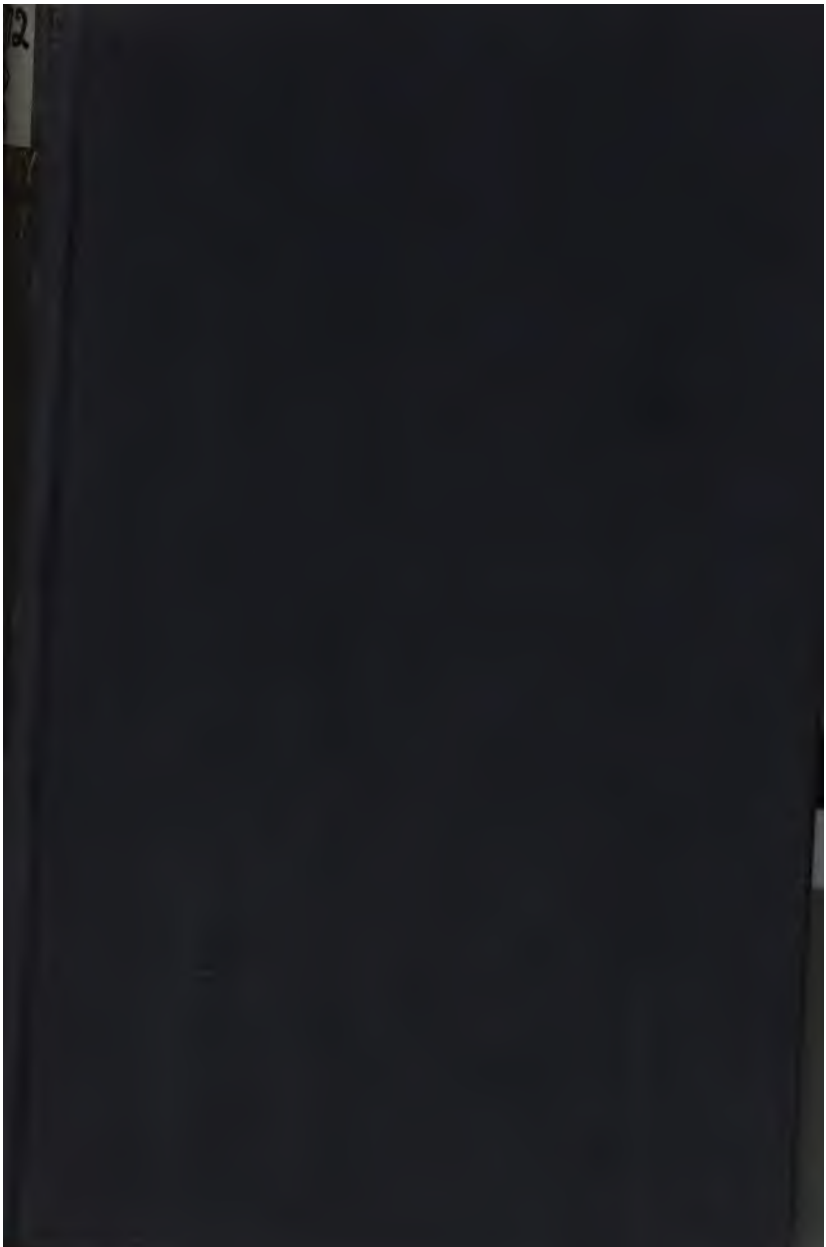
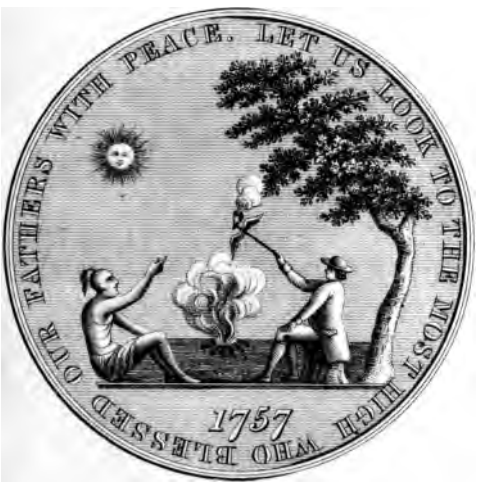


ANTHONY BENEZET.

INDIAN MEDAL



This medal represents William Penn, or as the Indians call him Brother Onas, at a Council fire offering the Calumet of Peace to an Indian Chief and pointing at the Sun as characteristic both of the Purity and durability of the Friendship which the Friendly Association designed to promote.

See p. 93 - 95.

S. Allen Sc.

ANTHONY BENEZET.

FROM

THE ORIGINAL MEMOIR:

Revised, with Additions,

BY

WILSON ARMISTEAD.

An American Officer, who attended Benezet's funeral, passed this eulogium upon him:—"I had rather," said he, "be Anthony Benezet in that coffin, than General Washington with all his fame."—*See page* 138.

LONDON:
A. W. BENNETT, BISHOPSGATE-STREET.
PHILADELPHIA:
LIPPINCOTT AND CO.

1859.

PREFACE.

AMONGST those who have manifested their love to God by their commiseration for the destitute and afflicted, and whose memories have left a fragrance behind them that shall remain for ages to come, may be enrolled the name of ANTHONY BENEZET, whose benevolent labours for the good of his fellow-creatures, in various ways, justly entitle him to the rank of an illustrious benefactor of the human race.

Yet, as Yvan Raiz, the Russian traveller, observes, "Although the academies of Europe resound with praises decreed to illustrious men, the name of Benezet is not found on their list!" "For whom, then," he very naturally inquires, "do they reserve their crowns?"

Verily the great men of the earth have their reward. But it was for no earthly renown that Benezet pursued his undeviating path of daily ser-

vice. He courted not, neither cared for, the applause of the world. He sought not to have its honours awarded to him. But having above all desired humbly to serve his divine Lord and Master, he doubtless obtained the imperishable reward which is dispensed in heaven by Him who hath said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

The scarcity of the original memoir of this good man, long out of print, has induced the compiler to issue the present volume, which is considerably enlarged, and somewhat improved in form, believing that the example of so humble, active, and practical a Christian, is more worthy of being known and imitated at the present day, when such labours as he was engaged in are as much needed as at any former period.

While few men have lived so blameless a life, few have lived so useful a one, as Anthony Benezet. A pattern of great piety, humility, and self-denial, every thought of his brain, every pulsation of his heart, appeared to be for the good of his fellow-creatures.

The miseries of the enslaved Africans, and the great injustice done to them, very deeply affected

his compassionate heart, and prompted him to open an extensive correspondence with the philanthropists of Europe and America, to enlist their sympathy and services in bringing about the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. Clarkson, in his "History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade," describes him as "one of the most zealous, vigilant, and active advocates which the cause of the oppressed Africans ever had." "He seemed," continues the same author, "to have been born and to have lived for the promotion of it; and he never omitted any opportunity of serving it."

Pre-eminently among the earliest and most indefatigable advocates of the injured Negro, we may fairly attribute to Benezet's labours, with the divine blessing upon them, a great part of that spirit of enquiry into their situation, and sympathy with their distresses, which have spread over the world, and which must ere long destroy the system of inhumanity and injustice by which so many millions of them are yet held in bondage.

But Benezet's efforts were by no means confined to the Negro. He was the friend of suffering humanity of all grades and complexions. He sought out the unfortunate, to give them comfort. He

espoused the cause of the poor and distressed of every description, and laboured most earnestly for their relief and welfare. He was indeed

> "———The offspring of humanity,
> And every child of sorrow was his brother."

It might be said of him, that his whole life was spent in going about doing good to men, or devising some means of benefiting them. And he appeared to do everything as if the words of our Lord were continually sounding in his ears, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

That he might devote his time and attention to the unfortunate, he rejected brilliant commercial prospects. His three brothers engaged in trade, and realized considerable pecuniary acquisitions. He also might have joined in their concerns, and been a partaker of their prosperity, had he felt himself at liberty to embark in their undertakings. But he considered the accumulation of wealth as of no importance, compared with the enjoyment of doing good.

Benezet chose the "better part;" and his every action bore evidence to the truth that he was "never weary of well-doing." "A Testimony" respecting him, issued by the Society of Friends after his

decease, states him to have been "assiduously diligent, suffering a small portion of natural rest to satisfy him, *employing his pen day and night*, particularly to inculcate the peaceable temper and doctrines of the gospel, in opposition to the spirit of war and bloodshed, as well as to expose the flagrant injustice of slavery, and the abomination of the African slave trade—lamenting the sorrowful defection of professed Christians in these respects."

For such particulars of the life and labours of this good man as have been preserved, the reader is referred to the following pages, which are commended to his notice with the exhortation, "Go thou and do likewise," endeavouring to "follow him as he followed Christ."

W. A.

Leeds, 1859.

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ANTHONY BENEZET.

CHAPTER. I.

Born in France in 1713—Honourable descent—His parents join the Huguenots—Their estate confiscated—They seek refuge in Holland—Remove to London—And to Philadelphia in 1731—Anthony becomes a "Quaker"—Marries in 1736—His somewhat unsettled state accounted for.

ANTHONY BENEZET was born at St. Quintin, in France, in 1713. It is not among the least interesting facts, connected with his virtues and services, that he was descended from an ancient and respectable family. His progenitors, through many generations, acquired and maintained an honourable reputation, by devotion to conscientious principles.

The most remote maternal ancestor to whom reference can be had, was Armand Crommelin, who lived in the fifteenth century, and who suffered so severely for his religious opinions, by the persecutions of that period, as to be induced to retire from his native place in Holland, and take up his abode at Courtrai, a town of the Netherlands. Of the numerous descendants from Crommelin, one of them, of the fifth generation,

was married to John Benezet, of Clavison, in Languedoc, who died in 1690. He left seven children, the eldest of whom, John Stephen, was the father of Anthony, the subject of this memoir.

An ancient family record, which has survived the vicissitudes of more than a century, exhibits evidence of the religious character of the paternal predecessors of Anthony Benezet. The births, marriages, and deaths noted in it, are uniformly accompanied with sentiments of piety. Connected with the register of his grandfather's decease, the event is said to be "to the great affliction of his children, and the universal regret of his relations and friends; for he was a model of virtue and purity, and lived in the constant fear of God." Attached to the birth note of his grandson Anthony, the Divine favour is thus implored for the infant's preservation and happiness:—"May God bless him, in making him a partaker of His mercies." Though virtue is not hereditary, it must be admitted that example is powerful.

Anthony's parents were among the most noted and wealthy persons of their day. On the revocation of the edict of Nantz, however, they associated themselves with those Protestants who had been contemptuously denominated Huguenots, and who became obnoxious to the unparalleled fury of Romish bigotry during the reign of Louis XIV. John Stephen Benezet suffered as severely as any of his ancestors for a faithful attachment to his religious opinions. His estate, on this account, was confiscated in 1715; when he withdrew from his native country, and sought refuge in Holland.

At this time his son Anthony was an infant, a circumstance which no doubt greatly increased the solicitude of his parents, whose afflictions must have been almost insupportable, and whose flight was extremely perilous. It was natural for the protector of a family thus situated, to resort to such means as might give hope of success to the hazardous enterprise which the urgent necessity of exile had dictated. So great an exigency probably reconciled to the mind of the suffering John Stephen Benezet, the method he adopted to effect it; though it offered a serious alternative, which was to sacrifice either the life or the fidelity of the servant of the crown.

To accomplish this purpose, he secured the services of a young man, upon whose attachment he could rely, to accompany him beyond one of the military outposts, which then skirted the frontier of France. Nothing occurred to interrupt their progress, until they approached the sentinel; when their adventurous friend presenting himself before him, displaying in one hand an instrument of death, and tendering with the other a purse of money, said:—"Take your choice; this is a worthy family, flying from persecution, and they shall pass." The guard accepted the gold, and their escape was safely accomplished.

They remained a few months in Rotterdam, and thence removed to London, where they resided sixteen years; during which time John Stephen Benezet, being engaged in commercial pursuits, was enabled to recover, in some degree, the losses he had sustained in his fortune. Whilst in Great Britain, Anthony received an

education that was deemed sufficient to qualify him for mercantile business; to acquire a knowledge of which, his father placed him with one of the most respectable traders of the metropolis. In this situation he did not long continue, declining to be occupied in the enterprises of commerce. Having chosen a mechanical business, he engaged himself to a cooper; but this proved an employment too laborious for his youthful and naturally delicate frame.

Of his juvenile habits and dispositions, however, but an imperfect account is preserved; it is only known that when about fourteen years old, he joined the Society of Friends. Whether the early development of his mind yielded any promise of the future excellence of his character, no evidence now remains. In 1731, at the age of eighteen, he came with his parents to Philadelphia, where the family was permanently established. His pursuits during the first five years after his emigration to Pennsylvania, cannot be ascertained.

In 1736 he married Joyce Marriott, a woman of exemplary piety, and who proved a true helpmeet. Three years after this he removed to Wilmington, Delaware, and was there engaged in a branch of manufacture, which neither answering his expectation, nor suiting the disposition of his mind, he was induced to return in a few months to Philadelphia.

The unsettled state in which he appears to have been at this period, in relation to his secular occupations, may be attributed to the operation of those benevolent principles of his nature which had not hitherto been

brought into complete action, as well as to the desire he cherished, that the energies of his mind might be directed to the most useful and salutary purposes. Thus, at an age when the generality of mankind are most concerned to determine in what manner they shall apply their time and talents, for their own aggrandisement, and are seen eagerly grasping for wealth, or panting for those honours and that fame which the world can bestow, Anthony Benezet exhibits the rare example of a man, subjecting every selfish and ambitious passion, to the superior obligations of religion; offering himself a candidate for any service which might contribute to promote his Creator's honour, and advance the happiness of his fellow-beings.

Such extraordinary devotion of heart could not fail to be preparatory to the luxuriant growth of all those tender charities, those exalted virtues, and that distinguished humility, which made up the plenteous and rich harvest of his life.

CHAPTER II.

Benezet undertakes the instruction of youth—Appointed teacher in the Penn Seminary in 1742—Establishes a school on his own account in 1755—Greatly endeared to his pupils—His improved system of educational treatment—Successful results on a deaf and dumb female—Subsequent progress in the instruction of deaf mutes—His reasons for engaging in tuition—Letter to David Barclay—To John Pemberton on the same subject.

In his twenty-sixth year, Benezet believed it most consistent with his duty to undertake the instruction of youth in useful learning; and his first engagement in that capacity was at Germantown, near Philadelphia. Whilst there he also employed a portion of his time as proof reader for a printer, near whom he lived. In 1742, a vacancy occurred in the English department of the public school, founded by charter from William Penn; an institution under the superintendence of some of the most eminent, pious, and learned men that adorned the religious and civil community of Philadelphia. By their solicitation and encouragement he left Germantown, and accepted the office of a teacher in that seminary: a station he filled for twelve years, to the entire satisfaction of his employers.

In 1755, he established a school on his own account,

for the instruction of females; and soon found himself entrusted with the education of the daughters of the most affluent and respectable inhabitants of the city. To his amiable and interesting pupils, he was endeared by the exercise of an uncommon degree of religious care; and such was the urbanity of his manners, and the lenity of his treatment, that the character of the tutor was lost in an indulgence more unlimited than even parental fondness is apt to dispense. This mode of treatment, produced a correspondent respect and regard from his scholars, in whose hearts was deeply implanted the strongest attachment to their preceptor and friend, which, as his biographer observed, "in those who had descended to the grave was extinguished only with their lives; whilst that still glowing in the bosoms of those who survived, could cease only with the termination of all human affections."

As an instructor of youth, as well as in every other engagement of life, Benezet appears to have reflected upon and determined for himself, the principles that were to control his conduct. It is not therefore surprising that he should have adopted a system of treatment unlike that which was then exercised by those who were entrusted with the education of children. The discipline of schools, at the time he began a reformation, was of all systems the most repugnant to the plain dictates of nature, reason, and Christianity. The individual who was to mould the mind of a child, lead it to the knowledge of its own energies, instil into it radical principles, and, in short, essentially contribute to form the character, could not, in those days, better display his

qualifications for this purpose, nor secure more certain, though misapplied patronage and confidence, than by the assumption of a demeanour at once supercilious and pedantic. To complete his attributes, the teacher ruled his subjects by the exercise of punishments, as cruel and vindictive, as might entirely comport with the despotic office he sustained.

The discerning and conscientious mind of Benezet, perceived the injurious tendency of a system thus organised. He saw its operation was calculated to produce in the minds of those who were subjected to its influence, dispositions the most unhappy; whilst it must inevitably lessen the ability, if not altogether frustrate the design of communicating information to youth. With Lord Bacon, he was convinced, that what is learned willingly, and at the proper season, makes the deepest impression; and that much depends on the manner of conveying lessons of instruction to the juvenile understanding.

The plan that Benezet pursued was therefore that of mildness. He investigated the natural dispositions of his pupils, and adapted his management of them, to their various tempers. Persuasion would secure attention and obedience in some, while proper excitement to emulation, would animate and encourage others. The sense of shame, and the fear of disgrace, could be roused in the minds of those, whose stubbornness the less acute remedies would not affect; so that he rarely had recourse to corporal punishment, and seldom permitted an angry passion to be exhibited to his scholars.

His patient and persevering spirit was remarkably displayed, in the attention he bestowed on a deaf and dumb female. She acquired, during two years under his tuition, such instruction as enabled her to enjoy an intercourse with society, which had been previously denied to her. And although his efforts in this case, to organise and develope ideas, did not reach the perfection since attained by his countrymen the Abbé De L'Epée, and the Abbé Sicard, and others, he nevertheless deserves credit for an attempt, which, in point of originality in Philadelphia, (if not in America,) must be awarded to him.

This unfortunate class of society were at that time not only neglected, but were frequently objects of proscription, from the idea that they were under the curse of Heaven. In some countries they were regarded as monsters, and were put to death as soon as their calamities were ascertained. Naturalists, legislators, divines, philosophers, and even parents, were agreed in the impracticability of conveying knowledge otherwise than by speech, thereby excluding the deaf mute from all means of intellectual improvement. Subsequent researches have not only proved the possibility of overcoming this deficiency, but the fact has become firmly established, that the deaf and dumb do not differ materially from other persons in their intellectual faculties and manifestations.

The system of imparting knowledge to deaf mutes has been gradually improved since attention was drawn to it, and not many years had elapsed after Benezet's successful experiment, before the first establishment was

originated for their reception and education. This was the Blind Asylum in Kent Road, London, opened in 1792. Several others have since been established in various parts of Europe and America; but it was not until 1824 that Philadelphia was possessed of such an asylum.

To return to Benezet's educational plans. When not immediately engaged in their studies, he was on the most social terms with his pupils, and regularly assigned a portion of the time usually allotted for business, to indulging them with suitable recreation and amusement, in an apartment he had expressly constructed for the purpose. So deeply was his mind interested in what he deemed the judicious education of youth, that for the promotion of his opinions and views he compiled two introductory books for the use of schools. His reason for engaging in this work, as well as his sentiments on the general subject of instruction, are given in the following letters:—

To David Barclay,* of London.

"*Philadelphia*, 1782.

"Esteemed Friend David Barclay:

"A good opportunity offering by our friend John Pemberton, I make use of it, affectionately to salute and inform thee, that I have with much satisfaction

* David Barclay was a grandson of Robert Barclay the Apologist, and died in London in 1796, in the 88th year of his age. For several generations the family had maintained an intimacy at Court, and David Barclay had the honour of entertaining in his house, in Cheapside, three successive monarchs, George I., II., and III., when, on their accession to the throne, they favoured the City with

understood, that the necessary and pious education of our youth has more particularly come under the notice of Friends, and that thou hast interested thyself in this important work.

"In the course of my concern for the proper instruction and best welfare of youth, in which I have been employed nearly forty years, I have found great disadvantage to arise from the want of a spelling book and primer, properly adapted, not only to bring them forward in reading, but also to inculcate proper principles in them. This led me to procure all the books of this kind I could meet with; and though I found more or less good in all, yet none answering my purpose, I endeavoured to compile a book of this kind. Before publication I laid my essay before the overseers of our public school, who appointed James Pemberton*, Nicholas Waln†, and others, a committee to review my manuscript, making proper amendments.

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their presence. From David Barclay's windows the sovereigns witnessed the procession previous to dining with the Mayor and citizens at Guildhall, on Lord Mayor's Day. Becoming possessed of an estate in Jamaica with 32 slaves upon it, he emancipated them, being convinced that retaining his fellow-creatures in bondage was not only irreconcilable with the principles of Christianity, but subversive of the rights of human nature.—See *Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, p. 96.

* James Pemberton, a Philadelphia Friend, was a man of great intellectual powers, highly cultivated. He cheerfully devoted his time, as well as his ample pecuniary means, to promote the good of his fellow-creatures. To the various benevolent institutions of Philadelphia he was a liberal benefactor, and in their management took an active share. He was the friend and advocate of the oppressed African and Indian tribes, and being a member of the State Legislature possessed considerable influence, which he exerted in favour of the latter. He died in great peace, in 1809, aged 85, looking forward with joy to an entrance into those mansions of which our Saviour said there were many in his Father's kingdom. "What a blessed company," he exclaimed, "are already gone there before me!"

† Nicholas Waln was an able Counsellor in Philadelphia, and a

"The first edition being sold, a second, enlarged, with improvements on the first, has been made. Of this I send thee a copy, also a primer, or first book, on the same plan, to save the cost of the spelling book, which young children are apt to deface before they have been taught many passages in it. The tendency of this kind of books is, too generally, little regarded by parents or tutors, provided there be what is judged sufficient of spelling and other common-place instruction. But my view went further; not only to make the spelling more easy, familiar and agreeable, than is usual, but also to cause the bent and aim of all the lessons, from first to last, to be such as tended to improve the heart, (the great work of Christianity,) and also to convince the judgment, by raising in the tender mind principles of compassion and tenderness, as well to the brute creation as to their fellow-men; a nobility of mind, and a love of virtue; thus gradually rising higher and higher, till the language and precepts, both in matter and language, are such as our best authors would afford.

"In the first edition I deviated from the established rule in the division of syllables, rather consulting and favouring the ear, than keeping to the usual custom; but some schoolmasters complaining that they were thus brought under difficulty, as both they and their scholars had been used to the common mode of dividing syllables, I thought it best in the second edition to give up any attempt of that kind, and make use of the same mode of spelling as was in Dilworth. The custom of making up the first lessons of words of one syllable only, I deviated from, experience having taught me that it is much easier to introduce children to reading, by using the easiest words of two, and even three syllables, such as ac-ti-on, &c., than hard words of one syllable, as draught, &c.

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minister amongst the Friends. His first appearance in the ministry was in a remarkable manner, as related in the *Select Miscellanies*, vol. ii. p. 11. He died in 1813, aged 71, and his last words were, "To die is gain."

"I have added a short essay on grammar, compiled with great care, to make the grounds of that necessary foundation of knowledge in our mother tongue, more clear and easy than such compilations generally are, most of which, by introducing parts of the Latin grammar, that are of no use in our language, run into many useless words, and are difficult to be understood, both by pupils and masters of dull capacities.

"This essay, though short, will, I believe, be found sufficient to give them such a general idea of English grammar, as to understand the reason of what is proposed, and to express themselves with correctness, where they have no other help, as well as fit them for understanding such larger works as fall in their way.

"I should be glad if thou and other Friends would so far co-operate with my concern, which indeed is weighty with me, as to give this spelling book a serious perusal; and if it should be approved, it might be republished with such amendments and additions as appear necessary. I trust this desire does not arise from any part I have had in it, but from a persuasion founded on long experience, and the evidence of others, that this book, or one of the same kind, may be of special service, not only in making the instruction of children more easy, but in laying before both tutors, pupils, and others, such leading principles on matters of the greatest weight, as may be instructive and edifying to them.

