations and decisions, so far as they concern the objects of our Inquiry, may, if we think proper, be reported by us also,) but—it is *the state and condition of the Apprenticed Africans, as collected by our own inquiry and examinations of parties, that is to form the basis of our Report.*

We have, &c.

To his Excellency Major-General
Sir Benjamin D'Urban, K.C.B.
&c. &c. &c.

MR. GANNON'S REPORT ON APPRENTICED AFRICANS. 61

Appendix (G.)

Gentlemen,

Custom House, St. John's, June 30th, 1824.

Appendix
(G.)

I BEG leave to inform you that Mr. Grenion has been with me this morning upon the case of "Peter," the African Apprentice, and I am happy to say that it does not appear that Peter's master has ill treated him. All Peter's misconduct on the day he complains of being ill treated, he has studiously avoided telling either you or myself.*

It appears that Peter stole a pig on the morning of that day, which was discovered by the owner of the pig, and who thereupon, with two or three of his companions, beat him very severely, and Peter was at length rescued by one of Mr. Grenion's own Slaves; that Peter by some means afterwards got a bottle of rum in his room, which after drinking a large portion of, and getting immoderately drunk, he was very abusive to his master; and Mr. Grenion discovering the remainder of the bottle of rum, broke it, together with a drinking cup, and then, to keep Peter quiet in his own room, put a small chain round his leg, which Peter broke, and then made his way to you with his complaint of ill treatment.

The conduct of Peter it appears has been very grossly bad in a great many instances, and that whenever his master gives him clothes, he immediately sells them, to buy rum; that although Peter appears now in torn and shabby clothes, it is not yet 3 weeks since he got new clothes from him.

I am extremely sorry to add to the subject of this letter, the further information to the instance which you yesterday witnessed in my office, of insubordination of one of the African men refusing to go to a proper master, two more instances since in two others of the Africans refusing to be bound out, or to serve two respectable white tradesmen in this town, a cabinet-maker and a blacksmith, who wish to take them.

I am now without the smallest hope of being able to reduce my hospital list, or lessen the present expense of maintenance to the unapprenticed Africans, unless my Lord Bathurst should be pleased to allow me to adopt the plan I proposed in my letter to you of the 3d of March, or some other.

As soon as the returns are completed,† which you have called for, I propose to accompany them with a letter of further explanation, and in which I will take the liberty of proposing another mode of employing the Africans which appears to me eligible for their own support,‡ though I shall do so with great deference.

I have, &c.

(signed)

George Wyke, Collr.

To

The Commissioners of Inquiry,
&c. &c.

* This African called upon me at my lodging, to complain that he had been maltreated by his master (Mr. Grenion, a shoemaker, of the town of St. John), and he held in his hand a part of the chain he had broken, and by which he had been confined, as above alluded to in the Collector's letter. I informed the African that the matter would be inquired into; and I called at the Custom-house to ascertain the terms upon which this Apprentice was *still* living with his master. I was aware that this master (Mr. Grenion) was allowed to retain the Apprentice (Peter) in his service, without being indentured to him, and only as "Attorney" for a Mr. Nowell, (Schedules page 44-45) and therefore, unless the conduct of the Apprentice had been such as to justify the treatment of which he had complained, the authority exercised by Grenion (who was not his lawful master) was the less excusable. The African (Peter) was apparently one of the most neglected and uncivilized persons among his class; and a most unfavourable character had been formerly given of him by the master (Grenion) at examinations before the Commissioners (Schedule, p. 44-45.) It could not but be known, however, that laborious services were performed by this African, and that his master was of that class of employers who are accustomed to profit by the labours of their Apprentices more than the latter receive of benefit in care or improvement.

† The Returns to which the Collector here alludes are contained in pp. 53, 54, Appendix (C.)

‡ This intended plan for the employment of the Africans was never laid before the Commission.