"The advantage of endeavouring to promote the education of our youth, on its right basis, viz., a true estimate of human life, and the amendment of the heart, whence obedience and love to God, benignity to men, and a tender regard for the whole creation would necessarily flow, must be obvious to every feeling mind; as also giving them as easy and compendious a knowledge of their own language, and such other useful parts of learning, as their situations may make necessary, to answer all the good purposes of life.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"*Philadelphia, 5th Mo., 29th*, 1783.

"DEAR FRIEND JOHN PEMBERTON: *

* * * * * * * "With respect to the education of our youth, I would propose, as the fruit of forty years' experience, that when they are proficients in the use of the pen, and sufficiently acquainted with English grammar, and the useful parts of arithmetic, they should be taught mensuration of superficies and solids: as it aids the mind in many necessary matters, particularly the use of the scale and compass; and will open the way for those parts of the mathematics, which their peculiar situations may afterwards require.

"It would also be profitable for every scholar, of both sexes, to go through and understand a short but very plain set of merchants' accounts in single entry, particularly adapted to the civil uses of life. And in order to perfect their education in a useful and agreeable way, both to themselves and others, I would propose to give them a general knowledge of the mechanical powers, geography, and the elements of astronomy; the use of the microscope might also be profitably added, in discovering the minute parts of the creation. This, with a knowledge of the magnitude and courses of the mighty bodies which surround us, would tend to exalt their ideas.

"Such parts of history as convey a right idea of the corruption of the human heart, the dreadful nature and effects of war, the advantage of virtue, &c., are also essential parts of an education founded upon Christian and reasonable principles.

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* John Pemberton, of Philadelphia, (also the bearer of the foregoing letter to England,) was a minister of the Society of Friends, in which capacity he travelled extensively in America, twice visiting Europe on the same errand. He was much interested in suppressing theatrical exhibitions in Philadelphia, and had interviews with the Governor on the subject. He died at Pyrmont, in Germany, in 1794, in his 68th year. Throughout his illness his mind was anchored on Christ, the Rock of Ages. A few hours before his close he said triumphantly, "I am departing for heaven; to the kingdom of God and of Christ." A valuable journal of his life is preserved.

"These several instructions should be inculcated on a religious plan, in such a way as to prove a delightful, rather than a painful labour, both to teachers and pupils.

"It might also be profitable to give boys of bright genius some plain lectures on anatomy, the wondrous frame of man, deducing therefrom the advantage of a plain, simple way of life; enforcing upon their understanding, the kind efforts of nature to maintain the human frame in a state of health with little medical help, but what abstinence and exercise will afford. These necessary parts of knowledge, so useful in directing the youthful mind in the path of virtue and wisdom, might be proposed by way of lectures, which the pupil should write down, and, when corrected, copy in a book, to be kept for future perusal." * * *

Such were the motives that influenced the conduct of this excellent man, in an occupation which was pursued for subsistence; affording the bright example too seldom imitated, of making worldly concerns subservient to the noblest duties, and the most extensive goodness. His great object was, to imbue the minds of his pupils with reverence for religion, and to train them up in a course of virtue. Were an estimate of his worth to be formed, by a reference to the services he rendered as an instructor of youth, they would be found to have entitled him to the distinguished consideration, respect, and gratitude, of future generations. But this appropriation of his time, formed only one of the numerous engagements of his benevolent and laborious life. He looked upon the world as his country, and considered all mankind as his brethren; and a wider sphere of usefulness opened out before him.

CHAPTER III.

Benezet's efforts against the Slave Trade and Slavery — Establishes a school for coloured people in Philadelphia— Enlarged by donations—Diligent attention to this object— Success attending it—His views respecting Negro capacity —Results of subsequent experience in the West Indies, &c. —General remarks on this subject.

With his enlightened and unbounded philanthropy, it was to be expected that the degraded and suffering condition of the negroes would occupy a large share of Benezet's notice and sympathy. About the year 1750, it was observed that his feelings were deeply affected with the iniquity of the slave trade, the unlawfulness of carrying negroes into captivity, and the cruelties exercised by those who purchased and employed them. The impulses of duty then, for the first time, brought him from the retirement of private life before the world, to lift up his voice in behalf of an oppressed and wretched portion of his fellow-beings. Perhaps no man in any age, or in any country, could have been better adapted to the great office of an advocate for the violated rights of a people, than was Anthony Benezet, by his peculiar capacity for being profoundly sensible of their wrongs. And when the astonishing effects of his labours in this work of mercy are reviewed, no doubt can be enter-

tained, that his commission to "plead the cause of the oppressed," proceeded from on High.

Among the earliest proofs of his compassion towards the African race, were the exertions he employed for the promotion of their welfare. In Philadelphia, the number of these objects of his regard was considerable, and he adopted the most rational course that could have been devised for their benefit, the establishment of an evening school, which he taught gratuitously himself.* And when a more enlarged plan of this nature was determined upon, by his brethren in religious profession, he contributed liberally towards it from his own limited income, and was indefatigable in soliciting donations from his opulent fellow-members, for the erection of a school for the instruction of black people.

Much of the two last years of Benezet's life were devoted to a personal attendance on this school, being earnestly desirous that they who came to it might be better qualified for the enjoyment of that freedom to which great numbers of them had thus been restored. To this he sacrificed not only the superior emoluments of his former school, but his bodily ease also, for the weakness of his constitution demanded more indulgence. By his last will he directed, that after the decease of his widow, his whole little fortune (the savings of the industry of fifty years) should, except a very few legacies, be applied to the support of it.

* Dr. Wilson, rector of St. Stephen's, Walbrook, London, a short time before his decease sent Benezet fifty pounds, to be applied to the support of this school, intending to have doubled the benefaction, but died before he effected his benevolent purpose.

In this charitable work he was successful beyond his own expectations, for the proficiency of his coloured pupils in the rudiments of learning, as well as the moral and religious advancement of many of them under his pious care, powerfully contributed to recommend their race to the notice, and the cause of their sufferings, to the investigation of many persons of influence, who had previously held both in contempt.

Among other important facts concerning the dispositions and mental capacities of the negroes, which his intercourse with them as a teacher, had afforded him the best opportunity to establish, was, that they possessed intellectual powers by no means inferior to any other portion of mankind. His opinion on this point is entitled to the highest consideration, not only because it vindicates those attributes of the Deity, which religion and reason conspire reverently to acknowledge; but being a determination of the judgment upon practical examination, it ought to be regarded as a solemn and unanswerable protest against the subtle sophistry, the degrading avarice, and refined cruelty, by whose unholy league attempts have been made to prove, that a sable skin cannot envelop a rational creature!

"I can," said Benezet, "with truth and sincerity declare, that I have found amongst the negroes as great variety of talents, as among a like number of whites; and I am bold to assert, that the notion entertained by some, that the blacks are inferior in their capacities, is a vulgar prejudice, founded on the pride or ignorance of their lordly masters; who have kept their slaves at such a distance, as to be unable to form a right judgment of them."

Most unphilosophical assumptions are still current in America, as to the natural inferiority of the coloured races, and their incompetency to receive instruction. Until those who compose this class of mankind have been placed in circumstances favourable to moral and intellectual culture, and the experiment of their improvement has been fairly tested, we are not warranted in the unqualified assertion of their inferiority to those who have hitherto been their oppressors. Numerous instances exist of individuals among them who have evinced eminent talent, and acquired much knowledge, under the greatest difficulties and discouragements.

The long experience of British planters, resident in our colonies, is confirmatory of the natural capacity of the negro. Intelligent West Indians, indeed, are seldom to be met with who express any doubt on the subject. Some have strongly advocated the competency of the blacks to profit, equally with Europeans, by such opportunities of improvement as are afforded them. Renn Hampden, Esq., M.P., formerly chairman of the privy council in Barbadoes, maintained that "the blacks are not inferior to the whites in intellect." Others, who have paid attention to this subject, have adopted similar views; among them are the Abbé Grégoire, Wilberforce, Clarkson, &c.

If the reader is interested in this question, he is referred to Tract 79 of the Leeds Anti-Slavery Series; or to a small work recently published, containing a condensation of facts in support of Negro equality, entitled *God's Image in Ebony*, by H. G. Adams. If still further evidence be desired, it may be found in a larger

work, of nearly 600 pages, entitled *A Tribute for the Negro; being a Vindication of the Moral, Intellectual, and Religious Capabilities of the African Race*, by Wilson Armistead; which contains a large mass of facts in proof of negro ability and intellect.

In a series of twenty *Annual Statements*, published by the "*Ladies' Society for Promoting the early Education and Improvement of the Children of Negroes and People of Colour in the British West Indies*," embracing a report of a large number of schools and of many thousand children, the great progress of the pupils is often noticed, and no complaint is made of their incapacity to receive instruction. Were it possible for a given number of the children of the aristocracy of England and of the American slaves to exchange situations from the moment of birth, it is by no means certain that the kindly-treated, educated, *christianised* negro in England, would not be as superior to the white slave in America, as the free European is now, when compared with the enslaved African. But if it be improbable that an advance of this extent could take place in a single generation, it cannot be disputed that the present race is susceptible of considerable mental elevation. And as regards the future, there seems little reason for doubting that a successive improvement would take place through a series of generations, by a constant increase and training of the mental faculties; for, agreeably to the opinion of the best physiologists, such improvements become organic, and so affect the race after several repetitions, as to form what may be termed the mould to a new character.

Even those who insist upon the negro's inferiority cannot deny that the powers of speech, of reasoning, of feeling, of sympathy, constitute the negro a human being with moral responsibility; and, consequently, that he has a claim on his fellow-creatures for all that consideration which Christianity enjoins from man to man.

"Is he not *man*, though knowledge never shed
Her quickening beams on his neglected head?
Is he not *man*, though sweet religion's voice
Ne'er made the mourner in his God rejoice?
Is *he* not *man*, by sin and suffering tried?
Is *he* not man, for whom the Saviour died?
Belie the negro's powers:—in headlong will,
Christian! thy brother thou shalt prove him still:
Belie his virtues;—since his wrongs began,
His follies and his crimes have stamp'd him MAN."

Montgomery.

CHAPTER IV.

Relinquishes his school, but resumes it—Continued efforts against the Slave Trade—Publishes several works on the subject—Forwards copies to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and persons of influence in Europe and America—Letter which accompanied them—Writes to Richard Shackleton—Notice of Edmund Burke—Letters to Granville Sharp—His Replies—Remarkable coincidence—Case of Somerset.

BENEZET proceeded with steady and unwearying step in the momentous concern which he had espoused, the abolition of the slave trade. Indeed his mind became so thoroughly absorbed in it, that he was induced to give up his school in 1776; and he removed to Burlington, in New Jersey, that he might more entirely apply himself to the promotion of the best interests of his fellow-creatures. But neither the change nor the situation altogether suited his active disposition, and in the following year he returned to Philadelphia, and resumed his former employment of school-keeping.

He did not relax in his efforts to advance the primary concern which had engaged his attention. Having already awakened observation and reflection in Philadelphia, and in some measure removed the unjustifiable prejudices against the negroes, he was prepared to make an appeal on their behalf to the justice and clemency of

communities and nations. His first attempts to enlighten the public mind, were made by composing and circulating through the medium of almanacs and newspapers, detached pieces on the unlawfulness of slavery. After this he published several essays on the slave trade; representing in a forcible and affecting manner the crimes it occasioned, the miseries it inflicted, and the awful consequences it must inevitably produce.

The largest and most important works, in this department of his literary labours, were:

"An Account of that part of Africa inhabited by the Negroes;" published in 1762.

"A Caution and Warning to Great Britain and her Colonies, on the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes;" published in 1767.

Subsequently, "An Historical Account of Guinea: its situation, produce, and the general disposition of its Inhabitants: with an Inquiry into the rise and progress of the Slave Trade, its nature, and calamitous effects."

These were printed at his own expense; and the following letter accompanied their distribution among persons of note and influence in Europe and America, to whom he sent copies. Among these he particularly addressed the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY:—

"With the best respects I am capable of, and I trust from no other motive than love to man, and from a persuasion of thy sincere desire for the suppression of evil, and the promotion of that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation, I make bold affectionately to salute thee, and to request a little attention to a subject which has long been of deep concern to many well-dis-

posed persons of all denominations in these parts, viz., the slave trade—the purchasing and bringing of the poor negroes from their native land, and subjecting them to a state of perpetual bondage, the most cruel and oppressive; in which the English nation is so deeply engaged, and which, with additional sorrow, we observe to be greatly increasing in their northern colonies, and likely still more to increase, by their recent acquisition of the factories on the river Senegal.

"I send thee herewith some small treatises lately published here on that subject, wherein are truly set forth the great inhumanity and wickedness this trade gives rise to, whereby hundreds of thousands of our fellow-creatures, equally with us the objects of Christ's redeeming grace, and as free as we are by nature, are kept under the worst oppression, and many of them brought to a miserable and untimely end.

"I earnestly entreat that thou wilt seriously read them, when I doubt not thou wilt perceive it to be a matter calling for the deepest consideration of all who are concerned for the civil and religious welfare of their country, and who are desirous to avert those judgments which evils of such a dye must necessarily, sooner or later, bring upon every people who are defiled therewith. And this will, I trust, plead my excuse for the freedom I take in addressing myself to thee.

"How an evil of so deep a dye has so long, not only passed unnoticed, but has even had the countenance of the government and been supported by law, is surprising. It must be because many worthy men in power, both of the laity and clergy, have been unacquainted with the horrible wickedness with which the trade is carried on, the corrupt motives which give life to it, and the groans, the numberless dying groans, which daily ascend to God, the common Father of mankind, from the broken hearts of these our deeply oppressed fellow-creatures. "ANTHONY BENEZET."

In addition to the foregoing, which accompanied the presented copies of his publications on the slave trade, Benezet entered into a special correspondence with

some whom he thought most likely to take a decided interest in the subject. One of his earliest letters extant is the following, to RICHARD SHACKLETON, of Ballitore, in Ireland:—

"*Philadelphia*, 6 *mo.* 6*th*, 1772.

"ESTEEMED FRIEND:

"Having a good opportunity by our dear friend Samuel Neale, I make free hereby affectionately to salute thee, and request thy attention to a subject which has long been a deep concern to many in these parts, viz.; the negro trade; the purchasing and bringing of those unhappy Africans from their native land, and subjecting them to a state of perpetual bondage, often the most cruel and afflictive, in which our nation is deeply engaged.

"I send thee by our friend Neale, two copies of a treatise lately published here on this weighty subject, wherein is set forth the inhumanity and great wickedness whereby so many thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men, equally with ourselves the objects of redeeming grace, endued with the same natural powers, and as free by nature as we, are brought to a miserable and untimely end. I beg thou wilt give it a serious perusal, when I am persuaded thou wilt perceive it to be a matter which calls for the most deep consideration of all who are concerned for the welfare of their country, and desirous to avert those judgments, which evils of so deep a dye must, sooner or later, bring upon every people who are defiled therewith. How an evil of so deep a dye has so long passed uncensured, and has even received the countenance of a Christian government and been supported by law, is surprising; and I apprehend must, in a great measure, have arisen from a false representation being made of the case to those in whose power it would have been to put a stop to the trade, who have been unacquainted with the corrupt motives which give life to it, and the groans, the dying groans which daily ascend to God, the common Father of mankind, from the broken hearts of these our dis-

tressed fellow-men; or, I think, we could not have so long continued in a practice so inconsistent with British ideas of liberty. Is it not strange, that whilst so much noise is made about the maintenance of liberty throughout the British empire, this prodigious infringement of every human and sacred tie, should be overlooked in the case of these miserable Africans?

"We make a high profession of the Christian religion, to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, and what is declared to be equal thereto, to love our neighbours (*i.e.* all mankind) as ourselves; and yet how unfeeling for the sufferings of others, how languid in our endeavours to procure them relief! If this love indeed prevailed, would it not deeply affect the hearts of many high professors of different denominations, who have had opportunity to be acquainted, not only with the grievous sufferings and prodigious havoc which is made by this trade in the human species, by means the most disgraceful, afflictive, and cruel, but also with its woeful effects on their lordly oppressors (who are also our brethren), in corrupting their morals, and hardening their hearts to that degree, that they and their offspring become alienated from God, estranged from all good, and are hastening to a state of greater, far greater, and more deeply corrupt barbarity, than that from which our progenitors emerged before their acquaintance with Christianity.

"Can we be both *silent* and *innocent* spectators? Ought we not, jointly or separately, to bring this matter before the government, before the King and Parliament? Will anything short of this excuse us to God, the common Father of mankind, when inquisition is made for the blood of so many thousands of our fellow-creatures, so unjustly and so cruelly shed, and still daily shedding by our nation, under the sanction of laws made by our representatives in Parliament? Indeed, daily experience verifies the assertion in the treatise sent herewith, 'That the slavery of the negroes in our colonies is attended with far worse circumstances, than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time.' For even wicked, amazingly wicked as are the American

laws quoted therein, yet that part for the security of the slaves is seldom put in execution, on several accounts. A slave's evidence is not valid, therefore the prosecution of the murderer must generally rest on the white overseer's testimony, who, except in resentment, will not be likely to appear against his employer. And it is dangerous in most places where slavery prevails, to plead the cause of the negroes; so that it is not uncommon to hear shocking instances of their being wantonly, passively, or cruelly murdered, without any legal notice being taken of it. We, as a people,* have not been backward in applying to Parliament in cases where our sufferings have been by no means comparable to the present case. If Friends could be prevailed upon to take any step tending to prevent the continuance of this terrible evil (the slave trade) at least, if not slavery itself, we should have the unity of many upright people of other religious persuasions. Indeed the people of Maryland and Virginia are so convinced of the inexpediency, if not all of them of the iniquity, of any further importation of negroes, that a Friend who has spent some time in those parts tells me, he thinks ten or twenty thousand people would join in a petition for that purpose, to Parliament.

"The last Maryland yearly meeting of Friends did draw up a petition to be laid before their Assembly, praying for a law to prevent any further importation of negroes, and I am told that Friends of Virginia had the same thing under their consideration.

"As the procuring, if possible, a remedy for this most grievous evil is what I have very much at heart, I trust thou wilt extend charity in judging of the freedom I have taken in thus writing to thee. It is what I should scarcely have done, but from the encouragement given me by our dear friend Samuel Neale; more especially as he tells me thou art closely connected with a person of judgment and weight in the English Parliament, who may be a good instrument in forwarding an inquiry into this potent evil; an evil of so deep a dye that if we indeed believe that the threats, as well as the pro-

* *i. e.* The Society of Friends.

mises, recorded in Scripture, will have their accomplishment, what can we expect but that the judgments of God will, when the cup is full, break out with irresistible fury!

"I shall take it kind if thou wilt let me hear from thee by a few lines in answer; and remain thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

In the latter part of the foregoing letter, there can be no doubt that the "person of judgment and weight in the English Parliament" referred to, was the great orator and statesman, Edmund Burke, for he was the intimate friend of Richard Shackleton,* to whom the letter is addressed. Burke lost no opportunity for advocating the cause of the negro. In a work on the European Settlements, which, though published anonymously, is universally attributed to him, he complained that the negroes endured a slavery more complete and intolerable than had been known in any time, or in any part of the world; and urged, by every motive of humanity, morality, and religion, that they should experience a different treatment.

Another of Benezet's letters written about this time was to Granville Sharp, of London, who had already become interested, having in 1769 published a work, which he called "A Representation of the Injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating Slavery in England." This is probably the "treatise," a part of which Benezet had republished in America, to which he alludes in the early part of his letter.

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* See *Select Miscellanies*; vol. iv., p. 327.

To GRANVILLE SHARP.

"*Philadelphia, 5th mo. 14th*, 1772.

"ESTEEMED FRIEND GRANVILLE SHARP:

"I have long been desirous to advise with such well-disposed persons in England, as have a prospect of the iniquity of the slave trade, and are concerned to prevent its continuance. And I should have wrote thee thereon, had I known how to direct; particularly as I had taken the freedom to republish a part of thy acceptable, and I trust serviceable, treatise. But now, having a good opportunity, I make free affectionately to salute thee, and to send thee some copies of a treatise lately published here on that iniquitous traffic, giving the best account of its origin, progress, &c., we have been able to procure. I doubt not but it may be amended by some more able hand on your side the water. We esteem the whole of thy treatise to be very instructive, and much to the point; nevertheless, it was thought, from the general disposition of the people here, that their attention was most likely to be drawn to it, if limited to that part which immediately concerns *us*. I trust thou wilt excuse the freedom we have taken in abridging it, even though thou should not quite approve our reasons for so doing. It is certainly incumbent on every lover of God and man to use their best endeavours to stop this unnatural and barbarous traffic, as well on account of its dreadful effects on the poor negroes, the devastation it occasions in their country, the destruction and intolerable suffering it entails on those who remain in bondage, and their offspring; but yet much more so in the case of their lordly oppressors, the people of the West India and southern colonies, to whom this dreadful evil will, in its consequences, extend beyond time, even in the regions of eternity, by hardening their hearts, so that they and their offspring become alienated from God, and are hastening to a state of greater and more deeply corrupt barbarity, than that from whence our progenitors sprung, before their acquaintance with Christianity.

"My friend John Wesley promises he will consult

with thee about the expediency of some weekly publication, in the newspapers, on the origin, nature, and dreadful effects of the slave trade. This appears absolutely necessary, as many well-minded people, who may have some influence, are ignorant of the case; and also because way may thereby be made for a further attempt towards the removal of this potent evil; to which, we think, nothing will so effectually conduce as a representation to the King and both Houses of Parliament. This is what we have a right to do, and what will at least be a testimony on behalf of truth. Indeed, we cannot be at the same time silent and innocent spectators of the most horrid scene (if rightly considered, in itself and in its consequences) that was, perhaps, ever acted upon the face of the earth. I have wrote to several leading persons amongst our Friends, the Quakers, on this head; earnestly requesting they would consider whether, being better acquainted with the prodigious iniquity and dreadful consequences attendant on this practice, and having so publicly, in their general Yearly Epistle to their churches, everywhere declared their abhorrence of it, it was not their duty, either as a people, or by their principal members, to endeavour for its removal by such a representation. I have also mentioned the matter, and sent some of the last and former treatises, to our agent, Benjamin Franklin, who I know has a due sense of its iniquity and evil consequences, and would, I am persuaded, use his influence that an end should be put to the trade. I have the more hope of the good effects which may attend an immediate application to the King, from a paragraph in our newspapers of this month, stating 'that a Parliamentary inquiry into the conduct of the East India Company in Bengal was proposed by a great personage, who was much shocked with the account he received of the oppression exercised over the poor natives.'

Will anything less than such an application excuse us to God, the Father of mankind, when inquisition is made for the blood of so many thousands and tens of thousands, may I not say hundreds of thousands, of our fellow-men (*i. e.* our neighbours, whom we are by the Gospel enjoined to love as ourselves) so unjustly shed,

and yet shedding daily, by our nation? What shall we do when God riseth up, and when he visiteth? What shall we answer him? Did not He that made them make us, and did not One fashion us before we were born? I beg and earnestly entreat, by the mercies of God, that this matter of an application to the King and Parliament may be weighty with you—by those mercies that each of us shall ere long, and perhaps very soon, recur to, when we shall have, with the greatest joy or grief, to remember that mercy is, with the blessing, promised to the merciful, and fulness of heart to those who truly hunger and thirst after righteousness. The mode of such a representation you may much better judge of than we can pretend to point out. I doubt not but thou wilt, upon inquiry, find more well-minded people ready to wish you 'Good speed' in this weighty service, than you are aware of. The most solid amongst all Dissenters, particularly the Presbyterians, would be well pleased to see an end put to the slave trade, and many to slavery itself. The people of New England have made a law nearly amounting to a prohibition of the trade, and, I am informed, have proposed to the Governor and Council that all negroes born in the country should be free at a certain age. I know the flood of impiety and selfishness, which as a torrent seems to overflow, will be a great discouragement; but let us remember, that the Lord's power is above the power of darkness; His hand is not shortened, that He cannot save by few, as well as by many.

"The people of Maryland and Virginia are so convinced of the inexpediency, if not all of them of the iniquity, of any further importation of negroes, that a person who spent some time in these provinces tells me, he thinks ten or twenty thousand people would freely join in a petition to Parliament against any further import. As, perhaps, the danger of increasing the number of negroes in the island and colonies may have influence on the Government to prohibit any further import, it may not be amiss to observe that, by a late computation, there are about 850,000 negroes in the English colonies and islands. In Jamaica alone, by the poll-tax in that island for the year 1768, it appears that

there were then 166,914 *taxable* negroes; doubtless there were more, who either eluded the tax, or were not taxable, to make up two hundred thousand: and, by the best account I can obtain, not many more, if any, than fifteen thousand whites. And the trade for slaves is carried on with such vigour, that we have reason to conclude there are yearly at least an hundred thousand violently brought from Africa by the English alone. These are employed to make some new settlement, as in the islands of Tobago, St. Vincent, &c.; also to make up deficiencies, and to sell to the Spaniards.

"I remain thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

It is worthy of note, that this letter reached Granville Sharp on the very day which terminated the memorable case of the slave Somerset, which established the freedom of all negroes setting foot on English territory. Fully prepared as his mind was to make him a valuable coadjutor in the great cause Benezet had so warmly espoused, we may form some idea of the joy with which Granville Sharp would receive this first offering of a correspondense entered into for the very same object he had himself already so much at heart, and in the promotion of which he became a most able and indefatigable advocate.

It was not long before he wrote the following reply:

GRANVILLE SHARP TO ANTHONY BENEZET.

"*Old Jewry, London, August* 21, 1772.

"DEAR SIR:

"You need not have made an apology for having abridged* my book. It is a sufficient satisfaction to me

* In a letter to Dr. Fothergill, when alluding to Benezet's abridg-

to find that you thought it capable of doing some service in a cause which we have both of us so much at heart.

"I not only approve, sir, of the abridgment you have made of my arguments in particular, but of your whole performance. Some copies of it arrived here very opportunely, just before the case of James Somerset came to a hearing in the Court of King's Bench; and, by Dr. Fothergill's kindness, I was enabled immediately to dispose of six: one to Lord Mansfield, the Chief Justice; one to Lord North, first Lord Commissioner of the Treasury; and four to the learned counsel who had generously undertaken to plead gratis for Somerset. I had thought indeed of reprinting it, as I did your former tract in 1768, but Mr. Clark, the printer, was luckily beforehand with me; so that I had an opportunity of purchasing more copies to distribute.

"I send you a copy of your own book as reprinted here, and some other pamphlets lately published on the subject; with a few little tracts of my own, of which I beg your acceptance, as a small token of my esteem. I have likewise sent a copy of the judgment given by Lord Mansfield in the case of Somerset. This judgment would have done Lord Mansfield honour, had he not all along seemed inclined to the other side of the question. After the second day's argument, before any judicial determination was given, he advised the West-India merchants to apply to Parliament while it continued to sit, and Mr. —— accordingly made a motion in the House for securing property in negroes and other slaves in this kingdom. However, he did not succeed; but it is apprehended that he and the other West-India merchants will use their utmost endeavours to carry their point next session. It is on this account that I have now undertaken to write once more upon the subject, in order to apprise disinterested people of the dangerous tendency of such a measure; and I shall endea-

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ment of his "Injustice of Slavery," Granville Sharp says, "My fellow-labourer, Mr. Benezet, has very judiciously extracted the marrow of my book."

vour to prepare what few friends I have in Parliament, for an opposition to such a destructive proposal, in case it should be renewed. My former tracts were built chiefly on the laws of England; but my present work is for the most part *founded on Scripture*, to obviate the doctrines of some late writers and disputers, who have ventured to assert that slavery is not inconsistent with the Word of God.

"I had thoughts once of addressing myself to the bishops and clergy, in order to show them the necessity of uniting their influence and interest on this occasion; but I have since had an opportunity of throwing this business upon the Archbishop of York,* whose application to his brethren (the clergy) would certainly be effectual, if he should think such a measure likely to be attended with success. I have the satisfaction to be informed that he is become a zealous advocate for the freedom of the negroes, and is desirous of doing every service to the cause that he can.

"Your proposal of petitioning Parliament is certainly very proper, if the subject of the petition be confined to the African slave trade (which is protected and encouraged by Parliament); but *with respect to the toleration of slavery in the colonies*, I apprehend the British Parliament has no right to interfere; and that your petition on this head should be *addressed only to the King, or to the King in Council.* My reason for this opinion I wrote at large in a letter to Lord North; a copy of which I enclose, because I think our brethren of the colonies cannot be too much upon their guard with respect to the dignity and independence of their own Assemblies on this point. My letter was indeed a private one, and, therefore, if you should think proper to communicate it, it will be right to suppress the name of the nobleman to whom it was addressed.

"You mention the information you have received from Maryland and Virginia, that ten or twenty thousand people would freely join in petition to Parliament against the further importation of negroes. Such a petition would retrieve, in some respects, the honour of

* Dr. Drummond.

those colonies, and be a glorious proof that they are not destitute of Christian and social principles; and it would probably lay the foundation for a total prohibition of that most abominable branch of the African trade, the buying and selling of men. Yet, as I have mentioned above, respect must be had to *the rights of the colonies;* and a petition from thence, *if addressed to Parliament,* ought to relate to the *slave trade* (with its bad effects and consequences) *in general,* and not merely to the importation of slaves into the colonies, because the colonies have a right *themselves* to prohibit such importation respectively in their own Assemblies, with the King's concurrence; which they will be sure to obtain in this matter, if asked for by a majority.

"With respect to a petition to Parliament against *the slave trade in general,* if you could procure even less than a tenth part of the lowest number of petitioners mentioned in your letter, I should think it a very considerable point gained; as it would afford an excellent argument against the pretended necessity of holding slaves in the colonies, which is always alleged as a reason for the encouragement given by Parliament to the African trade. A petition also to the King from a small number (if a larger number, or a majority, cannot be obtained), against *the toleration of slavery in the colonies,* might have very good effects; for though it would not be likely to succeed in the whole, yet it might at least occasion the setting on foot some wholesome regulations by way of restraint on the masters.

"I am told of some regulations that have taken place in the Spanish colonies, which do the Spaniards much honour, and are certainly worthy of our imitation, in case we should not be so happy as to obtain an entire abolition of slavery; and probably you will find many American subjects willing to promote such regulations, though the same people would strenuously oppose the scheme of a total abolition of slavery.

"Be pleased to inform me, whether you shall be likely to procure any such petitions or memorials as are mentioned above; because I would endeavour to prevail on some of the bishops to present the memorials that are for the King; as also on Sir George Saville, or some

other respectable member of the Lower House, to present the petitions to Parliament. Yet this matter will require good consideration, because the business is certainly in the regular channel when conducted by your own agent.

"Lord Dartmouth, who is lately appointed secretary for the colonies, is esteemed a humane and religious man, and his mediation with the King and Council might probably be very efficacious, were he applied to from your side the water, by way of *memorial accompanying the petition, &c.*, if signed by any respectable number of American subjects; and then the business would be in a regular track.

I need not assure you, sir, how much you have my good wishes for prosperity and success in your benevolent undertakings, and that I shall always think myself happy in lending what little assistance may happen to be in my power.

"With great esteem,

"GRANVILLE SHARP."

A regular correspondence was now instituted between these two philanthropists. But little of it is, however, now extant, beyond a few extracts, which are summed up in the following:—

ANTHONY BENEZET TO GRANVILLE SHARP.

"*Philadelphia, 4th mo.* —, 1773.

"ESTEEMED FRIEND:

"I wrote thee at large, by a vessel for Ireland, about six weeks since, also three weeks ago by the packet from New York, respecting the steps taken, and likely to be pursued, in the more northern provinces, in relation to the slave trade. I am glad to understand from my friend Benjamin Franklin, that you have commenced an acquaintance, and that he expects in future to act in concert with thee in the affair of slavery. I send thee herewith some pamphlets; and in confidence

of thy goodness of heart, which by looking to the intention, will construe the freedom I have taken in the best light,

"I remain, with love,
"ANTHONY BENEZET."

GRANVILLE SHARP TO ANTHONY BENEZET.

"*7th July*, 1773.

"DEAR SIR:

"I hope you will not measure my esteem for you by my negligence in writing. I found myself obliged to defer acknowledging your very sensible letters, for want of proper leisure; for I am really a sort of slave myself, being obliged to employ every day in the week constantly in the ordinary business of my office, and having no holidays but Sundays, as the branch that I am in requires more attendance than any in the whole office. However, every opportunity that I could possibly get to myself (and Sundays in particular, after service), has been employed in reading and collecting materials to forward the undertaking which you have so much at heart. * *

"With great esteem,
"GRANVILLE SHARP."

It is much to be regretted that so little of their correspondence is preserved, for it must have been as interesting as it was extensive. We have merely a notice of six more of Benezet's letters to Granville Sharp, in the "Memoirs" of the latter.

One of these, dated 11th mo. 8th, 1772, enclosed extracts from the minutes of the Virginia Assembly against the toleration of the slave trade, and signifying his hopes of succeeding in forwarding such petitions as were recommended in Granville Sharp's letter of Aug. 21st; stating also that he would send copies of that letter to Virginia and Maryland, and that an eminent

lawyer to whom he had communicated it, had undertaken to draw up suitable forms of petitions.

In another letter, dated 2nd mo. 18th, 1773, Benezet states that he had made out several copies of such parts of Sharp's letter as were likely to promote the good end proposed. These he had sent to Virginia, South Carolina, and Maryland, to such persons as had the matter at heart, with all the additional strength in his power, to encourage their taking most effect. In the same letter he says:

"We have pushed the point among ourselves [in Pennsylvania] by handing about extract copies of thy letter, the Virginia Petition, &c.;" to which he adds: "And our Assembly meeting about the same time, we put forward a petition to be laid before them, of which I herewith send thee a copy. This was freely agreed to by all the clergy of every denomination, and other weighty members of society: scarcely any but gave their cordial assent. If time would have allowed I am persuaded we might have had ten thousand signers. The Assembly concurred with the proposal, and appointed a short time for the second reading. Nevertheless, they have not thought it expedient to comply with the petition; but, as a preliminary, have thought it best to frame a Bill, augmenting (*i. e.* in favour of the Crown) the duty upon the negroes from £10 to £20. I have also sent an extract of thy letter, of the Virginia Petition, &c., to some weighty members of three different counties in New York Government, and the same to two counties in New Jersey, &c."

A letter dated 3rd mo. 29th, 1773, stated that

"In consequence of the Philadelphia Petition, mentioned in his last, the Assembly had laid a further duty on slaves (and made it perpetual), £20 per head; and that they apprehended that the passing or refusing of this law by the King and Council, will better enable

them to judge what further steps to take, with respect to making head with the King and Parliament that the *slave trade may be put an end to.*"

Another letter, dated 4th mo. 5th, 1773, informed Granville Sharp that

"An opposition to any further importation of slaves in the northern colonies appeared to be *an increasing* concern; and even the putting an end to slavery itself, was aimed at in New England; and that the Assembly had proposed, or intended to propose, a law for setting all negroes free at a certain age, and declaring those to be imported in future free, either at their landing or after some short time of service."

By another letter in the same year (1773), Granville Sharp received from Benezet a copy of the Pennsylvania Petition, and of the Act of Assembly which passed in consequence of it; with a request to give intelligence to his correspondents in America whether any notice had been taken by the British Government of the Virginia Petition, and the Acts of the Pennsylvania Assembly for laying a duty on negroes.

In a seventh letter of Benezet to Granville Sharp, dated 3rd mo. 16th, 1774, brought over by William Dillwyn, amongst other things he repeats that

"The importation of negroes, and indeed slavery itself, receives all the discouragement that can be expected in these northern colonies; and some in the more southern are also sensible of the danger and destructive tendency of the increase of slaves among them. But except some check can be put *with you* to the importation of slaves from Guinea, I fear little will be done.

"Our Assembly will be induced to petition the King against any further importation of slaves from Africa;

also to pass a law declaring all negroes in future to be born free. Thy remarks in favour of such slaves as have escaped from their masters, with the law-reasoning on the case, afford me uncommon satisfaction. I trust they will be made use of to profit in these parts. The Assembly at New York lately passed a law declaring the children of slaves to be born free, but it was not confirmed by the Governor."

It may be interesting here to point out the remarkable coincidence comprised in the fact, that before any acquaintance or correspondence had been opened between Anthony Benezet and Granville Sharp, they had both republished each other's works on slavery, the one in England and the other in America. The author of Granville Sharp's memoirs observes: "In a copy of one of Benezet's works found in Mr. Sharp's library, is the following marginal note in manuscript: 'The author of this book, printed at Philadelphia in 1762, was Mr. Anthony Benezet of that city, universally respected by all who knew him. When G. S. was involved in the first lawsuit, to defend himself against a prosecution for having set a negro slave at liberty, in 1767, *he accidentally met with a copy of this book* on a stall, and without any knowledge whatever of the author, caused this edition to be printed and published [with additions]. And it is remarkable that Mr. Benezet reprinted at Philadelphia G. S.'s representation of 'The Injustice and dangerous tendency of tolerating Slavery,' without knowing that the author had paid the same compliment to his former work in 1767.'"

As regards Benezet's correspondence with Granville Sharp, it may justly be observed, in the words of

Sharp's biographer, Prince Hoare, "if it did not inspire, at least it confirmed and enlarged, Mr. Sharp's desire of inquiry respecting the general subject of the African slave trade. It conducted his view to an examination of the *source of the evil*, and he conceived the vast design of extending his endeavours gradually, and of augmenting and strengthening his means, until he should obtain an entire abolition of the infamous traffic carried on by Great Britain and her colonies."

I cannot conclude this chapter without another slight allusion to the result of the case of Somerset, mentioned in Sharp's letter to Benezet, page 33. What a great and glorious triumph was achieved in the decision, "*That as soon as any slave set his foot on English territory, he became Free!*" From this time the poor African ceased to be hunted in our streets as a beast of prey. Our papers were no longer polluted with advertisements for the apprehension of men, whose only offence had been that of using their right, and fleeing from the service of the oppressor; nor for the sale of man as the property of his fellow-man!

It is to the result of this memorable trial that Cowper so graphically alludes in the following lines:

"Slaves cannot breathe in England: if their lungs
Imbibe our air, that moment they are free.
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it, then,
And let it circulate through every vein
Of all your empire. That where Britain's power
Is felt, mankind may feel her mercy too."

CHAPTER V.

Benezet's zeal against the Slave Trade increases—Writes to Dr. Fothergill—Notice of Dr. Rush—First Anti-Slavery Society in America—Writes to Abbé Raynal—The Abbé's reply—Writes to Queen Charlotte—Her remark on reading his letter—To the Queens of France and Portugal—To the Countess of Huntingdon—Her assurance—Corresponds with George Whitfield and others—Replies from Governor Livingston, Ambrose Serle, John Wesley, N. Gilbert—Extracts from letters to Samuel Allinson.

With the progress of life, Benezet's zeal and assiduity for effecting the abolition of the slave trade increased. No exertion was too great, nor any service too minute for him to undertake, to advance the righteous cause of justice and mercy. On one day he would be surrounded by the sable children of Africa, imparting advice, or deriving information from them concerning the cruelties they had suffered; and the next day engaged in composing essays on the subject; addressing letters to friends and strangers, from whom he hoped some aid could be obtained; or with an innocent boldness worthy of his office, he would be spreading the cause of the poor negro, in the language of warning and persuasion, before statesmen and sovereigns.

The following additional letters, probably the only ones extant, will further develope his opinions relative

to the traffic in human flesh, and the means he employed to promote its overthrow.

ANTHONY BENEZET TO DR. FOTHERGILL.

"*Philadelphia, 4th mo. 28th,* 1773.

"DOCTOR JOHN FOTHERGILL:

"Thy kind letter of the 28th of 8th month last I received, and gratefully acknowledge thy kind sympathy therein expressed. I am like-minded with thee, with respect to the danger and difficulty that would attend a sudden manumission of those negroes now in the southern colonies, as well to themselves as to the whites; so that, except in particular cases, the obtaining of their freedom, and indeed the freedom of many even amongst us, is by no means the present object of my concern. But our best endeavours to draw the attention of governments to the grievous iniquity and great danger attendant on a further prosecution of the slave trade, is what every truly sympathising mind cannot but earnestly desire, and under Divine direction promote to the utmost of their power.

"If this could be obtained, I trust the sufferings of those already amongst us, by the interposition of the government, and even from selfish ends in their masters, would be mitigated; and, in time, Providence would gradually work for the release of those whose age and situation would fit them for freedom. The settlements now in prospect to be made in that large extent of country, from the west side of the Allegany mountains to the Mississippi, on a breadth of four or five hundred miles, would afford a suitable and beneficial means of settlement for many of them among the white people, which would, in all probability, be as profitable to the negroes as to the new settlers. But I do not desire to take up thy time, which I would have avoided, was there any person to whom I could have addressed myself with the same expectation that what I have in view would have been answered thereby.

"An address has been presented to our Assembly, desiring it to use its utmost endeavours with the King

and Parliament, that an end may be put to the slave trade by laying a duty of £20 on all slaves imported. It was thought desirable that some friends with you should be acquainted with the further steps taken, or likely to be, to enable you to speak in support of the law, if necessary. I therefore send thee a copy of the address, also what I now write to our agent, Benjamin Franklin, on that head, to acquaint him with what transpires here on this momentous concern.

"I have also enclosed a number of copies of a pamphlet written at the time we presented the petition, to lay the weight of the matter briefly before members of the Assembly, and other active members of Government in this and the neighbouring provinces. It was written by Benjamin Rush, a young physician, a Presbyterian, whom thou wast acquainted with when pursuing his studies three or four years past in England. I also send a selection of religious tracts, chiefly compiled for the use of inquiring people in our back countries, where such books are much wanted. I endeavoured to select them plain, instructive, and edifying, without touching on what might occasion fruitless debate.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

The pamphlet alluded to in the foregoing letter was no doubt that published by Dr. Rush in 1773, entitled, "An Address to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements, on the Slavery of the Negroes," which was written at Benezet's own suggestion. He afterwards wrote a second, in vindication of the former against the acrimonious attack of a West India planter.

Dr. Rush was distinguished as a literary and scientific man, and was in high repute as a physician and a philanthropist in Philadelphia, and well known as the author of Medical Dissertations, Treatises on the Discipline of Schools, Criminal Law, &c. Benezet could not have drawn into this field of labour a better or more

efficient worker than Dr. Rush. His publications, written in a polished style, containing many new ideas and observations, and having a considerable circulation, spread conviction among many, and admirably promoted the cause for which they had been so laudably undertaken.

It was Dr. Rush and James Pemberton who undertook, in conjunction with others, to form a union of those who were friendly to the slave's cause. Early in 1775 a little company, chiefly Quakers, met at the Sun tavern, in Second-street, Philadelphia, and formed themselves into an association, under the unpretending title of "The Society for the Relief of Free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage." This society, confined to Pennsylvania, was the first ever formed in America, in which there was a union of persons of different religious denominations in behalf of the African race, and Anthony Benezet was one of its most active and zealous co-labourers.

But Benezet still continued his more private exertions. On discovering that the Abbé Raynal had brought out his celebrated work, the "History of the European Settlements in the West Indies," in which he manifested a tender feeling in behalf of the injured Africans, he entered into a correspondence with him, hoping to make him yet more useful to the cause.

ANTHONY BENEZET TO ABBÉ RAYNAL.

"*Philadelphia, 7th mo. 16th*, 1781.

"MY FRIEND ABBÉ RAYNAL:

"From an idea of the justice and generosity of

thy sentiments, I took the liberty of writing thee seven or eight months past, under cover of my friend Benjamin Franklin, also by J—— B——, who, we are afraid, was lost on his passage. Having received no answer, and not knowing whether my letters reached thee, or thine miscarried, and a good opportunity offering by my friend Dr. Griffiths, I now seize it to send thee two copies of a small extract on the origin and principles of my brethren the Quakers, whom, I observe in such of thy writings as have come to our hands, thou didst not think unworthy of thy attention.

"I have nothing to add to what I have already written thee; but shall repeat my wish of saluting thee affectionately, on the principles of reason and humanity, which constitute that grand circle of love and charity, not restricted by our parentage or country, but which embrace the whole creation; earnestly desiring, to the utmost of *my abilities, to promote the happiness of all men, even of my enemies themselves, could I have any.* I beseech God to give thee strength, that thou mayest continue to hold up to mankind principles tending to replenish their hearts with goodness, friendship, and charity towards each other, that thou mayest, to the utmost of thy power, render men reasonable, useful, and consequently happy; and more especially that thou mayest combat that false principle of honour, or rather of intolerable pride and folly, which so strongly prevails in our nation, wherein the most indolent and least useful fancy themselves, and are reputed, the most noble. Let us endeavour to make them sensible that men are noble only in an exact proportion with their being rational.

"The happiness which is to be found in virtue alone, is sought for by men through the titles acquired by their fathers, for their activity in those wars which have desolated the world, or in the wealth accumulated by their ancestors. Both means are generally unjust and oppressive, and consequently rather sources of shame and humiliation. For, as the Chinese philosopher well observes, 'There is scarcely one rich man out of a hundred, who was not himself an oppressor or the son of an oppressor.'

"Let us display to princes, and the rulers of nations, the example of Numa Pompilius, who, by a conduct opposite to that of Romulus, his predecessor, and most of his successors, rendered the Romans during his long reign, so respectable and happy. Above all, my dear friend, let us represent to our compatriots, the abominable iniquity of the Guinea [slave] trade. Let us put to the blush the pretended disciples of the benign Saviour of the world, for the encouragement given to the unhappy Africans, in invading the liberty of their own brethren. Let us rise, and rise with energy, against the corruption introduced into the principles and manners of the masters and owners of slaves, by a conduct so contrary to humanity, reason, and religion. Let us be still more vehement in representing its baneful influence on their wretched offspring, necessarily educated in idleness, pride, and all the vices to which human nature is liable.

"How desirable is it that Louis XVI., whose virtues and good disposition have been so nobly praised, would set an example to the other potentates of Europe, by forbidding his subjects to be concerned in a traffic, so evil in itself and so corrupting in its consequences; and that he would also issue out ordinances in favour of such negroes as are now slaves in his dominions. Alas! should Christianity, that law of love and charity, work its proper effect on the hearts of its pretended disciples, we should see numbers of Christians traverse Africa and both the Indies—not to pollute themselves with slavery and slaughter, nor to accumulate wealth (the supreme wish of the present nominal Christians—but that Divine love would impel them to visit remote regions, acquaint the inhabitants with the corruption of the human heart, and invite them to seek for the influence of that grace proposed by the Gospel, by which they may obtain salvation.

I am under the necessity of concluding hastily, requesting thou wilt excuse faults, which time does not allow me to correct, and write me by various opportunities, the vessels bound to these parts often missing their destination.

"I am affectionately thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

To this energetic epistle the Abbé made the following reply:—

ABBÉ RAYNAL TO ANTHONY BENEZET.

"*Bruxelles, December* 26, 1781.

"All your letters have miscarried. Happily I received that of the sixteenth of July, 1781, with the pamphlets filled with light and sensibility which accompany it. Never was any present more agreeable to me. My satisfaction was equal to the respect I have always had for the society of the Quakers. May it please Heaven to cause all nations to adopt their principles; men would then be happy, and the globe not stained with blood. Let us join in our supplications to the Supreme Being, that he may unite us in the bonds of a tender and unalterable charity.

"I am, &c.,

"RAYNAL."

The Abbé Raynal lost no opportunity of advocating the cause of freedom. In giving an account of the laws, government, and religion of Africa, its produce, the manners of its inhabitants, the trade in slaves, and the mode of procuring them, with several other particulars relating to the subject, he urged the duty of humanity to the slaves. But fearing this might be construed into an approval of slavery, before he quitted the subject he employed several pages in showing its utter inconsistency with sound policy, justice, reason, humanity, and religion.

About two years after this time, finding that the slave trade (which had greatly declined during the American war) was now reviving, Benezet addressed the following letter, soliciting her benevolent influence on behalf of the oppressed,

"To Charlotte, Queen of Great Britain.

"*Philadelphia, 8th mo. 25th,* 1783.

"Impressed with a sense of religious duty, and encouraged by the opinion generally entertained of thy benevolent disposition to succour the distressed, I take the liberty, very respectfully, to offer for thy perusal some tracts, which I believe faithfully describe the suffering condition of many hundred thousands of our fellow-creatures, of the African race; great numbers of whom, rent from every tender connexion in life, are annually taken from their native land, to endure, in the American islands and plantations, a most rigorous and cruel slavery, whereby very many of them are brought to a melancholy and untimely end.

"When it is considered that the inhabitants of Britain, who are themselves so eminently blessed in the enjoyment of religious and civil liberty, have long been, and are yet, very deeply concerned in this flagrant violation of the common rights of mankind, and that even its national authority is exerted in support of the African slave trade, there is much reason to apprehend that this has been, and as long as the evil exists will continue to be, an occasion of drawing down the Divine displeasure on the nation and its dependencies.

"May these considerations induce thee to interpose thy kind endeavours on behalf of this greatly oppressed people, whose abject situation gives them an additional claim to the pity and assistance of the generous mind, inasmuch as they are altogether deprived of the means of soliciting effectual relief for themselves; that so thou mayest not only be a blessed instrument in the hands of Him "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice," to avert the awful judgments by which the empire has already been so remarkably shaken, but that "the blessings of thousands ready to perish" may come upon thee, at a time when the superior advantages attendant on thy situation in this world will no longer be of any avail to thy consolation and support.

"To the tracts on the subject to which I have thus ventured to crave thy particular attention, I have added

some others, which at different times I have believed it my duty to publish, and which I trust will afford thee some satisfaction; their design being for the furtherance of that universal peace and good will amongst men, which the Gospel was intended to introduce.

"I hope thou wilt kindly excuse the freedom used on this occasion, by an ancient man whose mind, for more than forty years past, has been much separated from the common course of the world, and been long painfully exercised in the consideration of the miseries under which so large a part of mankind, equally with ourselves the objects of redeeming love, are suffering the most unjust and grievous oppression, and who sincerely desires the temporal and eternal felicity of the Queen and her royal Consort.

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

The Queen, already prepossessed in favour of Benezet by the representations of Benjamin West, the celebrated historical painter, received this pathetic letter with marks of peculiar condescension and attention. After having perused the epistle she is said to have remarked, "That the writer was truly a good man, and that she kindly accepted the present, and would read the books he had sent."

Benezet made similar communications on the subject of the slave trade to the Queens of France and Portugal. To Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, he wrote on the following subject. Under her patronage, aided by the liberality of many persons in England and America, a college for the education of indigent orphans had been founded near Savannah, in Georgia. It was anticipated that this institution would prove useful to the negroes, but, on the contrary, the managers of it employed a great number of slaves, to extend the rice

and indigo plantations belonging it; and so in fact to reduce the benevolent institution, liberally endowed by the countess, to a mere mercantile speculation, carried out by slave labour. Benezet apprized her of the fact, appealing to her religious principles as to the inconsistency of allowing the managers of the college to encourage slavery. His appeal to the amiable countess was successful, for she assured him, in reply to his address, "*That such a measure should never have her concurrence, and she would take care to prevent it.*"

Benezet also corresponded with George Whitfield on this subject; and it was probably owing to this that the latter so freely exposed and condemned the "inhuman usage," as he termed it, interesting many of his followers in the negro's behalf. That Benezet also wrote to many others, is evident from the fragments of the letters which follow, which show that he had addressed those who thus respectfully reply to his letters:—

FROM GOVERNOR LIVINGSTON, OF NEW JERSEY.

"The piece on slave keeping is excellent, but the arguments against the unlawfulness of war have been answered a thousand times. May the Father of Lights lead us into all truth, and over all the commotions of this world, to his own glory, and the introduction of that kingdom of peace and righteousness which will endure for ever. Believe me to be your sincere friend."

FROM AMBROSE SERLE, SECRETARY TO LORD HOWE.

"*Philadelphia, June 2nd,* 1778.

"I ought not to omit, my valued friend, the returning you my kindest thanks for your obliging present of books, which I shall peruse with attention, and for your

sake keep them by me. It would be happy for the world at large, and for individuals, if the principles they maintain were rightly understood and cordially received. We should, in that case, have had no occasion to deplore the present miseries and troubles, which, as the certain effect of sin, naturally result from the ambition, dishonesty, and other unmortified passions of mankind. The world, on the contrary, would be something like a paradise regained; and universal benevolence and philanthropy preside, as they ought, in the human heart.

But though, from long experience, we may and must despair of the general diffusion of Christian sentiments and practice, we have this comfortable trust, in our own particular persons, that we have a peace which the world can neither give nor take away; and though the kingdoms of this world tumble into confusion, and are lost in the corrupted strivings of men, we have a kingdom prepared of God, incorruptible, and that cannot fade away. There, though I see your face no more upon earth, I have the hope of meeting with you again, both of us divested of all that can clog or injure our spirits, and both participating that fulness of joy which flows from God's right hand for evermore. To his tender protection I commend you, and remain with sincere esteem, your affectionate friend."

FROM JOHN WESLEY.

"Mr. Oglethorp, you know, went so far as to begin settling a colony without negroes; but at length the voice of those villains prevailed who sell their country and their God for gold—who laugh at human nature and compassion, and defy all religion but that of getting money. It is certainly our duty to do all in our power to check this growing evil, and something may be done by spreading those tracts which place it in a true light. But I fear it will not be stopped till all the kingdoms of this earth become the kingdoms of our God."

John Wesley, the writer of the foregoing, and the venerable founder of Methodism, was a strong opponent

of slavery, which he described in a few words as "the sum of all villanies." In 1774 he published a work against it, entitled "Thoughts on Slavery," and frequently pressed its evils on the notice of his hearers, especially of the ministers of his connexion. Four days before his death he wrote to a friend: "Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery—the vilest that ever saw the sun—shall vanish away before it."

FROM NATHANIEL GILBERT, OF ANTIGUA.

"*October 29th*, 1768.

"I desire to embrace as my brethren all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. I cannot but think that all true Christians agree in fundamentals. Your tracts concerning slavery are very just, and it is a matter I have often thought of, even before I became acquainted with the truth. Your arguments are forcible against purchasing slaves, or being any way concerned in that trade."

The following extracts from letters addressed by Benezet to his friend Samuel Allinson, a lawyer, of Burlington, in New Jersey, one of his coadjutors in that State for promoting the abolition of the slave trade, further evince how various and incessant were his efforts in this branch of his labours.

"*Philadelphia*, 10*th mo.* 30*th*, 1772.

"I send thee herewith a small tract (which I desire thou mayest keep) lately sent me by Granville Sharp. It is an appendix to his former treatise, and was published on account of the late negro trial. He has written me a long intelligent letter, relating to things in London on that head, which I shall be pleased to have an opportunity to communicate to thee.

"It seems Lord Mansfield, notwithstanding truth forced him to give such a judgment [in the case of Somerset], was rather disposed to favour the cause of the master than that of the slave, advising the master to apply to the Parliament then sitting, which was done accordingly, but without success. Granville Sharp fears such an application will be renewed at the next session, and he is preparing, through his friends in Parliament and the bishops, to endeavour to prevent its taking place, and calls for our help from this side the water. As he desires a speedy reply, I want the advice of my friends what answer to make him. I have already let one opportunity pass; but there will soon be another. I have also to communicate an interesting letter from Benjamin Franklin on the same subject."

"*Philadelphia*, 11*th mo.* 30*th*, 1772.

"DEAR SAMUEL:

"I received both thy letters, enclosing the petitions,* and regret I have not sooner acquainted thee with the result; but the care of a large school, engagement upon engagement—I think four or five evenings last week, on committees, &c.—and the books I received from England, which I intended to send thee, not being all returned, occasioned the delay.

"The vessel from Virginia being near its departure when the petitions came to hand, I had only just time to confer with James Pemberton on the expediency of forwarding them, when we concluded it best to take more time and wait for a future opportunity, which he thought would offer. I send thee herewith such of the pieces relating to slavery, &c., as I have been able to get back. People are shamefully careless in not returning borrowed books. The one wanting, written by a West Indian, I will send thee after. I have received, since I saw thee, a letter from the Chief Justice of

* Memorials, which Benezet was instrumental in having circulated on the subject of the slave trade, in several of the provinces, addressed to the King and Parliament of England.

South Carolina, which will, I believe, afford thee much satisfaction."

"*Philadelphia, 12th mo. 14th*, 1773.

"BELOVED FRIEND:

"The passage we were seeking for is Psalm lxviii. 31: "Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God;" under which name all that part of Africa inhabited by negroes may be comprehended; and that these are the people here intended is clear from Jer. xiii. 23: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin?"

"Since my return I have received letters from Thomas Nicholson in North Carolina, Edward Stabler in Virginia, and James Berry in Maryland, all leading members in their several yearly meetings, (these I shall be glad to communicate to thee,) expressive of their concern in forwarding the great and good work we are engaged in. Edward Stabler, clerk of the yearly meeting of Virginia, observes, though they have not yet received the encouragement they desire to their petition in England, yet it has not abated the zeal of some of their leading men against the traffic."

"*Philadelphia, 3rd mo. 30th*, 1774.

"I was sorrowfully disappointed in not seeing thee in town. I had just received a long letter from Granville Sharp, which I should have been glad of an opportunity of showing thee, and taking thy advice upon a suitable answer; more particularly on a matter he appears to have much at heart, viz., our procuring as many petitions as possible from persons of some weight in the several provinces, to the same purport as ours to the Assembly, immediately to the King only. As I shall not send my letter before William Dillwyn goes, which may be some time hence, I may still have an opportunity of consulting thee on this matter.

"Enclosed I send thee a copy of an argument, &c., I found in Granville Sharp's letter, which strikes boldly

and deeply.* I hope the idea will have a tendency to raise generous sentiments in some of thy brethren of the law, whose hearts are not yet quite seared with the love of the world, to appear in the noble cause of real liberty. I showed it to Dr. Rush; and inquiring if we should publish it in the papers, he replied, 'They would knock us on the head if we did.' I believe it will in future be profitably made use of. Remember me affectionately to James Kinsey.† I should be glad to know his sentiments on the law reasoning of the argument.

"What a great thing it is to stand up for liberty—true liberty—from a mind truly delivered from all selfishness, in an unfeigned love to God and mankind! O the selfishness of the human heart! How much of it is apt still to cleave to us, even when our designs are upright!"

"DEAR SAMUEL:

"I send thee herewith a dozen pamphlets. I should be glad that these and more of the same may be handed to the members of your Assembly, and others in your province with whom they may be likely to promote a representation being made to the King and Parliament, against the slave trade."

"*Seventh day, four o'clock.*

"DEAR FRIEND:

"I should have been very glad to have got thee

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* This argument was in defence of those who think it their duty to protect fugitive slaves. It is founded first on the law as stated in Deut. xxiii. 15, 16: "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant who is escaped from his master unto thee," &c. Secondly, on a maxim of the common law of England, "that the inferior law must give place to the superior." Man's laws to God's laws, confirmed by the author of the Doctor and Student, who asserts that even the statute law ought to be accounted null and void, if it be contrary to the laws of God. "Etiam si aliquod statutem esse editum contra eos nullius vigoris in legibus anglice censeri delet," &c.—Chap. vi.

† Chief Justice of New Jersey.

to peruse the notes [on slavery] which I intend to make, as they will be large, and I wish, if possible, to put them into the hands of the members of every Assembly on the Continent, except South Carolina and Georgia; but do not desire thou shouldst be inconvenienced on that account. It will be eight or ten days before they are in press. It might preserve me from inadvertently publishing something that might rather weaken the cause we both have at heart. However, in this and all other things, I desire to stand clear in the purity of my design, and leave the event, but watch against my natural activity."

CHAPTER VI.

Benezet continues his labours—Early results of his efforts—His Account of Guinea imparts an extraordinary impulse to the mind of Clarkson—His publications largely distributed by the "Friends" in England—Clarkson acknowledges his indebtedness to Benezet's "precious book"—Sketch of Clarkson's awakening through the medium of a Prize Essay—Devotes his whole energies to Anti-slavery labours—Glorious results—Honour due to Benezet.

BENEZET'S sympathies towards the negro in bondage continued to flow out of his soul with unstinted liberality. He left no means untried to enlighten the public conscience to the enormities of slavery. He subsidized the almanacs which Franklin published, and used their extensive circulation to disseminate his views. He continued to write and print innumerable tracts, scattering large editions of them at his own expense; and he contributed probably more powerfully than any other individual, to promote the cessation of the evil, the existence of which he so much deplored.

It is said he was in the constant practice of carrying various anti-slavery pamphlets in his pockets, for distribution. The circulation of these, as well as his correspondence with men of eminence in various parts of the world, were not long in producing decided results. A

desire was excited in the minds of many at least to enter into a consideration of the subject, the result of which was an opening out of all the outrages and corruptions attendant on the slave trade and slavery.

Though preceded by Lay and Sandiford in the same line of labour, Benezet was the first who effectually called public attention to the wrongs of the negro, enlisting, by his unwearied exertions, some of the most efficient philanthropists in Europe and America into a determined opposition to the slave trade. These kindred minds were soon prepared to unite in the mighty struggle which ensued, for ridding both hemispheres of such a pollution.

We now arrive at one of the most extraordinary and important results arising out of Benezet's efforts. This was no less than the assistance he rendered, through one of his publications, to the benevolent Thomas Clarkson, who, after his mind had become awakened to a sense of the iniquities of the slave system, and of its unparalleled atrocities, directed his whole energies to effect its abolition.

The Society of Friends had now entered with zeal and determination into the anti-slavery field. The Philadelphia yearly meeting transmitted to the yearly meeting of London, Benezet's "Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies," with a request that it might be reprinted in England, and put into the hands of members of Parliament, and others. This was done; and the book was extensively scattered among several public bodies, the clergy and dissenting ministers, and justices of the peace, and particularly among the great

schools of the kingdom, that the rising generation might acquire a knowledge, and at the same time a detestation, of the cruel traffic it was written to expose. Six hundred copies were sent to the members of both Houses of Parliament. "This was done," says Benezet, "to forward the design of a national inquiry."

Others of his works were distributed in like manner, as well as extensively advertised; and it was by this means that a copy of his "Historical Account of Guinea" so providentially fell into the hands of Thomas Clarkson, when he was in search of facts for a dissertation before the University of Cambridge, on the question of the lawfulness of slavery.

The influence of Benezet's "Account of Guinea" proved indeed a most powerful instrument in giving a lasting impulse to the mind of Clarkson, whose indefatigable exertions contributed so much towards effecting the abolition of the slave trade and slavery by the British Parliament. "In this precious book," says Clarkson, "I found almost all that I wanted." Its harrowing details struck home to his heart, and determined the future course of his life, which was—to dedicate himself to the work of emancipation.

Though the world well knows the sequel, it may be highly interesting, and not out of place here, to record, for those who are not aware of it, the manner in which the providential awakening of this great champion in the cause of freedom was effected. This I shall endeavour to do, for the most part, from an admirable little work, "A Monograph of Thomas Clarkson," by James Elmes.

In 1785 Dr. Peckard became Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. That benevolent and patriotic divine took the first opportunity that presented itself of exciting the attention of the public to the crimes he had himself denounced from the pulpit. This he effected through a University prize, offered to the young and ardent minds of the undergraduates, for the best Latin dissertation on the following subject:—"*Anne liceat invitos in servitutem dare?*"—("*Is it right to make slaves of others against their will?*")

Thomas Clarkson was then senior wrangler in the University. In the previous year he had gained a prize for the best Latin dissertation. That he might retain his reputation, he again prepared for the conflict, to obtain a still higher degree of scholastic fame. In studying the subject proposed, the young aspirant properly conceived that the proposition, though couched in general terms, pointed indirectly at the African slave trade, which had begun to occupy a share of public attention, but which he lamented his entire ignorance of, the subject being wholly new to him. A few weeks only were allowed for the composition of the essay. He commenced his labours, however, with an earnest determination to do his best. He procured access to the manuscript papers of a deceased friend who had been engaged in the trade; and was acquainted, also, with several naval and military officers who had been in the West Indies, and were well informed on the subject of African slavery. From these and other sources he gained some authentic information. But he still felt himself at much loss for the want of substantial mate-

rials with which to construct his edifice, and where to procure them he did not know.

In this difficulty, "*going, by accident,*" says Clarkson, "*into a friend's house, I took up a newspaper then lying on the table, and one of the articles which attracted my notice, was an advertisement of Anthony Benezet's 'Historical Account of Guinea.' I soon left my friend and his paper, and, to lose no time, hastened to London to buy it. In this precious book I found almost all that I wanted.*"*

From the truthful pages of this book of Benezet's, he gathered not merely the author's own observations and statements, but by means of it he gained a knowledge of, and copious references for authority to, the great names of Adanson, Barbot, Smith, Bosman, Moore, and other writers, on subjects connected with his inquiry. These were of unquestionable authority. The abolition of the slave trade not having been mooted when they wrote, their statements must be regarded as impartial, and not written for the advocacy of the point in question.

The information and references furnished by Benezet's book encouraged Clarkson to proceed, and gathering information from every other source he could think of, he set to work in earnest for the completion of his essay. But no man, he pathetically says, can imagine the severe trials its composition subjected him to. He

* See *Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade;* in which he also says, that "Benezet's *Account of Guinea* became instrumental beyond any other book ever before published, in disseminating a proper knowledge of the slave trade." —Vol. i. page 169.

had expected to find much pleasure in collecting his materials, in arranging and in constructing his *ædicula* to freedom. He anticipated gratification from the invention of his proposed arguments, the arrangement of his facts, the skill to be displayed in the proper connections, the proofs he should give (by induction) of the unlawfulness of making persons slaves against their will, and from the laudable aspiration (so natural in a youthful heart) of being engaged in an innocent contest for literary honours from his *alma mater*.

But all these anticipations of delight were damped by the horrible and astounding facts that presented themselves continually to his view. It was a continued succession of perpetual woe and misery, and naught but gloomy scenes of mental agony and bodily anguish were before him, from early morn to dusky night. By day he was wretched; at night he could take but little rest, sometimes not closing his weary eyes for very grief. Chains, whips, fetters, branding-irons, collars (as if for wild beasts), blood, gashes, sobs, convulsions, shrieks, as described in the terrific narratives he had consulted, appeared like frightful realities in his dreams of the night, and mental visions of the day.

At length it became less an object of ambition as a literary contest for academic honours, than the production of a work that might be of use to the suffering Africans, and a call upon his country to shake off "the accursed thing," which is twice cursed, cursing both the persecutor and the persecuted; for

> "Heaven, whose darling attribute we find
> Is boundless grace and mercy to mankind,
> *Abhors the cruel.*" *Dryden.*

With this additional object perpetually in his mind, after having read the harrowing accounts in Benezet's faithful pages, he regularly slept with a light in his chamber, that he might rise from his bed and note down such thoughts as arose in his mind during the still and solemn hours of night. This practice arose from a fixed determination of putting forth his utmost strength, not merely for University honours, but for the honour of universal human nature; and that no auxiliary, however small, should be lost to the argumentative portion of his thesis.

Having at length completed his painful task, he transmitted his dissertation to the Vice-Chancellor, and shortly afterwards found himself honoured, as in the previous year, by the award of the first prize. Thus was the first spark elicited in Clarkson's mind, which ultimately kindled a fire in the whole Christian part of the English nation, and excited the people throughout the length and breadth of the British isles,* in a generous resolve to alleviate the sufferings and redress the wrongs of their African brethren. In his efforts to aid this endeavour, the quiet undergraduate of Cambridge was speedily converted from a youthful aspirant for academic bays, into

> "The champion of an injured race,
> Among the great and good."—*B. Barton.*

As it was the custom at Cambridge for the author of these laureated dissertations to read them in the senate

* Ireland nobly backed the philanthropic cause. See Sir John Newport's Speech in the House of Commons, June 10, 1806.

house before the assembled University, shortly after the adjudication of the honours, Clarkson was recalled to Cambridge for that purpose. He returned to his college and performed his academic duty; but on his journey to London, which he performed on horseback, the subject of his recent lucubrations—which had so painfully occupied his mind by night and day, when, in his desire to excel, he followed the precept of the Roman lyrist (Horace),

"Nocturnà versate manu, versate diurnà,"

—so completely engrossed his thoughts, and preyed with such frightful energy upon his mind, that he could think of nothing else. He became, as he records in his narrative, at times very seriously affected whilst on the road. He occasionally stopped his horse, dismounted, and proceeded slowly and thoughtfully on foot, frequently endeavouring to persuade himself that the contents of his dissertation could not, by any possibility, be true. The more, however, he reflected upon the barbarous facts which he found recorded with such testimonies to their truthfulness in the authorities he had quoted, the more he believed their frightful statements to be true. Approaching the village of Wade's Mill, in Hertfordshire, he sat down in a disconsolate mood upon the grass by the road side, and held his horse by the bridle. Whilst seated upon this grassy spot, which is as deserving of commemoration as Whittington's stone on Highgate Hill, the happy thought flashed into his mind, that if the horrifying contents of his academic exercitation *were true*, the time had cer-

tainly arrived when some person should come forward and put an end to such demoniacal atrocities.

In this state of mental perturbation the young *alumnus laureatus* reached his home, more sad than even had he lost the prize. This overwhelming impression, from which such great results have flowed, occurred in the summer of 1785. In the autumn of that year, the incipient champion of the abolition of the traffic in human flesh and blood, body and soul, unable to shake off his melancholy feelings, walked frequently in the woods contiguous to his home, that he might contemplate the all-engrossing subject in silence and in solitude, and find relief for his agitated feelings.

In these umbrageous solitudes, communing in spirit within himself, the question still recurred to his mind, "Can these things be true?" Still the answer followed as instantaneously as the thunder succeeds the lightning, "They are—they must be: the testimony is too powerful for doubt." The same results always followed these solitary conferences, and Clarkson became increasingly impressed with the necessity of some one interfering to put an end to the bloody traffic. This he ultimately resolved to do himself. He felt convinced that there never had been any cause undertaken by any man in any country, or in any age, so great and so important to religion and humanity, as that upon which he was meditating: that there never had been one in which more cruelty was inflicted or more misery endured, or which cried more loudly to heaven and earth for redress.

Though the youthful student might not be entirely

uninfluenced by a desire for worldly interest and honours, the sense of duty and the holiness of the cause he had espoused, crept closer to his heart, and he never relinquished it, but dedicated his whole life to the sacred cause of Freedom. Aided by Granville Sharp, Wilberforce, and the Society of Friends in a body, with others whom God raised up for this noble work, Great Britain was enabled, by a sacrifice of twenty millions sterling, besides an incalculable amount of time and money spent in its accomplishment, to liberate the 800,000 slaves in its West India islands. Thus was the foul blot for ever wiped from its national escutcheon;—a noble deed, which is recorded by the venerable Hugh Stowell in the following words: "On the page of history one deed shall stand out in bold relief—one consenting voice pronounce—that the greatest honour England ever attained, was when, with her Sovereign at her head, she proclaimed—THE SLAVE IS FREE! In the pages of history this act will stand out the gem in our diadem."

Thanks be to God, Great Britain is clear of this direful curse! But the United States now holds nearly four millions of slaves. We shall have a few more remarks to make on this subject shortly. In concluding the present chapter, in justice, no less than in honour to the memory of the pious but humble Benezet, let it be remembered, that although his zealous labours did not eradicate from American soil the evil he so much deplored, they contributed powerfully to strengthen the arm of the great champion of his favourite cause, and finally to wipe away no small portion of human disgrace.

CHAPTER VII.

Benezet specially active in promoting Anti-slavery mov among "Friends"—Incident at a critical juncture draft of an epistle issued by Pennsylvania yearly m in 1754—The Society provides for the education of co people—In 1774 all the slaves held by Friends in Pe vania emancipated—More difficulty to overcome in States; but in 1787 no Quaker any longer holds a s The society now in a position to remonstrate more with others—Its continued efforts to the present time plan adopted by Friends the only right and effective

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LIVING as he did during that interesting period the religious community to which he belonged occupied with those considerations which led purification from the iniquity of slavery, Benezet specially active in promoting that righteous work addition to his other untiring efforts in behalf o oppressed negro, his ardent and pathetic addres his fellow-members on this subject were powerfu irresistible. He awakened the unconcerned, conf the wavering, and infused energy into the most ze keeping all alive to a just sense of the momentou of slavery.

On one occasion, during the yearly meeting Friends at Philadelphia, when that body was en in considering the question as it related to its own

bers, some of whom had not yet wholly given up the holding of negroes in bondage, a difference of sentiment was manifested as to the course that ought to be pursued. For a moment it appeared doubtful which opinion would predominate. At this critical juncture Benezet left his seat, which was in an obscure part of the house, and presented himself, weeping, at an elevated door, in the presence of the whole congregation, whom he addressed with these words of the Psalmist: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." He said no more; but under the solemn impression which succeeded this emphatic quotation, the proposed measure received the united sanction of the Assembly.

That he was ever helpful in the preparation of the documents put forth by the Society on this subject there can be no doubt. Amongst these, an epistle issued by the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania to its members, in 1754, is supposed to have emanated from his pen. It possesses much force, and was calculated, as the following extract shows, clearly to set forth the inconsistency of slavery with the religion of Christ.

"Now, dear Friends, if we continually bear in mind the royal law of 'doing to others as we would be done by,' we should never think of bereaving our fellow-creatures of that valuable blessing, liberty, nor endure to grow rich by their bondage. To live in ease and plenty by the toil of those whom violence and cruelty have put in our power, is neither consistent with Christianity nor common justice; and, we have good reason to believe, draws down the displeasure of Heaven; it being a melancholy, but true reflection, that where slave-keeping prevails, pure religion and sobriety decline; as it evidently tends to harden the heart, and

render the soul less susceptible of that holy spirit of love, meekness, and charity, which is the peculiar character of a true Christian. How then can we, who have been concerned to publish the Gospel of universal love and peace among mankind, be so inconsistent with ourselves as to purchase such who are prisoners of war, and thereby encourage this anti-Christian practice? And more especially as many of those poor creatures are stolen away—parents from children and children from parents; and others who were in good circumstances in their native country, inhumanly torn from what they esteemed a happy situation, and compelled to toil in a state of slavery too often extremely cruel. The dreadful scenes of murder and cruelty those barbarous ravages must occasion in the country of these unhappy people, are too obvious to mention. Let us make their case our own, and consider what we should think, and how we should feel, were we in their circumstances. Remember our blessed Redeemer's positive command—'to do unto others as we would have them to do unto us;' and that with what measure we meet, it shall be measured to us again. And we entreat all to examine whether the purchasing of a negro, either born here or imported, does not contribute to a further importation, and consequently to the upholding of all the evils abovementioned, and the promoting of man-stealing—the only theft which by the Mosaic law was punished with death. 'He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hands, he shall surely be put to death.'—Exodus xxi. 16.

"The characteristic and badge of a true Christian is love and good works. Our Saviour's whole life on earth was one continued exercise of them. 'Love one another,' says he, 'as I have loved you.' How can we be said to love our brethren, who bring, or for selfish ends keep them in bondage? Do we act consistent with this noble principle, who lay such heavy burdens on our fellow-creatures? Do we consider that they are called, and sincerely desire that they may become, heirs with us in glory, and rejoice in the liberty of the sons of God, whilst we are withholding from them the common liberties of mankind? Or can the Spirit of God,

by which we have always professed to be led, be the author of these oppressive and unrighteous measures? Do we not thereby manifest that temporal interest has more influence on our conduct herein, than the dictates of that merciful, holy, and unerring Guide?"

After making some allusion, with feelings of satisfaction, to those Friends who had already liberated their slaves, the epistle concludes in the following words:—

"Finally, brethren, we entreat you, in the bowels of gospel love, seriously to weigh the cause of detaining them in bondage. If it be for your own private gain, or any other motive than their good, it is much to be feared that the love of God and the influence of the Holy Spirit, is not the prevailing principle in you, and that your hearts are not sufficiently redeemed from the world; which, that you, with ourselves, may more and more come to witness, through the cleansing virtue of the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ, is our earnest desire."

The first concern of the Society of Friends regarding slavery, was faithfully to perform its duty for the extinction of the evil within its own limits, and until this could be fully carried out, to provide for the proper care and oversight of the coloured people in their midst, whether slave or free. In several places they provided for their meeting together for Divine worship; and strenuous efforts were made for their education, schools being established, in which they or their children were gratuitously instructed in useful learning. Committees were appointed to provide books, to see after placing the children at school; to visit the schools, and inspect the conduct and improvement of the scholars. Towards this object the monthly meeting of Haddonfield on one occasion raised upwards of £130. One of these schools for the coloured

people, the one instituted by Benezet himself, is continued by Friends to this day, supported by funds derived from the voluntary contributions of the members, with legacies and bequests, yielding an income of about one thousand dollars per annum. The average number of pupils is about 68 of both sexes.

The conviction of the sinfulness of slavery becoming more and more deeply impressed upon Friends, the Society continued its admonitions and remonstrances to such of its members as still retained negroes as property. In 1774 the Friends of Pennsylvania as a body had emancipated all their slaves; every member who declined to make the sacrifice of profit to principle being excluded from membership. In the adoption of this course they were the first to set the example.

In other States the difficulties of emancipation were considerable, manumission in some not being permitted but on terms nearly amounting to a prohibition. But notwithstanding these difficulties, "the Quakers," says Clarkson, "could not be deterred, as they became convinced of the unlawfulness of holding men in bondage, from doing that which they believed to be right. Many liberated their slaves, whatever the consequences were, and some gave the most splendid example in doing it, not only by consenting, as others did, thus to give up their property, and to incur the penalties of manumission, but by calculating and giving what was due to them, over and above their food and clothing, for wages, from the beginning of their slavery to the day when their liberation commenced. One of the brightest instances of this was afforded by Warner Miflin. He

gave unconditional liberty to his slaves, and paid all the adults on their discharge the sum which arbitrators, mutually chosen, awarded them. Thus manumission went on, some sacrificing more, others less; some granting it sooner, others later; till in the year 1787 there was not a slave in the possession of an acknowledged Quaker."*

This debt of justice having been paid, and the Society of Friends thus cleared of all participation in slavery, it was in a position, and felt called upon, to plead more strongly the cause of the slave before the world, and to remonstrate with the rulers and the people against the iniquity and wickedness of the whole system. The first memorial to the American government was presented by the yearly meeting of Pennsylvania about two years after the extinction of slavery within its own limits. The earliest petition presented to the British parliament against the slave trade was by the Friends, in 1783.†

From that time to the present, the Society has continued to labour with diligence and perseverance in this righteous cause, endeavouring to enlighten the public mind respecting the enormities of the slave trade and slavery; to prepare the way for the extinction of these foul blots upon the Christian name, and to ameliorate the condition of the free people of colour. Memorials have frequently been presented to legislative bodies with a view of forwarding these important objects, and nu-

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* Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, p. 122.

† Clarkson's *History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade.*

merous treatises calculated to promote sound Christian views respecting them, have been published and widely disseminated; besides various other measures which from time to time have been presented, as proper and right to engage in. And there is abundant cause thankfully to acknowledge, that as Friends have endeavoured to keep a single eye to their holy Leader, and simply to follow His requirings, having no other aim but to advance the glory and the good of their fellow-creatures, it has often pleased Him to open the hearts of those they have addressed, to receive their admonition or remonstrances, and to bless their humble endeavours.*

There cannot be a doubt that the termination of slavery in seven of the thirteen original States of the American Union, is mainly attributable to the influence of "Friends." "But," as the author of the "History of Friends in America" justly observes, "had Sandiford and Lay, and Benezet and Woolman, allowed their convictions to have been silenced by the prevailing public opinion, or even by the views of [some] of their brethren in religious profession, it is doubtful whether at this day a Free State would be found throughout the widely extended limits of the great American republic."

A happy circumstance would it have been indeed if each of the Christian denominations in America had followed the example of the "Friends"—neither receiving nor retaining slaveholders as members. This is the only safe course to pursue. Without its being adopted, the efforts of those who desire to oppose the evil are

* "Brief Statement of the Rise and Progress of Anti-slavery in the Society of Friends," pp. 58, 59.

paralyzed, and therefore ineffective. It is cause of rejoicing that some other religious societies and associations are beginning to see this more clearly, for it is evident that so long as ministers and members may hold their fellow-men as property, without incurring the censure of the communities to which they belong, such a course can only be regarded as a practical declaration that slavery is not inconsistent with the principles of the Gospel.

Let our holy religion be no longer maligned by its professors wickedly defending or aiding in the support of this inhuman system of cruelty and oppression, so contrary to the blessed precepts of Christianity. How long shall infidelity be armed with the most powerful of all its weapons? leading to the natural enquiry,

——"Just God, and holy!
Is that Church, which lends
Strength to the spoiler, Thine?"

CHAPTER VIII.

Benezet's efforts to promote Peace principles—Addresses the King of Prussia on this subject—Endeavours to dissuade the Americans from resorting to arms, previous to the breaking out of the revolutionary war—Interview with Patrick Henry—Letter from the latter, containing strong sentiments against Slavery—Their development probably attributable to one of Benezet's works—Benezet sends his pamphlets on War to persons of influence in America and Europe—Letter, with a packet of them, to President Laurens—Publishes another work on War.

From the magnitude of the object, and his devotedness to its promotion, we might suppose the abolition of slavery was the cardinal engagement of Benezet's life. Indeed for most other men it would have been sufficiently great to require all the zeal and perseverance, all the time and talents, as well as all the benevolence, usually combined in the characters of the most noted philanthropists. Among the benefactors of mankind, who have run their bright course and ascended to their reward, many names are familiar to our recollection, deserving and receiving the tribute of our grateful praise; but those illustrious examples have been for the most part distinguished by some one favourite pursuit, or some peculiar trait of beneficence. As in the

bountiful dispensation of intellectual power which gave Newton superiority in one science, and Linnæus in another; that ranked Archimedes an original in mechanics, and yielded to Virgil and Milton the palm of verse: all were great in their respective spheres, whilst on no one of them was conferred the felicity of mind which could intuitively embrace all the subjects for which each was conspicuous. Universality of genius is not more remarkable, nor more rarely witnessed, than the virtue of unbounded love, which was proverbially awarded to Anthony Benezet.

The dreadful effects of war upon nations and individuals deeply grieved his susceptible heart. He wrote and distributed essays, deprecating that inhuman practice, persuading mankind, with a holy ardour, to desist from such things as were calculated to inflame the passions, and produce those wrathful tempers, that could be appeased only by imbruing the hands of brethren in each other's blood. On this account he addressed an energetic and pathetic letter to Frederick, King of Prussia.

For the promotion of the peaceable principles of Christianity, at the important crisis when the representatives of the colonies were assembled to consult on measures in relation to the impositions of Great Britain, he visited many of the deputies in Congress, and endeavoured to persuade them from a resort to arms, hoping they might procure the removal of the grievances complained of, without involving the country in war. He thus acquaints one of his friends of an interview with Patrick Henry, a delegate from Virginia:—

"*Philadelphia, 10th mo. 23rd*, 1774.

"DEAR ——:

"I was well pleased to hear from thee. I have not been unmindful to lay before all the delegates I have conversed with, the dreadful situation of the people in the southern provinces, and the absolute necessity they are under of ceasing from any further import of negroes.

"With Patrick Henry I went further. He gave some attention when I mentioned from whence I apprehended we must look for deliverance, even from God alone; by pursuing such methods as would be most agreeable to the nature of the beneficent Father of mankind, whose love and regard to his children, even to such as were influenced by wrong dispositions, remained unchangeable. That we could not conciliate the Divine regard, but by acting agreeably to the Divine attribute, which was love, and was to overcome by suffering.

"That whatever wound might be given or received between us and the mother country, if ever that which was right prevailed, we should mutually mourn over. That as Christianity knew of no enemies, we could not expect deliverance by the violent method proposed [going to war], without departing from the true foundation.

"I feel but little apprehension at the prospect of things, which to many is so alarming. People are afraid of being disturbed in their enjoyments, in their ease, their confidence in the world, and the things of it. But I fear nothing more than giving way to a spirit whose hope and expectation is from the unchristian, unnatural, and cruel measures proposed by too many, who have worked themselves to such a pitch that it looks as if they were athirst for blood! It is from God alone, by true faith in His promises, that deliverance must arise; and if from the prevalence of other measures affliction and distress should be our lot, it will be our own fault if it does not work for our good. Oh! if a sufficient concern prevailed to experience grace to gain the victory, to know all worldly inclinations and desires to be brought under the regulation of the

humbling power of the gospel, many would not feel so much of self in themselves, inducing them to hope and seek for comfort from the world, in ease and plenty, which proves a bar to obtaining an establishment in the pure, humble, self-denying path of truth.

"If we properly felt our wants, and the gulf between us and true peace: if the combat between nature and grace were duly maintained: the dread of outward evils would have little weight with us, however we fall by outward commotion; even should the earth be dissolved, if in proper dispositions we cannot fall lower than into God's arms.

"In haste, I remain thy affectionate friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"P.S.—I should have been glad to have seen thyself and dear companion before you left us, but make it a rule to take no umbrage where no slight is intended;—indeed where it is, to bear it, and take the first opportunity to return kindness for the contrary, as most noble, and most conducive to peace."

The celebrated orator and statesman, Patrick Henry, mentioned in the preceding letter, would probably never have developed the sentiments which are contained in the following extract from a letter to a friend, had not one of Anthony Benezet's works on slavery been sent to him by a correspondent. So candid an acknowledment of the iniquity of the system, rarely proceeds from those who are unhappily the proprietors of slaves.

FROM PATRICK HENRY.

"*Hanover, January* 18, 1773.

"DEAR SIR:

"I take this opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of Anthony Benezet's book against the slave trade. I thank you for it. It is not a little surprising that the professors of Christianity, whose chief excel-

lence consists in softening the human heart, and in cherishing and improving its finer feelings, should encourage a practice so totally repugnant to the first impressions of right and wrong. What adds to the wonder is, that this abominable practice has been introduced in the most enlightened ages. Times that seem to have pretensions to boast of high improvements in the arts and sciences, and refined morality, have brought into general use, and guarded by many laws, a species of violence and tyranny which our more rude and barbarous, but more honest ancestors detested.

"Is it not amazing, that at a time when the rights of humanity are defined and understood with precision, in a country above all others fond of liberty, that in such an age and in such a country, we find men professing a religion the most humane, mild, gentle, and generous, adopting a principle as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible, and destructive to liberty? Every thinking, honest man, rejects it in speculation. How few, in practice, from conscientious motives!

"Believe me, I shall honour the Quakers for their noble efforts to abolish slavery. Would any one believe that I am master of slaves, of my own purchase! I am drawn along by the general inconvenience of living here without them. I will not, I cannot, justify it. However culpable my conduct, I will so far pay my devoir to virtue as to own the excellence and rectitude of her precepts, and lament my want of conformity to them.

"*I believe a time will come when an opportunity will be offered to abolish this lamentable evil.* Everything we can do is to improve it, if it happens in our day; if not, let us transmit to our descendants, together with our slaves, a pity for their unhappy lot, and an abhorrence for slavery. If we cannot reduce this wished-for reformation to practice, let us treat the unhappy victims with lenity. It is the furthest advance we can make towards justice. It is a debt we owe to the purity of our religion, to show that it is at variance with that law which warrants slavery.

"I know not where to stop. I could say many things on the subject, a serious view of which gives a gloomy perspective to future times!"

Nearly a century has elapsed since the ideas contained in this letter from an American statesman were suggested; but, alas! what efforts have been used by the lawgivers of those States where this "lamentable evil" of slavery exists, to "abolish" it? It is true the northern States enacted laws by which it was gradually terminated in them, but it has at the same time been greatly extended in the southern, and more westerly, and newly-settled States of the Union.

Several of Benezet's pamphlets on war, especially one entitled "Thoughts on the Nature of War," published in 1776, were sent to persons of distinction and influence in the American government and in Europe. The following letter accompanied a packet containing some of these treatises, addressed to

"HENRY LAURENS, PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES.

"The fear of intruding upon thy engagements having prevented my waiting upon thee, I take the liberty, with due respect, to enclose the within pamphlets, which I earnestly request thou wilt seriously peruse, as they contain matters of the utmost importance to the cause thou art engaged in.

"How far, as followers of a Saviour who enjoins us to love one another, even to love our enemies, and who finally gave up his life for our salvation, we can readily continue in a war whereby so many thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-men, equally with ourselves the objects of redeeming grace, are brought to a miserable and untimely end: not to mention the corruption of manners, the waste of substance, &c., thereby introduced: is a matter which certainly calls for the most serious consideration of those who retain the least love for mankind. The 'Thoughts on War' will, I trust, lessen, if not remove, any prejudice which our Friends'

refusal to join in any military operation may have occasioned. The caution, &c., on slavery, will I believe in general meet with thy approbation. It was reprinted in London, and delivered to about eight hundred members of Parliament and officers of the Crown.

I remain respectfully thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

In the same year he also issued a small work, entitled "Serious Reflections on the Times, addressed to the well disposed of every religious Denomination." In this treatise he laments the insensibility too generally manifested respecting the "judgment of war," which then involved the country in distress; and he endeavoured to persuade the people to cultivate a spirit of reconciliation. He concludes his book in the following affectionate and feeling manner: "Let us not, beloved brethren, forget our profession as Christians, nor the blessing promised by Christ to the peacemakers; but let us all sincerely address our common Father for ability to pray—not for the destruction of our enemies, who are still our brethren, the purchase of our blessed Redeemer's blood, but for an agreement with them; not in order to indulge our passions in the gain and delights of this vain world, and forget that we are only pilgrims and strangers in it—but that we may be more composed and better fitted for the kingdom of God; that, in the dispensations of His good pleasure, He may grant us such a peace as may prove to the consolation of the church as well as the nation, and be on earth an image of the tranquility of heaven."

CHAPTER IX.

Benezet's sympathy towards the Indians—Papers lost that might have thrown light on his efforts for them—Letter to John Smith—To Sir Jeffery Amherst—Entreats him to endeavour to prevent an Indian war—Formation of an Association for promoting peace with the Indians, in 1756—Its unremitting exertions—Silver medal issued by it to distribute among the Indians—Appropriateness of its design—Benezet an active and useful member of the Association—Publishes a work on the Indians.

TOWARDS the Indians, the aboriginal inhabitants of America, there flowed from the expanded heart of Anthony Benezet copious streams of solicitude and sympathy. He looked upon them as his brethren, equally with himself the objects of Divine regard; and though untaught in the arts, and strangers to the advantages of civilized life, he respected the correctness of some of their practices, and admired the wisdom of many of their laws.

Though their "untutored minds" had never been made acquainted with the written history of the Christian religion, nor their reason replenished from the stores of learning, still he believed their sacred rites found acceptance with God, as devotions intended to give evidence of their belief in His eternal existence, providence, and government. Beholding them through this

amiable and compassionate medium, he could not sanction the contumely they suffered, and he publicly and fearlessly avowed his opinions of the injustice and inhumanity of any measures, either of the provincial government or of individuals, which violated any of their rights of person or property.

When the first memoir of Benezet was published, thirty-two years after his decease, his biographer regretted so few materials could be procured to furnish an account at all worthy of so great a philanthropist. No traces were discernible of the mass of important and interesting documents that must have accumulated during more than fifty of the last years of his life, devoted as it was continually to the most benevolent labours, in relation to many of which he kept up very extensive correspondence. If access could have been had to the stock of original papers which were no doubt preserved by him, they would have thrown much light upon what must now remain in oblivion. The following letter of Benezet's to John Smith, of Burlington, New Jersey, showing the interest he took in the Indians, and his watchful care over their concerns, was only published a few years ago:—

"*Philadelphia, 6th mo. 14th,* 1758.

"DEAR FRIEND JOHN SMITH:

"The account of a number of Indians having passed the Delaware, was yesterday confirmed by a letter from Fort Allen, written by Charles Thompson, so that we may expect to hear of the destruction of numbers of our back settlers. This is very afflicting to a sympathising mind, and naturally leads, with deep concern, to consider the neglect which so much prevails among your politicians with respect to Indian affairs.

Your declaration of war against the Indians is still in force, which, joined to the mutinous and wrathful dispositions of your back inhabitants, may occasion their being guilty of some rash and cruel act. Should they endeavour to destroy the people and settlement now making at Wyoming, of which I am not without fear, the consequences might be dreadful both to your province and this.

"When I was last at Easton I was told by French Margaret that the Minisink Indians had done the most mischief, and were the most averse to peace with the English, which has since been confirmed to me by the chiefs amongst the Moravians. I believe these people have been greatly abused both by your and our back-settlers, in several respects, especially in the settlement of their lands, for which, I doubt, they have received little or no consideration. I cannot find they had any representative, nor that any inquiry was [made] on your behalf when your commissioner met the Indians at Crosswicks this spring, though I apprehend them to be the greatest in number, and more able to do mischief than any other Indians your province is concerned with. They have been mistakenly looked upon as a branch of the Delawares, and so have not been particularly considered in the sale of land, and yet, I believe, received no part of the consideration from the Delawares; for I see by the treaties they were looked upon by the Delawares as a separate nation, under their own king.

"I understand Charles Read proposes to get your Indian commissioners to meet next second day at Trentown, to consider what is expedient to be done. If some of the Burlington Friends were present, I think there would be more likelihood of matters being effectually looked into. Certainly time calls for a strict inquiry into the situation of your Indians in general, more especially the Minisinks. The proclamation of war being still in force is also a material point to be considered, so that all possible care be taken to prevent your back-settlers taking any inconsiderate step which may continue and increase the enmity between us and the Indians.

"I remain thy friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

In 1763, when Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander-in-chief of the British forces, was at New York, preparing to open a campaign against the Indians, Benezet, anticipating with horror the wide-spread devastation which must be the effect of hostilities with the natives, addressed to him the following letter:—

"*Philadelphia, 7th mo.*, 1763.

"With much respect, and from nothing but love to mankind, and a particular concern for the great distress which will necessarily attend the inhabitants of our large extended frontiers should a war be once kindled with the Indians, and from a persuasion of the justice and benevolence of the general's disposition, I earnestly request a few moments of thy kind attention whilst I mention what I apprehend is, in a great degree, the occasion of the violent part the Indians have of late taken—drawn as well from several years' observation of their disposition, as from conversation with Frederick Post, a person who resided many years amongst these people, and had often been employed by our government as a messenger to them.

"It appears the Indians have long entertained a jealously that the English intended violently to dispossess and drive them off their lands. This is more particularly verified from an account written by Frederick Post of his journey to the river Ohio, being sent there by the Governor of Pennsylvania, to divert the Indians settled on that river from giving any assistance to the French. In a conversation he had with those Indians before Pittsburgh was evacuated, they repeatedly expressed their desire, that when the French were removed the English should also evacuate the lands to the westward of the Alleghany mountains, agreeable to the expectation given by messages sent to them in the name of the English government, viz.,—'that the English intended to oblige the French to abandon all the country on the Ohio, without any design of settling those lands themselves; that they only proposed to

establish a trade with the western Indians on a fair and good footing.'

"And in the instructions given to Frederick Post in his journey to a great council of Indians on the Ohio, he was directed to assure them of our sincere disposition towards peace, and that we should use our utmost endeavours not only to renew and strengthen our former friendship and alliances, but to settle everything to their satisfaction likely to occasion differences; and to give the Indians everywhere the strongest assurances that no person should be permitted to make settlements on their lands, or anywhere to the westward of the Alleghany mountains.

"It appears, by Post's journal, that immediately after the English had possessed themselves of Fort Duquesne, the Indians desired it might be evacuated, and that the English should retire to the eastward of the Alleghany mountains; but this not being agreeable to the English, the Indians were repeatedly pressed to alter that resolution; but they persisted in it, and at different times replied as follows: 'We have already answered what we have to say to the general, that he should go back over the mountains. We have nothing to say to the contrary. We have told them three times to leave the place, but they insist upon staying here; if, therefore, they will be destroyed by the French and Indians, we cannot help them.'

"The question being again put to them, the counsellors said, 'They had spoken nothing but what was agreed between the Indians at Custkusking. We have told them,' say they, 'three times to go back, but they will not go, insisting upon staying here; now you will let the Governor-General and all people know, that our desire is that they should go back till the other nations had joined in the peace, and then they may come and build a trading-house.'

"A noted Indian, one of the chief counsellors, told Post and his company, in secret, 'that all the Indians had jointly agreed to defend their hunting place at Alleghany, and suffer nobody to settle there; so he begged us to tell the Governor-General and all other people, not to settle there: and if the English would

draw back over the mountains, they would get the o nations into their interest; but if they stayed and tled there, all the nations would be against them, he was afraid it would be a great war, and never c to a peace again.'

"It was the opinion of Frederick Post, that if English did not attend to this request, and persiste holding possession of Pittsburgh, and suffering lands to the westward of the Alleghany to be se without the consent of the Indians, it would be a ther occasion of bloodshed. It appears that the nations were also disgusted at Pittsburgh and Augusta being retained and fortified by the Eng from what passed at the treaty held last summe Lancaster, with Governor Hamilton. When the ernor proposed to have the consent of the Indian carrying goods by the west branch of the Susqueh to Pittsburgh, the head warrior of the Senecas appe much disturbed at the proposal, and among other th replied: 'Brother, you may remember you told (speaking of the whole nation), when you were goi Pittsburgh, you would build a fort against the Fre and you told me that you wanted none of our l Our cousins (pointing to the Ohio Indians, who then present) know this. You promised to go aw soon as you drove the French away, and yet you there and build houses, and make it stronger stronger every day; for this reason we entirely deny request: you shall not have a road this way.'

"Upon the whole, it is thought the apprehensio Indians are under, that the English intend by de to dispossess them of their land, is the cause of the violence they have lately committed, which, probab not without the knowledge and consent of the nations; those political people making use of smaller nations to accomplish their designs, but th such a manner that they may rather act the pa mediators than of accessaries, when perhaps the principals.

"Could the Indians be made easy in this resp much hope that the ancient friendship formerly sub ing between them and the English would be rest

An extensive and profitable trade would be carried on with them; and our people might securely settle, though perhaps in a more compact manner, upon those lands already purchased, which, it is thought, would be fruitful of many advantages. And doubtless the Indians would, as they have always done, let the English have more land upon very easy terms, as fast as we should be ready to settle it; which is the more likely, because the land beyond the provinces, for many hundred miles, even as far west as the Mississippi, is but thinly inhabited; there being, by creditable account, but a few thousands of Indians upon that large extent of country—yet enough to drive our frontier inhabitants to the greatest extremity, should the English resolve to possess and maintain that land by force of arms.

"It is often used as an argument for maintaining the strong places the English have taken in the Indian countries, that those places were freely granted by the Indians to the French, and are therefore the property of the English by right of conquest. But, upon inquiry, I believe the conclusion will be seen to be wrong; and it will appear that it was generally either under pretence of building trading-houses, or by violence, that the French got footing amongst them.

"This was particularly the case in the settlement made by the French at Pittsburgh, as appears by a treaty held at Carlisle by the government of Pennsylvania in 1753, with some deputies of the Indians settled on the Ohio. They came to acquaint the Governors of Pennsylvania and Virginia that the French were coming up the lakes, with a large body of troops, to build four strong houses on the Ohio. That their council had sent twice to forbid the French advancing any further upon their land, but that the French general had manifested the greatest disregard to their opposition, and told them he was resolved to build four strong houses (of which Pittsburgh was one); and further, that he intended to prevent them from making any more foolish bargains about land with the English.

"Perhaps I have said nothing to the general but what he is already fully acquainted with; yet I trust the weightiness of the subject, and the uprightness of my

intention, will plead my excuse for the liberty I have presumed to take.

"There are about a hundred and fifty Indians at Wyaloosing, on the north branch of the Susquehanna, about seventy miles above Wyoming. These are an industrious, religiously-minded people. The name of their chief is Papunobal.* They absolutely refused to join the other Indians in the last war, though threatened with death on that account.

"There is another Indian settlement about forty miles higher up the same branch of the Susquehanna, consisting of about a hundred persons. They also are a sober and industrious people, principally of the Nanticoke tribe, who, about twenty years ago, at the request of the five nations, were permitted to remove from Maryland to the place where the now are. On the breaking out of the last Indian war, their chief sent a string of wampum to the other Indians, with these words: 'Brethren, if you desire to become grey, and see many days upon this earth, leave off striking the English.'†

"The disposition of many of the common people, and indeed some others, is at present such, and a spirit of so much wrath is kindled in their breasts, that there is danger not only that these Indian settlements, but several other smaller ones within our province, may be destroyed, should these troubles continue, if great care is not taken to prevent it. And here I beg the general's excuse if I add, that notwithstanding the conduct of the Indians has, for some years, been such as to raise great

* The Indian chief, Papunobal (or, as his name is variously spelt, Papunehung, Papounan, &c.), with a number of his tribe, visited Philadelphia in the years 1760 and 1761. They had interviews with "Friends," and a public conference with Governor Hamilton. During their stay they repeatedly expressed their dislike of war, as arising from a bad spirit; and were surprised that the *Christians* were such great warriors, rather than lovers and cultivators of peace. For some account of this visit, and of Papunobal's conversion, see "Select Miscellanies," vol. iii., pp. 61—68.

† The term "English," in this letter, means the white people.

prejudice against them, yet, from nearly seventy years' experience, the people of Pennsylvania, and many in New York, know that the Indians, when not irritated and vitiated by the conduct of the worst of the Europeans, such as the Indian traders too generally prove, are, in general, a people that will be true to their promises, if strict care be taken on the part of the Europeans to fulfil their engagements to them.

"And further, may I entreat the general, for our blessed Redeemer's sake, from the nobility and humanity of his heart, that he would condescend to use all moderate measures, if possible, to prevent that cruel and prodigious effusion of blood, that deep anxiety and distress that must fill the breasts of so many helpless people, should an Indian war be once entered upon!

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Influenced by motives of good will toward the Indians, and concern for the welfare of the whole community, and actuated by a generous sense of the kind disposition manifested by the forefathers of the natives to the first European settlers in Pennsylvania, Benezet was one of those who, in 1756, formed a society, called "The Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians by Pacific Measures." This association was chiefly composed of members of the Society of Friends.

The course pursued by several of the proprietary governors of Pennsylvania towards the Indians had been radically opposed to the views of the freemen of the province, as may be seen by a reference to the measures adopted at different periods by their representatives in the Assembly. Some of the warmest controversies which occurred in early times betwen the government and the people, grew out of the conflicting opinions entertained on this subject. The establishment of stores

on the borders by persons to whom the governors granted permission—the introduction, by those traders, of spirituous liquors among the natives, contrary to the wish and, in some cases, after the express forbidding of the Indians themselves, with the corrupt and cruel conduct of many of those mercantile agents, and the persons they had about them, were the real causes of most, if not all, the hostile incursions of the natives upon the frontier settlements.

It was too evident to those immediately entrusted with the interests of the people of the state, that so long as such a course was pursued by the proprietors' representatives, not only the dreadful ravages of war must be produced, and the expenses for the support of the government be multiplied, but the extension of settlement upon fair and honourable principles be impeded or wholly suppressed. The preservation of tranquility with the Indians was therefore the interest and the wish of the great mass of the inhabitants; whilst, unhappily, the conduct of the executive and its friends tended to interrupt the relations of harmony with their aboriginal neighbours.

It is not more astonishing than lamentable, that any of the descendants of PENN, the wise and benevolent founder of the province which bears his name, should have allowed such deviation from his illustrious example and conduct towards the Indians. And in the final prostration of the power and loss of the family property in Pennsylvania, the prophetic warning of their great and good ancestor has been remarkably verified. In a letter written by him in 1682, after showing the happy

effects which would result if the inhabitants of the province and their descendants adhered to "justice, mercy, equity, and the fear of the Lord," he thus exhibits the affecting contrast that must be produced by the disregard of those solemn duties: "If not, their heirs, and my heirs too, will lose all—and desolation will follow."

The unremitting exertions of the "Friendly Association," in carrying out the purposes of its establishment, were auxiliary to the laudable efforts, in the same cause, of the provincial legislature; and the society, consequently, experienced the opposing influence of the executive department of the government. But being protected by the strength of public feeling in favour of humanity and justice, it was not only regardless of proprietary assault, but firmly and boldly remonstrated against their measures, by addressing the governors and principals themselves.

The association expended in presents of clothing, &c., to the natives, during seven years of its existence, upwards of fifteen thousand dollars, voluntarily supplied by donations of the members.

In 1757, besides other proofs of its regard for the Indians, that they might be possessed of an object that would frequently remind them of the intentions of their friends, the association had a medal designed and executed in silver, bearing an appropriate device and motto, which was distributed among the principal chiefs of the several nations.

Benezet was much interested in the execution of this medal, an engraved representation of which is given as a frontispiece to the present volume. At the time the

dies were made, coining presses were unknown in America. They were therefore cut on punches fixed in a socket, and struck with a sledge hammer.* Although this medal may be thought of little value, considerable interest must always attach to it, not only from the occasion for which it was struck, but as serving to show the progress of the arts in America.

The medal is intended to represent William Penn, or, as the Indians call him, Brother Onas, at a council fire, offering the calumet of peace to a chief, and pointing to the sun as characteristic both of the purity and durability of the friendship which the Friendly Association designed to promote.

In addition to this explanation, and as illustrative of the appropriateness of the design, it is said, that some years previous to the formation of the Friendly Association, Conrad Weiser was sent by the Governor of Pennsylvania to Shamokin, which was at that time an Indian town, on account of the supposed murder of one or more white traders by the Indians. When he had performed his errand a feast was prepared, at which about one hundred persons were present. The eldest of the chiefs made a speech, in the course of which he said, "That by a great misfortune, three of their brethren, the white men, had been killed by an Indian; that, nevertheless, the sun was not set, it had only been darkened

* The die was engraved in Philadelphia, by Edward Duffield, and cost the association fifteen pounds. Joseph Richardson, in a letter to Thomas Wistar, dated Philadelphia, 6th mo. 12th, 1813, says, "I well remember the striking of the Indian medal by my father."—His father, Joseph Richardson, was a member of the Friendly Association, and, by profession, a silversmith.

by a small cloud, which was now done away; and he that had done evil was likely to be punished, and the land to remain in peace."

From this we may readily infer, that during a time of actual hostility, the representation of the sun advancing to its zenith would be appropriate on the part of those who were desirous of proving the ambassadors of that desirable state of tranquility which had long been interrupted. To the Indians, therefore, this medal would be of considerable import, as they attach much value to such means of conciliating friendship.

These observations are corroborated by the result of the Indian conference already mentioned, for, towards its conclusion, the eldest chief exhorted his people to thankfulness to the Great Spirit, and then began to sing with an awful solemnity, but without expressing words, the others accompanying him with their voices. After they had done, the same Indian, with great fervour, expressed these words: "Thanks, thanks be to Thee, Thou Great Lord of the world, in that Thou hast again caused the sun to shine, and hast dispersed the dark cloud: the Indians are thine."

Of the Friendly Association for Regaining and Preserving Peace with the Indians, Benezet was at all times an active and useful member, being several times elected one of its trustees. In that capacity he attended frequent conferences, held with the Indians in their own country—cheerfully enduring the fatigue, privation, and exposure of travelling in a part of the province then almost a wilderness. He also early saw and suggested the propriety of endeavouring to convey to the inhabi-

tants of the forest a knowledge of agriculture and the domestic arts; and directed by his will that a part of his estate should be applied to the education of Indian children. These he conceived to be the most judicious preparatory measures for leading the minds of the aboriginal inhabitants to the substantial blessings of Christian virtue.

From the scraps of Indian history found amongst his manuscripts, it is evident he was collecting important facts and interesting events concerning that people; probably with the design of furnishing a more general account of them than that which he published in 1784, entitled, "Some Observations on the Situation, Disposition, and Character, of the Indian Natives of the [American] Continent."

CHAPTER X.

Benezet interested in the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia—Some account of them and their sufferings—Several thousands banished—Memorial to the King of Great Britain—Benezet undertakes to provide for five hundred sent to Philadelphia—Houses built for them by subscription—Grants them annuities—Anecdote of the missing pair of blankets—His great kindness leads to suspicion as to his motives.

In the midst of his various and important avocations, a call was made upon Benezet's active benevolence, from a novel and unexpected quarter. But ever prepared to dispense good, he obeyed the summons with promptitude and cheerfulness. It was a duty no less formidable than that of extending protection and care to a considerable part of a colony of people, whose condition was deplorably wretched and wholly friendless. Previous to giving an account of his unremitted attentions to these unhappy exiles, it may be proper to furnish a brief notice of their history and character, and of the most extraordinary and unjustifiable measures which terminated in their banishment.

These helpless strangers were a portion of the descendants of those French inhabitants of Nova Scotia who, after the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, by which the

province was ceded to England, were permitted to hold their lands, on condition of making a declaration of allegiance to their new sovereign. The acknowledgment of fidelity was given under an express stipulation that they and their posterity should not be required to bear arms either against their Indian neighbours or transatlantic countrymen. The contract was at several subsequent periods revived, and renewed to their children; and such was the notoriety of the compact, that for half-a-century they bore the name, and, with some few exceptions, maintained the character, of neutrals. They were a people remarkable for their piety, and mildness of disposition—frugal and industrious—strongly attached to the French monarch—and unalterably devoted to the Roman Catholic religion.

During the war of 1755, some of the young neutrals were detected conveying intelligence to the Indian and French forces then acting against the province. This defection greatly incensed the British commander, and produced a determination to punish the whole fraternity by the confiscation of their property and banishment of themselves to different places along the sea coast, from Massachusetts Bay to South Carolina.

When the period had arrived for carrying this cruel purpose into execution, an order was issued requiring the neutrals to assemble at the different ports, under the specious pretext of communicating to them some important and valuable information. The unsuspecting Acadians, utterly ignorant of the destiny that awaited them, were obedient to the requisition; and when collected at the time and places appointed, they were,

to their consternation, informed that their lands were forfeited to the crown; that they themselves were prisoners, and were to be immediately removed from the province.

Vessels being in readiness to convey them away, they were ordered on board. A scene of distress and confusion ensued. The military, who had been purposely concealed until now, made their appearance; and the embarkation was soon effected at the point of the bayonet, with the exception of two to three hundred, who escaped and sought refuge in the neighbouring forests. Towards those who fled, all possible measures were adopted to coerce them back to captivity: the country was laid waste to prevent their subsistence, and many of them were shot, and otherwise perished.

This community, at the time of this disastrous event, amounted to nearly seven thousand persons. The number who were banished could not be accurately ascertained — upwards of a thousand were sent to Massachusetts Bay, and about five hundred of them to Philadelphia.

The following extract from a memorial to the King of Great Britain, which was prepared soon after their arrival in Philadelphia, and no doubt drafted by Benezet at the request of the neutrals, will corroborate the history of their suffering, in their own manner of relating it.

"Thus we, our aged parents and grandparents (men of great integrity and approved fidelity to your Majesty), and our innocent wives and children, became the unhappy victims to those groundless fears. We were transported into the English colonies; and this in so

much haste, and with so little regard to our necessities and the tenderest ties of nature, that from the most social enjoyments and affluent circumstances, many found themselves destitute of the necessaries of life—parents separated from children, and husbands from wives, some of whom have not to this day met again. We were so crowded in the transport vessels that we had not even room for all to lay down at once, and, consequently, were prevented from carrying with us proper necessaries, especially for the comfort and support of the aged and weak, many of whom quickly ended their misery with their lives. And even those amongst us who had suffered deeply for your Majesty, on account of their attachment to your Majesty, were equally involved in the common calamity, of which Rene-Lablane, the notary public, is a remarkable instance.

"He was seized, confined, and brought away among the rest of the people; and his family, consisting of twenty children, and about one hundred and fifty grandchildren, were scattered in different colonies. He was put on shore at New York in an infirm state of health, with only his wife and two youngest children. He joined three more of his children at Philadelphia, where he died, without any more notice being taken of him than any of us, notwithstanding his many years labour and deep suffering for your Majesty's service.

"The miseries we have since endured are scarcely to be expressed, being reduced for a livelihood to toil and hard labour in a southern clime, so disagreeable to our constitutions that most of us have been prevented by sickness from procuring the necessary subsistence for our families, and are therefore threatened with that which we consider the greatest aggravation of all our sufferings, having our children forced from us and bound out to strangers, and exposed to contagious distempers unknown in our native country. This, compared with the affluence and ease we enjoyed, shows our condition to be extremely wretched. We have already seen in this province two hundred and fifty of our people, half the number that were landed here, perish through misery and various diseases."

The melancholy story of the sufferings of these poor creatures would have awakened compassion in the most obdurate heart; and intensely acute must have been the feelings of Benezet when introduced to a knowledge of their dreadful fate. He at once adopted the five hundred of these sufferers who arrived in Philadelphia, as his children, and employed every exertion to soften the rigour of their condition. His being able to converse with them in their own language facilitated their necessary intercourse with the inhabitants, whilst it must have mitigated their sorrows, since they found in him not only a friend who yielded them all the comfort and consolation he could bestow, but an interpreter, qualified and willing to hear and make known the history of their afflictions.

On their disembarkation, the neutrals were taken charge of by the conservators of the poor, and conveyed to a building which had been occupied as a lodging for soldiers. Many of them were labouring under disease, some were enfeebled by their crowded condition and the scanty fare of the passage, others were disconsolate in consequence of being separated from their nearest connexions, whilst all were dejected with the striking reverse from their former comforts and independence.

Though the funds for their support were for a time supplied from the public purse, Benezet undertook to provide for their subsistence in the purchase and distribution of everything they required. To the sick and dying he administered relief, as long as human exertion was availing or could hope for success; and when death terminated the sufferings of any, he would perform the last office of respect to their remains.

The inconvenient construction of the barracks, as well as want of room in them, being ill-suited to their accommodation, he solicited permission of his friend, Samuel Emlen,* to occupy part of a square of ground owned by him in Philadelphia, with buildings for the residence of the neutrals. The grant being promptly made, Benezet collected subscriptions, and was soon able to purchase materials and erect a sufficient number of small houses, to which they were immediately removed.

The supply from the public treasury ceasing on their change of situation, he was obliged to devise employment for them to procure a livelihood. Among various occupations to which he directed their attention, was the manufacture of wooden shoes and linsey cloth.

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* Samuel Emlen, of Philadelphia, was an eminent minister of the Society of Friends, in which capacity he travelled much in America, the West Indies, and Europe. A short time before his decease, being engaged in meeting in a lively testimony, he was seized with violent pain. Leaning for support on the rail of the gallery, he pathetically uttered these lines of Addison's:—

"My life, if Thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And death, if death should be my doom,
Shall join my soul to Thee."

Two days after, he attended his usual weekday meeting, and was enabled, in the authority and power of the Gospel, to set forth the excellency of that faith which is the saint's victory, and which overcometh the world. This was the last occasion on which he publicly advocated the cause of his Divine Master. His weakness rapidly increased, but under much bodily suffering he was preserved in calmness and cheerfulness of mind. The consolations of the religion he had preached for forty years were, in this trying season, his own rich experience. He died in 1799, aged about seventy.—*See* "Bowden's History of Friends in America," vol. ii., pp. 402.

The materials for the latter were principally obtained by their gathering rags from the streets of the city, which they washed and prepared for the purpose.

In addition to the personal services thus rendered, Benezet paid out of his small income annuities to several of the oldest and most helpless. It is related of him, among other proofs of his kindness, that his wife having made unsuccessful search for a pair of blankets she had recently purchased for the use of the family, went into a room where her husband was writing, and expressing surprise as to what could have become of them, his attention was arrested, and when he understood the cause of her uneasiness, he said, "Oh! my dear, I gave them some evenings since to one of the poor neutrals."

For several years he devoted himself to the advancement of the interests of these people, who, by death and removal to different places, were ultimately reduced to a very small number. Such was his assiduity and care of them, that it produced a jealousy in the mind of one of the oldest men among them of a very novel and curious description. This he communicated to a friend of Benezet's, to whom he said, "It is impossible that all this kindness is disinterested: Mr. Benezet must certainly intend to recompence himself in the end by treacherously selling us." When their patron and protector was informed of this ungrateful suspicion, it was so far from producing an emotion of anger or an expression of indignation, that he lifted up his hands and laughed immoderately.

CHAPTER XI.

Benezet appointed overseer of the Penn School—and manager of the Pennsylvania Hospital—Obtains interviews with every member of Government on Slavery—Arrests the progress of kidnapped Negroes—Gives rise to a Society for aiding free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage—Presided over by Dr. Franklin and others—Plan for preventing an oppressive landlord distraining—Duelling—Interview with Marquis Chattelleux on restoring persons apparently drowned—Benezet's more private life—Valuable labours as a Friend—Prejudice overcome by the presentation of a copy of "Barclay's Apology"—His disapproval of theological disquisition on abstruse and doubtful points.

In 1756 Benezet was chosen overseer of the "public school founded by charter from William Penn, in the town and county of Philadelphia;" and in 1757 the "contributors to the Pennsylvanian Hospital" elected him a manager of that Institution.

Although Benezet never interfered with the affairs of state, except when he was desirous its energies should be directed for promoting the happiness of his fellow-creatures, if he had occasion to solicit persons in power for such purposes, he was indefatigable in his exertions to obtain the object in view. During the sitting of the legislature in 1780—a session memorable for the enactment of a law which commenced the gradual abolition

of slavery in Pennsylvania—he had private interviews on the subject with every member of the government, and thus, no doubt, essentially contributed to the adoption of that memorable measure.

His agency in arresting the progress of a number of kidnapped negroes, on their route from New Jersey through Philadelphia, to one of the southern States, and whose claim to freedom, by his perseverance, was ultimately established, gave rise to a society for the relief of free negroes unlawfully held in bondage, incorporated with ample authority, and presided over successively by Dr. Franklin, James Pemberton, Dr. Rush, and Dr. Caspar Wistar.

Among the numerous productions of Benezet's fertile philanthropy, was a plan he conceived to prevent an oppressive landlord from distraining for rent the *stove* of a poor tenant; a bill predicated upon his suggestion was introduced to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth, which became law.

The disgraceful practice of duelling did not escape Benezet's notice, but we have nothing left to show in what manner in particular he attacked this execrable fragment of barbarous times. This was, also, a subject to which the attention of his friend Granville Sharp had been unexpectedly directed, whilst pursuing his anti-slavery work. In a letter to Benezet, dated 7th January, 1774, he says:—

"Towards the end of last summer, when I had set about to finish my tracts, I was undesignedly drawn off by a particular subject, the pernicious practice of duelling, which occurred to me in the course of that relating to the 'Necessity of Submission to Personal Injuries,'

in which it was proposed to show the true meaning of the several texts usually cited for the lawfulness of *Slavery among Christians.*

"My intention, indeed, was only to touch lightly on *duelling;* but, in examining the subject, I found it so perplexed with contradictions, and false precedents cited by the law writers, that I was gradually and imperceptibly led on by the importance of the subject to canvass it thoroughly, and at some length. On account of some violent disputes and personal abuse among our magistrates in the city, I thought it my duty, as speedily as possible, to print my remarks on it in a separate tract."

During an interview with the Marquis Chattelleux, near the termination of the military services of that officer in America, in the revolutionary war, besides other topics of a benevolent nature introduced by Benezet, was an inquiry respecting the method invented in Europe for restoring persons supposed to be drowned. The marquis promised him not only a written account of the practice adopted by his countrymen, but also a box of apparatus used in the seaports of France, both which he sent. This information arrived about the time a society was formed in Philadelphia, for endeavouring to recover suspended animation occasioned by immersion in water; and imparted much instruction to the newly-organized association.

The features already described are some of the most prominent in the public life of Anthony Benezet. Let us now contemplate him in a less extended sphere of action. But it is almost impossible to discover a line which separated his pursuits, or abstracted his mind, from the great purpose for which he seems to have lived —*the good of his species.*

As a member of the Society of Friends, Benezet's labours were highly valuable and important. Believing its doctrines and practices to be those inculcated by Christ, he was at all times desirous, not only of carrying them out in practice, but making them known. He published works explanatory of them, which will be noticed in the following chapter. These he distributed, with other standard works of the society. Having some acquaintance with a minister of another denomination, who was known to be averse to the doctrines of Friends, he presented him with a copy of "Barclay's Apology" for perusal. It broke down some of his aversions, and in a subsequent letter of acknowledgment to Benezet, he wrote thus:—

"Long had I censured with contemptuous rage,
And scorned your tenets with the foolish age;
Thought nothing could appear in your defence,
Till Barclay shone with all the rays of sense.
His works, at least, shall make me moderate prove
To those who practise what he teaches—LOVE.
With the censorious world no more I'll sin,
In scouting those who own the light within:
If they can see with Barclay's piercing eyes,
The world may think them fools, but I shall think them wise."

But Benezet's religion by no means consisted of a sectarian profession. He was, as Dr. Rush observed, a man of a truly catholic spirit; one who loved piety and virtue in others, wherever he found them, and who respected all sincere worshippers of God. His profession of Christianity was never contradicted by his precepts, nor sullied by his practice. Unbounded in his charity, his great aim was to discover some favourable

symptom in the dispositions of those whose course was devious, and that, when discerned, he cherished with pious solicitude. His access to the most erring of his brethren, and others, was always easy; and where human efforts could be instrumental to reclaim offenders, the spirit of the Gospel, as it flowed toward such through his heart, seldom failed of gaining a victory.

The fundamental doctrines of religion, as they were taught by the Redeemer, comprised his creed, regulated his conduct, administered to the purest of his earthly enjoyments, and constituted the basis on which rested his hope of future felicity. He often said that the memorable Sermon on the Mount taught enough to occupy the attention of the sincere in heart; and if duly regarded, its lessons would ensure the present and everlasting welfare of men.

He deprecated whatever had a tendency to lead the mind from those plain and simple manifestations of duty, which are mercifully afforded by God for promoting the happiness of his accountable creation. He did not, therefore, approve of theological disquisitions on abstruse and doubtful points. His opinion on this subject is thus clearly and fully stated in one of his note books:—

"I have often much wished the enlightened William Law had not launched out in some matters which, I apprehend, tend more to employ the natural activity of the mind, than to centre his readers, as his other writings do, in a childlike humble state of watching and prayer for Divine aid, from a feeling sense of the depth of their misery, and inability to redeem themselves. Indeed if this humble disposition, which in all its religious motions seeks solely the honour of God and the good

of mankind, had been more prevalent, true Christian charity would have been better maintained, with respect to those particular opinions which cause so much unprofitable debate amongst us.

"I know some think great advantage will arise, from people's having what are called right ideas of God; and that those opinions are productive of much tenderness and charity in the minds of those who adopt them. But has this indeed been the case? Have the meekness and gentleness of Christ been more apparent in those who have been zealous advocates for this opinion than in other people? Ideas, however exalted they may appear, except impressed on the mind by truth, are still but bare ideas, and can have no influence in subduing that love of the world, that carnality of mind, that obduracy of heart, and, principally, that poisonous idolatry of self, so apt, under one subtle form or another, to insinuate itself even into the hearts of such as have already made some good advances in religion."

CHAPTER XII.

Benezet appointed an Elder—Well qualified for this office—Advocates plainness and moderation—Dissuades from an inordinate pursuit of wealth—Publishes an account of the Society of Friends—Extracts from his concluding observations—Publishes reasons for the Peculiarities adopted by Friends—Notes accompanying the presented copies of his works—An estate worth £100 unexpectedly left to him—Interview with Count de Luzerne on the Slave Trade—Anecdote exhibiting his faithfulness in not bestowing compliments—Kindness to young persons—Instanced in an anecdote relating to Jacob Lindley—Mode of reproving improprieties—An illustration of this—Also by letters—Efforts against the use of intoxicating liquors—Points out the great responsibility of wealth—Anecdotes relating to this—Laments the consequences of a love of money—His mode of terminating a pecuniary dispute—On the accumulation of wealth, in a letter to John Pemberton.

About the year 1770, Anthony Benezet was appointed to the important station of an elder in the Society of Friends—the duties of which he was peculiarly qualified to fulfil. He was especially desirous that the Society should sustain the character for plainness and moderation which had distinguished its origin, and often imparted such counsel and advice as would promote that object. He perceived that the accumulation of wealth amongst his fellow-members induced habits and associ-

ations which were often fatal to their maintenance of primitive simplicity; and it was a primary duty with him to dissuade them from the inordinate pursuit of secular occupations.

He conceived it derogatory to the dignity of the human mind, if its energies sought no other exercise than such as immersed it in selfishness. This disposition, more than any other, he held to be opposed to the proper use of its noble endowments, and subversive of the exalted happiness it was designed to partake of in futurity.

In 1780 he published, in English and French, "A Short Account of the Religious Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers." This work was the best summary of the principles, and of the discipline and economy of the society, that had then appeared.* In the concluding observations of the author, it is clearly shown upon what ground he believed the doctrines they profess could be upheld with purity and effect.

"If," says he, "upon observing the conduct of many who profess to be of this Society, any should be ready to take offence at the great deviation which may appear from those principles set forth in the foregoing account, let them consider that the human heart, in its fallen state, is prone to evil, and by joining therewith it may gradually become very corrupt; that a real change

* A more enlarged work of this kind was afterwards published by Henry Tuke, entitled, "The Principles of Religion as professed by the Society of Friends, commonly called Quakers; written for the Instruction of their Youth, and the Information of Strangers." Subsequently, similar works were published by Jesse Kersey, Elisha Bates, and others.

thereof is not gained by birthright, or a mere association with any people, but only by submission to, and a humble abiding under, the cross of Christ.

"Thus the sincere and faithful among them, who are daily exercised in labouring to have their wills brought, in all things, into a conformity with the Divine will, knowing that nothing less than this can entitle to membership in the true church—the Bride, the Lamb's wife—often find a necessity laid upon them to bear testimony against the subtle delusive spirit of the world, in its various appearances; and also to press their fellow-members in religious profession not to rest contented in the regular observance of any form, or in the bare acknowledgment of any principles, but to strive to become acquainted with the operation of the Spirit of Truth in themselves, and closely adhere to its monitions and guidance, as the only safe path through this life, and the foundation of an unshaken hope of a blessed enjoyment in that which is to come.

"Therefore, may every tender inquirer after the right way not look out at the conduct of others, nor place their dependence upon any man, but carefully attend to the openings and leadings of the Holy Spirit in their own minds, and as they follow on to know the Lord they will be brought to a degree of the same experience with the apostle: 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.'"

His reasons in support of the peculiarities of the Society, as being consistent with Scripture authority, were stated in a small work he published in 1782, entitled: "On the Plainness and innocent Simplicity of the Christian Religion."

In addition to his own opinions on the subjects on which he wrote, and which he believed it his duty to print and distribute, he was often engaged in selecting

and compiling sentiments from various authors, of moral and religious tendency. These pamphlets he industriously circulated; and when he heard of his friends or others being about to travel, he enlisted their services to spread them; "esteeming it," he said, "indeed a favour, in this self-pleasing age, if people will but give them a serious perusal."

He frequently presented his friends with copies of his essays as soon as they appeared, and these occasions were embraced to convey to them the feelings of his mind. The following notes, written for that purpose, exhibit the amiable manner in which he discharged such duties:—

"To H. H.:

"I herewith send a couple of pamphlets, the perusal of which will, I hope, be agreeable to thyself, and my kind friend thy spouse. We are so liable, in this frail state of existence, to suffer our minds, even imperceptibly, to be so much engrossed with the trifles of life—and indeed its fears as well as its joys may be truly so termed, when compared with the solemn scenes which lay before us—that I trust anything which may tend to call us back to ourselves cannot be taken but in good part, from those whose desires we are persuaded are sincere for our best welfare.

"'How sweet,' says the pious Brainard, when near his end, 'how sweet is a spirit of devotion, a spirit of seriousness and Divine solemnity, a spirit of Gospel simplicity, of love and tenderness!' How vastly superior are the pleasure, peace, and satisfaction derived from these Divine frames, to that which we sometimes pursue in things vain and trifling. Indeed our own better experience teaches us that in the midst of such laughter the heart is sorrowful, and that there is no true satisfaction but in God.

"Your real friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"To Dr. ——, of Wilmington:

"I am persuaded, my kind friend, thou wilt excuse this freedom. But a good opportunity offering, I take the liberty to enclose a few pamphlets. They contain some serious items on the solemn truths of our holy religion. That at the beginning is worthy of notice as well for the weight as the great importance of it. The small tract at the end may tend to remove some mistaken prejudices which too often prevail, for want of due information.

"The other tracts, though written by persons differing in circumstantial matters, yet all agree in enforcing the amendment of the heart, the end and aim of the Gospel, yet so expressed as not to infringe that charity (*i. e.* the love of Christ), which is the distinguishing badge of Christianity. I shall be glad to hear of thy welfare; and in that great circle which is not limited by party or country, but with cordiality of affection embraces the whole creation,

"I salute thee, and remain thy friend,

"Anthony Benezet."

The expense of printing being defrayed from his own purse, and deriving no pecuniary compensation from his publications, combined with his great liberality in other respects, caused Benezet's friends to fear he should forget his own wants in the dispensing of his income. This idea being once suggested to him, he said, "I lose nothing by doing so. I once sent to a religious man (with whom I had no personal acquaintance) a number of my tracts, and at his death it was found that he had bequeathed to me his whole estate, which amounted to one hundred pounds."

The piety and integrity of Benezet's character excited in the mind of every one who knew him, the greatest respect; whilst the innocent and unreserved affability

of his manners rendered his association, with all classes of society, acceptable and agreeable. As the objects that engaged his attention were of a public nature, he had frequent interviews with persons of distinction in the government, whose influence he wished to exert for the advancement of his benevolent purposes. By these he was uniformly heard with marked attention, and received many amiable proofs of regard.

Soon after the arrival of the Count de Luzerne at Philadelphia, as ambassador from the court of Louis XVI., Benezet, anxious to interest his feelings regarding the slave trade, made him a visit, and that occasion laid the foundation of a cordial and mutual attachment. A most friendly intercourse was maintained between them as long as Count de Luzerne remained in the United States; and when the Count was about to embark for France, a day being assigned for taking leave, he thought it respectful to wait upon him. On arriving at his residence, he found the minister surrounded by numerous guests, who were bestowing compliments and good wishes upon him. Benezet retired, unobserved, to a corner of the room, till some of the visitors had gone; and when an opportunity occurred he presented himself before the Count, and said, "Thou knowest I cannot use the compliments which the company have expressed; but I wish thee the favour of Heaven, and a safe return to thy country." Upon which the Count exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Benezet, you have exceeded them all!" at the same moment embracing and kissing him.

Anthony Benezet was remarkable for his kind and condescending manner towards persons much younger

than himself, especially if he perceived in their character any promise of usefulness. He was often heard to quote the text, "Wisdom is grey hairs, and an unspotted life old age." From this trait of a really great mind, might be expected to proceed every amiable and encouraging effort to render the talents and dispositions of those with whom he met, subservient to the greatest possible benefit to his fellow-creatures: hence he always sought for, and seldom failed to make himself acquainted with, some feature of the character, or use some information acquired by mingling among men, which he ever directed to a salutary purpose.

An interesting proof of this humble, though exalted disposition, in Anthony Benezet, is illustrated in the notice he took of the pious and excellent Jacob Lindley, when he was a youth. Lindley, to adopt his own designation of himself, was a "stripling" when he attended a yearly meeting of Friends held at Philadelphia. He had been, for some time, much afflicted with observing the pernicious effects of spirituous liquors, and was anxious that the Society might cease to use, and prevent any of its members manufacturing or vending them. Lindley stood up, and developed his feelings to the assembly in the energetic and pathetic manner for which he was peculiarly remarkable.

When the meeting adjourned, he observed a stranger pressing through the crowd towards him, who took him by the hand in the most affectionate manner, and said, "My dear young friend, I was very glad to hear thy voice on the subject of spirituous liquors. I had much unity with thy concern, and hope that no discourage-

ment may have been received from its not being further noticed; and now I want thee to go home and take dinner with me, having something further to say to thee on the subject."

Lindley accepted the invitation; and after they had dined, Benezet introduced his young guest into his little study, where he produced a manuscript work on the subject of spirituous liquors, in an unfinished state. He opened the book, and laid it on a table before them, saying, "This is a treatise which I have been for some time engaged in writing, on the subject of thy concern in meeting to-day; and now if thou hast a mind to sit down and write a paragraph or two, I will embody it in the work, and have it published."

The same disinterested goodness which induced him to respect and cherish whatever he saw valuable in the character of his young friends, led him also to disapprove those practices which he observed any of them in the indulgence of, rendering them less useful than they might otherwise be, and their example injurious to others. But whether exciting to good works, or reproving for what he conceived to be improprieties, the time and manner were always wisely adapted to the purpose. Having no dogma of his own formation to establish, nor any selfish feeling to gratify, the means he employed for promoting the welfare of others were uniformly such as the Author of Christianity ordains for accomplishing the great end of the religion of love.

It would be impossible to furnish a more striking example of the delicate and forcible manner he adopted in the expression of rebuke, than that which occurred

at the house of one of his female acquaintance, some time after her marriage. He had called on a benevolent errand; and though his young friend was *in full dress for a ball*, he was admitted. When he beheld her gala attire, he drew himself into an attitude of surprise, and with regret marked in his unsophisticated countenance, he exclaimed plaintively, "My dear S——, I should not have recognised my amiable pupil, but that thy well-known features and excellent qualities are not to be hidden by so grotesque and lamentable a disguise. Thy kind and compliant temper has yielded, at some expense to thy heart, to the opinions of others. I love thee for the motive, though I cannot admire the evidence of it."

The subsequent letters will also establish this predominant disposition of his mind. The females to whom they were addressed were in early life:—

"To E. G.:

"The perusal of the enclosed serious reflections in the mournful situation of things amongst us, will, I trust, afford thee satisfaction, and I should rejoice if they might have any tendency to strengthen those good inclinations which I am persuaded thy own good sense, (as well as religious views,) will suggest, of the impropriety of thy giving any countenance to the vain and corrupting dissipations which are proposed to be soon entered upon in this city, in which thou wilt doubtless be pressingly invited to join. My near affection and long connection with thy dear father, and my earnest desire for thy true welfare, will, I trust, make an apology for this freedom unnecessary.

"From the same principles, I cannot but much desire that thou wouldst let us have thy company at our religious meetings, as I suppose our mode of worship is most agreeable to thy judgment. It would certainly furnish thee with an opportunity of gaining such reli-

gious strength, as might the better enable thee to encounter the violent attacks from the spirit of the world, which thy situation will otherwise expose thee to. I know it is common for us frail mortals to plead the necessity of complying with many things in contradiction to our better-informed religious judgments, and conclude we shall keep within certain limited bounds. But, alas! weakness is ours. It is not in our power to stem the torrent when once embarked on a stream.

"The Almighty will not accept of a divided heart. If, as the Scripture says, 'the righteous scarcely are saved,' how can we expect Divine assistance if we do not, through watching and prayer, exercise the whole power we are favoured with?

"Let us, by a generous effort of that reason, enlightened by grace, which I am persuaded thou hast been favoured with, break through the tinsel scene of vanity and folly that surrounds us. Let the wise man's advice be most weighty with us,—to remember our latter end; and in everything let us act with reference to that awful period. Let us view things as they will appear to us on a bed of languishing, when, as we cannot then afford this world's votaries any further profit or pleasure, so they will quite forsake us, and we shall be left to our own pungent reflections and the converse of superior beings, administering comfort or the contrary.

"At such a time, with how much more satisfaction shall we have to reflect upon the time we have spent in seeking after God (in worship or otherwise), than in those light and frothy conversations, those scenes of corrupting dissipation, which so much engross the time and minds of the worldly.

"With near affection, I remain,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

"To S. N.:

"My dear ———, I have of late been much engaged in thought. And, indeed, what serious mind can refrain from mournful reflections, when we consider, on the one hand, the purity of our profession, and, on the other, have to observe the general behaviour and appearance of our young women, and the insensibility

they manifest when treated with on these important subjects! I trust, my dear friend, from the apprehension I have of thy sensibility and kind disposition, I may mention my thoughts on this most interesting subject, with expectation of tender sympathy from thee, rather than danger of giving thee any offence.

"I have remembered the apostle's injunction, 'that Christian women ought to be arrayed in *modest* apparel, *not costly*, but with *sobriety* and shamefacedness.' I have also had to think of the nature of the Gospel, the conduct, dress, food, &c., of him who was greater than any of the prophets, even John, the forerunner of Christ. I have remembered the birth and situation of our blessed Saviour himself: His submitting to the most humbling appearance, even to be laid in a manger; and, when grown up, declaring His coming was in the form of a servant, 'not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' 'Behold,' says He, 'I am amongst you as one that serveth;' '*leaving us* an example,' saith the apostle, 'that we should follow his footsteps.'

"But how different from the example of our Lord are the conduct and views of the greatest part of our young people; notwithstanding that it is indispensably necessary that such as desire to follow Christ in the regeneration, should behave (in their clothing, &c.) in such a manner as will best enable them to answer the sober ends of an industrious, frugal life: a life of affection and care, not only in their own families, but as sisters and friends; as nurses, spiritually and temporally, to many who may suffer for want of their assistance. Dr. Cave, in his account of the first Christians, tells us 'they were exceedingly careful to avoid all such things as savoured of costliness and finery, choosing such as expressed the greatest lowliness and innocency.' And that our early Friends understood the apostle's advice in its full extent appears beyond all dispute, from what William Penn says in his Reflections and Maxims, viz., 'If thou art clean and warm, it is sufficient; for more does but rob the poor and please the wanton.'

"If every expense which might be spared is vainly wasting that which properly belongs to the poor, and every conformity to vain and foolish fashions is to

please, and indeed often meant to allure, the wanton, what can be said in defence of the appearance of so many of our young women?—so contrary to that humble, self-denying state of service, which, as followers of Christ, is required of them; choosing to appear as mistresses, as ladies, delighting themselves, like the false church, in sitting as queens to be looked at and admired, rather than capacitated to fulfil the sober ends of life, in the service we owe one to another.

"From a sense of the prevalency of these evils, how can the sincere lovers of truth but mourn—deeply mourn, even over many of those who esteem themselves, and are esteemed, as *moderate*, comparatively with others?—the softness and delicacy of their clothing more adapted to Pagan kings' palaces than Christian pilgrims' cottages—the putting on of their apparel, too, manifestly calculated to allure the wanton! To these things may be added that practice formerly used, and now come again into fashion, of causing their clothes, even their rich silks, &c., to trail on the ground; which thou mayest remember was a matter of so great concern to our dear friend, Daniel Stanton: an evil which appears to me to be of a very deep dye, as it is not a sudden start of passion in the vain mind, but a deliberate act, which requires time and consideration. Hence it may be truly termed (though I believe not considered as such by many in the practice) an act of open rebellion to every impression of grace, as well as an act of ingratitude to HIM who permits them to use and enjoy the most delicate and nice apparel.

"I have been sorrowful to observe so many manifest such ingratitude as to throw off all consideration of delicacy and neatness, and only because it is the fashion —because the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience, calls to follow his fashions, they should conform to that which is in itself so odious, so destructive, so contrary to every sense of reason and neatness! What shall I call it? Indeed it is in itself more expressive of that folly and corruption in which the human heart is capable of running, than words can set forth. If our dear young women would take these things into serious con-

sideration, it may prevent that which, in a solemn time, may give them inexpressible pain.

"I remember the case of a young woman with whom I had repeatedly treated on these subjects, but to no purpose. When in a consumption, and near her end, I was desired to visit her, and was informed that she wanted the company of serious people, and had requested her mother not to admit those who indulged themselves in the fashionable dress of the times, being assured that those who appeared thus could not afford her the comfort she wanted. This will certainly be, more or less, the case with every individual at such a trying hour, except sunk into stupidity, or seared into hardness of heart.

"Sentiments of this kind I earnestly wish may be enforced upon our young women, that they may consider the nature and design of the Christian religion; the high profession we make, that the eyes of thoughtful people are upon us, that they mark and despise us for our inconsistency; and, above all, what a blessing and matter of joy it will be to the well-disposed youth, in a future day, to reflect that they have to the utmost of their power, by their conduct, held up the hands of their parents and friends in strengthening the little good that remains amongst us.

"Do not think I say too much on the subject, for indeed it is a matter of the greatest weight, and ought to be laid open in its fullest light; in which I am encouraged from a hope that the sensible youth will so far see its reasonableness and necessity, as to become advocates on behalf of the cause of truth.

"With near affection, dear ———, I wish ever to remain thy real friend,

"ANTHONY BENEZET."

Deploring, as he did, whatever had a tendency to abridge the comforts, increase the sorrows, or endanger the present and eternal welfare of men, we cannot be surprised that Benezet should discern the ensnaring influence incident to the habitual use of intoxicating

liquors. Observation had furnished him with afflicting evidence, that to this fruitful cause of evil might be traced many of the most distressing instances of the premature termination of human life, the overthrow of domestic happiness, and the prostration of the highest intellect. Against the employment, therefore, of spirituous liquors, except as a medicine, he maintained a constant and faithful testimony. His exertions to diminish the abuse of it were not confined to oral argument and admonition, but he deemed it of sufficient importance to communicate his sentiments respecting it to the world, in a pamphlet which he published in 1778.

Benezet ardently inculcated his belief in the great responsibility attached to the possession of wealth; and from those who were blessed with ability to do good to the poor and friendless, he implored the most liberal dispensation of money for their relief. His appeals on this account were often availing. He not unfrequently obtained large donations for charitable purposes, from those who were greatly indebted to his efforts for the enjoyment of the "luxury of doing good!" So judicious was he in the distribution of pecuniary assistance, that without any suggestion from himself, his friend John Reynel, of Philadelphia, made him his almoner; and in that capacity Benezet had the satisfaction, for many years, to dispose of a large part of the income of that benevolent man, thus nobly devoted to the comfort of his afflicted fellow-creatures.

When he observed a covetous disposition in those who were abounding in riches, he was more severe in the expression of disapprobation than respecting almost

any other error in the circle of human frailty. He considered a penurious mind as scarcely rational, and aware of his liability to censure with severity those who indulged that degrading propensity, he often checked himself when about to give loose to his feelings in relation to it, having been frequently heard to say, that "the highest act of charity in the world was to bear with such unreasonableness of mankind."

An acquaintance relating to him, in conversation, that he had recently heard of a person in whose coffers, after his death, many thousand dollars in specie were found, Benezet expressed great sorrow at being informed of the circumstance, and begged of his friend to give as little currency as possible to the fact; adding, that he thought "it would have been quite as reasonable to have had as many thousand pairs of boots or shoes in the house, whilst the poor were suffering with bare feet for the want of them."

He deeply lamented the consequences he observed were produced by the love of money; tracing to that cause many of the unhappy turmoils which often lay waste the harmony of families, and which are not unfrequently the foundation of sanguinary conflicts between nations. When acquainted with disputes between individuals on account of pecuniary matters, he was known to negociate with them, by persuading one to accept less than his demand, and the other to allow more than he at first conceived right. Having thus brought them to the nearest point of reconciliation, he paid the difference out of his own pocket, and restored the parties to peace and intercourse, without suffering either of

them to know it was purchased at the expense of his purse.

In a letter written a little before his decease, to John Pemberton, then in England, he expresses his sentiments on the useless accumulation of wealth, in these terms:—

"*Philadelphia, 5th mo. 29th,* 1784.

"It is amazing what an influence the love of the world, its esteem and friendship, and the desire of amassing wealth,—living, themselves and children, in delicacy and show, in conformity to the world,—have upon many in our Society, who, in other respects, appear under some impressions of good. They cannot but be sensible of its woeful effects upon the religious welfare of their offspring, who thereby, as warned by the apostle, fall into snares and hurtful lusts, often to their perdition. The nature of our profession, and a conformity to the example and precepts of our Lord, lay an absolute prohibition on such a state.

"'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon earth,' says our blessed Saviour. 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter,' &c. 'Woe unto you that are rich.' Be not conformed, but be ye transformed, that ye may be the better qualified to follow Him who has called you, in the way of the cross, to be soldiers in His holy warfare. Learn of Him who was meek and lowly;—who, though He was Lord of all, chose to come in the form of a servant, walked on foot, fed on barley loaves, &c. &c.

"Some injunctions, less likely to affect the heart, we take according to the full force of the expressions, as with respect to taking oaths, &c.; whilst others, whose hurtful nature is more apparent, and as positively prohibited by our Saviour, as that of laying up treasures, we make nothing of.

"An instance which occurred recently caused me to make some painful reflections upon this most weighty subject, which I incline to communicate to thee, my dear friend; perhaps thou mayest make a profitable use of it, in some places where thy lot may be cast.

"A Friend died, reputed to have left sixty or seventy thousand pounds to a number of children and grandchildren, already so elevated by the fortunes they were possessed of, as to be ready to take wing and fly away into conformity to the world, its friendships, fashions, &c.

"This happened in the depth of winter, one of those intense cold days which we have all felt to be very trying, even to those who are best provided with fuel and clothing, &c. As I passed along I observed aged people and others tottering about the streets, or standing in the cold, in pursuit of a few pence towards a scanty subsistence. Many of these, doubtless, poorly provided with fuel or bedding: both of which were then exceedingly scarce and dear.

"I compared the situation and necessity of these aged people, with the superfluous wealth and delicate living of the children of the rich man lately deceased, and could not but be astonished at the selfishness and caprice of the human heart. I queried with myself,—'Are both these children of the same Father, equally under His notice? Are they enjoined, and do they profess, to love each other as they love themselves?' Why is not much of this wealth, and of the wealth of a number of other rich Quakers, laid out in procuring a place of refuge and comfort, and moderate provision, for such weak and aged people, that they may, in the decline of life, be put in the most suitable situation, to think and prepare for their latter end, and enjoy a moderate state of comfort.

"Is it honest to God or man? Is it doing justice as stewards of the wealth committed to our care? Is it loving our neighbours as ourselves? If mankind are indeed brethren, can it be agreeable to the good Father of the family, that one should engross so much and employ it to feed the corruptions of his offspring; whilst others are under such manifest disadvantages for want of help?"

CHAPTER XIII.

Benezet's great humility—His own opinion of himself—John Woolman—Benezet's personal appearance—General observations on his character—Did not indulge in superfluities—Visited by foreigners of distinction—Cheerful, active, never idle—His plain dealing—Several illustrative anecdotes.

THOUGH "full of good works and alms deeds," which yielded him the gratitude of thousands, though respected for his integrity even by those whose conduct he opposed; honoured at home and abroad for the purity of his motives; admired for his expanded views of the principles of eternal justice and right, which he unceasingly advocated; and beloved and caressed by his personal friends: circumstances combining to elevate the mind in a manner few could have resisted, Benezet was, notwithstanding, continually clothed with the armour of humility, and, protected by it, none of these things exalted his depending spirit. His opinion of himself is truly exhibited in the following extract from a letter to one of his friends:—

"*Philadelphia, 7th mo. 16th*, 1774.

"I herewith send John Woolman's Journal, and that part of his work published in England. Thy aunt showed us a written testimony sent from England, which

I applied to her for, but she tells my wife thou hast a copy of it. I know of nothing else I can furnish, which would help the designed testimony. Oh, that I may have reason to believe that my name is written in the meanest page (if there is any difference) of the Book of Life, and I care nothing about testimonies! I beg thou wilt spare complimenting me about the importance of my engagements. Thou, amongst others of my fellow-men, art welcome (nay, hast a right) to my poor service. I indeed desire not to be my own; but I am much out of humour with most of what I have been long doing, as well as with myself. I am rather fearful much of my activity has been nothing, indeed less than nothing. Oh! that a true Gospel nothingness may prevail in my heart, is my most sincere desire."

The person whose Journal is named in the foregoing letter, John Woolman, of New Jersey, was one of Benezet's most intimate friends, and a powerful coadjutor in opposing the sinfulness of slavery. He was an eminent minister of the Society of Friends, and died in 1772, whilst on a Gospel mission to Great Britain. He published a treatise on slavery so early as 1750. He was a scrupulous abstainer from the use of all slave produce. Being about to visit the West Indies, having just read Benezet's "Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies," he says: "After the full information I have had from reading it, of the oppression the slaves are under who raise the West India produce," he did not feel easy to embark in a vessel employed in trading in the gain of oppressors. He exhibited through life a striking example of self-denial, adorned with an amiable sweetness of disposition, and affectionate goodwill to mankind universally. Charles Lamb says, "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart."

"———O! WOOLMAN, venerable seer,
In thee the astonished, gazing world admired
What this degenerate age can rarely boast,
A faithful follower of a suffering Lord.
'Twas thine the painful thorny path to tread,
'Twas thine to bear a Saviour's dying cross.
Redeemed from earth and earth's perplexing cares,
Redeemed from lawful and unlawful self,
Thy mind was tutored, fitted, and prepared,
To enjoy the highest privilege of man—
A near communion with eternal good,
A fellowship celestial while below,
The certain earnest of immortal bliss;
The only wish to hear, and hearing, to obey
The sacred mandate, the supreme decrees,
Of Him who calls to purity and peace."

As regards Benezet's personal appearance, he was small; his countenance composed of strong and interesting features; and though his face beamed with benignant animation, it was far from being handsome. Of this he was himself sensible; for a friend once expressing a desire to possess his portrait, he did not assign the strongest objection he probably entertained on the subject, but replied, "Oh, no, no! my ugly face shall not go down to posterity."

His understanding was naturally good; and from books, and an extensive intercourse with mankind, he had acquired a valuable stock of information. He paid some attention to medical inquiries, in the prosecution of which, after he had passed the meridian of his days, he attended a course of lectures on anatomy. His mind manifested an unusual degree of innocence; and, though guileless himself, he could quickly penetrate the dis-

guises with which others endeavoured to veil their follies or their vices.

He was religious without gloom, cheerful without levity; and whilst he ardently pursued the path in which he believed duty to God conducted him, neither the rigour of bigotry nor the littleness of ostentation had any place in his well-regulated mind. He was remarkably active in his movements, having much of the vivacity of manner peculiar to his countrymen, the French. He did not indulge in any superfluity in dress, his clothing being made in the most simple manner, and of some material selected for the durability of its texture.

His house was one of the first brick dwellings erected in Philadelphia, which still remains a venerable specimen of primitive architecture. His patriarchal mode of living was consistent with his profession. But, humble as it was, his dwelling was the resort of some of the worthiest characters of the country, and his hospitable table has been spread for their entertainment; whilst few foreigners of distinction who came to Philadelphia, left without visiting him.

He was never idle: perhaps no man more faithfully occupied his time; and few, if any, to so good a purpose. Even at an advanced period of life he denied himself what he considered the needless portion of time allotted usually to sleep, having been heard to say he could "not reconcile a habit of such slothful indulgence with the activity of Christian fervour."

When engaged in preparing his books, he devoted several hours before the dawn of day to writing; and an

occasional relaxation of mind being indispensable, he sought retirement and bodily exercise in the cultivation of a vegetable garden. He had a faculty nearly allied to what is termed "association of ideas." This was peculiarly evinced in geography, of which he possessed so intimate a knowledge, that when any particular latitude and longitude were mentioned, his mind, by a comparison and collation of relative facts, instantly presented a correct image of the spot on the globe.

The equanimity and sprightliness of his disposition were such, that he derived satisfaction from sources that would have produced melancholy or discontent in the mind of almost any one but himself. Having formed an opinion that the great temperance for which he was remarkable would contribute, among other advantages, to prolong the vigour of his memory, on one occasion, in conversation with a friend, he enforced the idea with considerable zeal. This happy consequence did not, however, result from his abstemious habit of living; for several years after, when at the age of seventy, he told the same gentleman that the faculty of recollection had become much impaired. He assured him at the same time, "that its failure enabled him then to read, with great satisfaction and pleasure, those books he had perused in younger life, the impression of which had been dissipated by the lapse of time."

He often indulged an inherent facetiousness of mind, though the sallies of his wit were always controlled by the predominance of goodwill, and were intended to convey lessons of instruction. Seeing one of his friends in the street, who was remarkable for a hurrying habit

he had acquired, Benezet called to him to stop. "I am now in haste," said the gentleman, "and will speak with you when we next see each other;" but, resolved on his purpose, he retained him an instant, with this impressive question: "Dost thou think thou wilt ever find time to die?" They then parted, and the person who received this laconic interrogation, was afterwards heard to say that "he felt infinitely indebted to Mr. Benezet for his kind admonition."

An instance of his mode of plain dealing is recorded in the memoirs of Count Segur. In a conference with General Chevalier de Chastellaux, he said to him: "I know that thou art a man of letters, and a member of the French Academy. Men of letters have, for some time past, written many good things; they have attacked errors, prejudices, and more than all, intolerance: will they not at last try to disgust mankind with war, and make men live amongst each other like friends and brothers?"

The sympathies of Benezet's nature extended to everything that was susceptible of feeling, so much so that he avoided the use of animal food during several of the last years of his life.

His kindness and charity towards objects of distress were intuitive. One of his friends related having seen him take off his coat in the street, and give it to an almost naked mendicant, and go home in his shirt-sleeves for another garment.

Another instance, illustrative of this prompt benevolence, may be cited. It affords also an additional proof of the efficacy of his humane appeals to those in high

worldly rank, even when the mode of his application seemed calculated, by its singularity, to render his efforts abortive.

During the American war, when the British army occupied Philadelphia, Benezet was assiduous in relieving many of the inhabitants, whom the state of things, at that distressing period, had reduced to great privation. Observing a female whose countenance indicated calamity, he inquired into her circumstances. She informed him she was a washerwoman, and had a family of small children dependent on her exertions for subsistence; that she had formerly supported them by her industry, but having six Hessians now quartered at her house, it was impossible, from the disturbance they made, to attend to her business, and she and her children must speedily be reduced to extreme poverty.

Having listened to her simple and affecting relation, Benezet determined to ameliorate her situation. He repaired to the general's quarters; but intent on his final object, he had omitted to obtain a pass, essential to an uninterrupted access to the officer. Entering the house without ceremony he was stopped by the sentinel, who, after some conversation, sent word to the general "that a queer-looking fellow insisted upon seeing him."

He was soon ordered up. Benezet, on going into the room, inquired which was the chief, and, taking a chair, seated himself beside the general. Such a breach of etiquette surprised the company present, and induced a German officer to exclaim, in his vernacular tongue, "What does the fellow mean?" Benezet, however, proceeded, in French, to relate to the general the cause

of his visit, and painted the situation of the poor woman in such vivid colours as speedily to accomplish the purpose of his humane interference. After thanking the commander for the ready acquiescence to his request, he was about taking his departure, when the general expressed a desire to cultivate a further acquaintance, requesting him to call whenever it might be convenient; at the same time giving orders that Benezet should, in future, be admitted without ceremony.

It is almost needless to say that in all his actions, the strictest adherence to honesty and straightforwardness were striking characteristics of Anthony Benezet. In a postscript to one of his letters he thus expresses himself: "I desire to verify in myself, in all cases, the doctrine of one of the copies in use in my school:

> 'Just be thy thoughts, and all thy words sincere;
> And know no wish, but what the world may hear.'"

CHAPTER XIV.

Benezet's early decline—His illness excites deep interest—Sense of his unworthiness—Death in 1784—A great concourse of people attend his funeral—Eulogium expressed by an American officer—Benezet's will—His disapproval of overrated memorials of the dead—Proposes his own epitaph—Remarkable dream of Dr. Rush.

From about the age of thirty, the constitution of Anthony Benezet became firm, enabling him to endure great exposure and fatigue, with the uninterrupted enjoyment of good health, until within a short time previous to his death. This event, it was supposed, was accelerated by his adoption of vegetable diet at a period when the gradual decay of his physical energy required a plan more liberal and nourishing. But though he was for many months evidently declining, he continued to pursue his career of goodness without any abatement of zeal, submitting only to the influence of his disease, by confinement at home, for about ten days before his valuable labours terminated on earth.

As soon as it became known he was ill, an extensive and deep interest was excited in Philadelphia. His friends and fellow-citizens, anxious to learn his real situation, were seen crowding about his dwelling, all making affectionate inquiry concerning him, and ex-

pressing the ardent solicitude they felt that he might be restored to his accustomed usefulness in the world.

When, however, they were assured his recovery was hopeless, the desire of many to see him was such as to induce an indulgence of their wish. They seemed to want his dying benediction extended to them. They were admitted. The chamber in which he lay, and the passage that led to it, were filled with approaching and retiring mourners. He kindly received these visits of respect and love. His last hours, like his long and excellent life, were full of the most important instruction. At that awful crisis, when the character displays no false glare, and all fictitious supports sink into nothing, he taught what he had always inculcated—that humanity had nothing to boast of; that the efforts of man could shed no unfading glory on himself.

He had not now much to communicate, and the few expressions which escaped his lips were such as could only have proceeded from a mind abased by a sense of its own unworthiness, and reverently depending on the mercy of Heaven. At one time he said: "I am dying, and feel ashamed to meet the face of my Maker, I have done so little in His cause." He was heard also to utter: "Alack! alack! we are poor creatures. I can take no merit for anything I have done; there is mostly something underneath that is selfish, which will not bear sifting." At another time he said: "I could wish to live a little longer, that I might bring down self."

On the day preceding his death, he took an affectionate farewell of his wife, who was then in an infirm state of health. Their final separation on earth must have

been soothed by the reflection which enabled him to address her thus, for the last time, "We have lived long, in love and peace." They had no offspring to witness this touching scene, on whom his mantle might fall, who could aspire to imitate his example, and inherit his unblemished fame.

His sufferings towards the close were great, but he endured the pangs of expiring nature with much patience. He contemplated with Christian composure the moment that would terminate his earthly existence, in the firm expectation of a happy immortality; and when the mysterious union between mind and matter was dissolved, his redeemed spirit entered into the everlasting habitation of the righteous!

He died on the third of the fifth month (May), 1784, aged 71 years.

When it was announced that death had numbered him among his victims, the expression of regret was universal. It was a day of sorrow. The afflicted widow, the unprotected orphan, and the poor of every class, had lost the sympathetic mind of Benezet. Society lamented the loss of the brilliant light of his philanthropy. The friendless tribes who wandered the American wilderness, and the oppressed Africans, were indeed bereft: for his willing pen and tongue had ceased for ever to pourtray their injuries, or to plead for the establishment of their rights.

At his interment, in Friends' burial ground, the greatest concourse of people that had ever been witnessed on such an occasion in Philadelphia, was present; composed of all ranks and of all religious professions,

manifesting the universal esteem in which he was held. It might justly be said that "the mourners went about the streets," and that his death was embalmed with tears. Among others who paid this last tribute of respect, were many hundreds of black people, who also testified by their tears the grateful sense they entertained of his pious efforts in their behalf.

An officer, who had served in the American army during the revolutionary war, in returning from the funeral, pronounced a striking eulogium upon him. It contained but a few words: "I would rather," said he, "be Anthony Benezet, in that coffin, than General Washington, with all his fame!"

Benezet's will, in his own handwriting, bequeathed his estate to his wife during her natural life, and at her death directed the payment of several legacies to poor and obscure persons, in sums of from two to five pounds. The residue he devised in trust to the overseers of the public school, "To hire and employ a religious-minded person or persons, to teach a number of negro, mulatto, or Indian children, to read, write, arithmetic, plain accounts, needlework, &c.; and it is my particular desire, founded on experience, that in the choice of such tutor special care may be had to prefer an industrious, careful person, of true piety, suitably qualified, who would undertake the service from a principle of charity, to one more highly learned, not equally disposed."

In a codicil executed three days previous to his death, he directed his books, amounting to nearly two hundred volumes, principally on religious and medical subjects,

to be given to "the library of Friends, in Philadelphia." He also bequeathed to the "Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, &c.," the sum of fifty pounds.

Such were the services, and thus was terminated the life, of Anthony Benezet. The emotions that crowd on the mind when contemplating the assemblage of estimable qualities displayed in his character, are of no ordinary nature. With feelings tending to enthusiastic eulogy, his biographer pauses, however, in the recollection of a fact communicated by one of the most intimate surviving friends of this amiable and excellent man. Benezet disapproved of the often overrated testimonies recorded of the dead, and requested the friend alluded to to use his exertions, if he survived him, to prevent any posthumous memorial concerning himself, should a disposition be manifested to offer such a tribute to his memory; adding to the injunction, "But if they will not regard my desire, they may say:—

ANTHONY BENEZET

WAS A POOR CREATURE;

AND,

THROUGH DIVINE FAVOUR,

Was enabled to know it."

No apology is thought needful for concluding this short and inadequate sketch of a truly great and good

man, with the relation of a remarkable dream by one of his intimate and valued friends, the talented and amiable Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia:—

I thought I was conducted to a country (says Dr. Rush) which, in point of cultivation and scenery, far surpassed anything I had ever heard or read in my life. This country, I found, was inhabited only by negroes. They appeared cheerful and happy. Upon my approaching a beautiful grove, where a number of them were assembled for religious purposes, I perceived at once a pause in their exercises, and an appearance of general perturbation. They fixed their eyes upon me, while one of them, a venerable-looking man, came forward, and, in the name of the whole assembly, addressed me in the following language:—"Excuse the panic which you have spread through this peaceful and happy company. We perceive that you are a white man. That colour, which is the emblem of innocence in every other creature of God, is, to us, a sign of guilt in man. The persons whom you see here were once dragged by the men of your colour from their native country, and consigned by them to labour, punishment, and death. We are here collected together, and enjoy an ample compensation in our present employments for all the miseries we endured on earth. We know that we are secured by the Being whom we worship from injury and oppression. Our appearance of terror, therefore, was entirely the sudden effect of habits which have not yet been eradicated from our minds." "Your apprehensions of danger from the sight of a white man," said I, "are natural. But in me you behold a friend. I have been your advocate, and"—here he interrupted me, and said, "Is not your name *Rush?*" I answered in the affirmative. Upon this he ran up and embraced me in his arms, and afterwards conducted me into the midst of

the assembly, where, after being introduced to a number of principal characters, I was seated upon a bank of moss and the following account was delivered to me by the venerable person who first accosted me:—

"The place we now occupy is called the Paradise of Negro Slaves. It is destined to be our place of residence till the general judgment; after which time we expect to be admitted into higher and more perfect degrees of happiness.* Here we derive great pleasure from contemplating the infinite goodness of God, in allotting to us our full proportion of misery on earth, by which means we have escaped the punishments to which the free and happy part of mankind too often expose themselves, and endure after death. Here we have learned to thank God for all the afflictions our taskmasters heaped on us, inasmuch as they were the means of our present happiness. Pain and distress are the unavoidable portions of all mankind. They are the only avenues that can conduct them to peace and felicity. Happy are they who partake of their proportion of both upon the earth!" Here he ended.

After a silence of a few minutes, a young man, who bore on his head the mark of a wound, came up to me, and asked "if I knew anything of Mr. ——, of the island of ——?" I told him I did not. "Mr. ——," said he, "was my master. One day I mistook his orders, and saddled his mare instead of his horse, which provoked him so much that he took up an axe and with a stroke on my head dismissed me from life. I long to hear whether he has repented of this unkind action. Do, Sir, write to him, and tell him his sin is not too great to be forgiven; tell him his once miserable slave,

* The reader should note that these sentiments are not given as those of the author, but simply as they were expressed in the dream.

man, is not angry with him; he longs to bear his offers to the offended Majesty of Heaven, and, when he dies, Scipio will apply to be one of the convoy that shall conduct his spirit to the regions of bliss, appointed for those who repent of their iniquities."

Before I could reply to this speech, an old man came and sat down by my side. His hair was white as snow. With a low, but gentle voice, he thus addressed me: "Sir, I was the slave of Mr. ——, in the island of ——. I served him faithfully upwards of sixty years. No rising sun ever caught me in my cabin; no setting sun ever saw me out of the sugar-field, except on Sundays and holidays. My whole subsistence never cost my master more than forty shillings a-year. Herrings and roots were my only food. One day, in the eightieth year of my age, the overseer saw me stop to rest myself while I was at work. He came up to me, and beat me till he could endure the heat and fatigue, occasioned by the blows he gave me, no longer. Nor was this all: he complained of me to my master, who instantly set me up at public vendue, and sold me for two guineas to a tavern-keeper in a distant parish. The distress I felt in leaving my children and grandchildren (twenty-eight of whom I left on my old master's plantation), soon put an end to my existence, and landed me on these happy shores. I have now no wish to gratify but one, and that is, to be permitted to visit my old master's family. I long to tell my master that his wealth cannot make him happy; that the sufferings of a single hour in the world of misery, for which he is preparing himself, will overbalance all the pleasures he ever enjoyed in this life; and that for every act of unnecessary severity he inflicts upon his slaves, he will suffer tenfold in the world to come."

He had hardly finished his tale, when a decent-looking woman came forward, and addressed me in the

following language:—"Sir, I was once the slave of Mr. ——, in the State of ——. From the healthiness of my constitution, I was called upon to suckle my master's eldest son. To enable me to perform this office more effectually, my own child was taken from my breast, and soon afterwards died. My affections, in the first emotions of my grief, fastened themselves upon my infant master. He thrived under my care, and grew up a handsome young man. Upon the death of his father I became his property. Soon after this event he lost £100 at cards. To raise this money I was sold to a planter in a neighbouring State. I can never forget the anguish with which my aged father and mother followed me to the end of the lane, when I left my master's house, and hung upon me when they bade me farewell. My new master obliged me to work in the field, which in a few weeks ended my life. Say, my friend, is my first young master still alive? If he is, go to him and tell him his unkind behaviour to me is upon record against him. The gentle spirits in heaven, whose happiness consists in expressions of gratitude and love, will have no fellowship with him. His soul must be melted with pity, or he can never escape the punishment which awaits the hard-hearted equally with the impenitent, in the regions of misery."

As soon as she had finished her story, a middle-aged woman approached me, and, after a low and respectful curtsey, thus addressed me:—"Sir, I was born and educated in a Christian family in one of the southern States of America. In the thirty-third year of my age, I applied to my master to purchase my freedom. Instead of granting my request, he conveyed me by force on board a vessel, and sold me to a planter in Hispaniola. Here it pleased God"—upon pronouncing these words she paused, and a general silence ensued. All at once the eyes of the whole assembly were turned

from me, and directed to a little white man who advanced towards them, on the opposite side of the grove in which we were seated. His face was grave, placid, and full of benignity. In one hand he carried a subscription paper and a petition; in the other he carried a small pamphlet on the unlawfulness of the African slave-trade, and a letter directed to the King of Prussia, upon the unlawfulness of war. While I was employed in contemplating the venerable figure, suddenly I beheld the whole assembly running to meet him; the air resounded with the clapping of hands, and I was awakened from my dream by the noise of a loud and general acclamation of—"ANTHONY BENEZET!"

Alice Mann, Printer, Duncan-Street, Leeds.