The Liverpool Mercury.

SALUS POPULI LEX SUPREMA.

FRIDAY, MAY 31, 1833.

COLONIAL SLAVERY, COMPENSATION, &c.

(Continued from our last.)

In an editorial article of considerable length, which appeared in the *Mercury* of March 1, entitled "Condition of the Free Negroes of Hayti—Slavery in the West Indies—Free Labour recommended," we gave some interesting extracts from the valuable evidence of Mr. Taylor, of this town, from which we shall repeat the following passage, to prove that the negro, like any other man, is stimulated to labour by the hope of reward, although the system pursued towards him seems founded on the persuasion that no motive but the fear of punishment will operate upon his sluggish and stubborn nature.

"Soon after he took charge of Papine, a long line of fence was to be made between that and the adjoining estate, formed by a trench of four feet deep, with a mound thrown up. It was to be done by taskwork, at so many feet per day. The negroes complained that the work was too much for them; the overseer, on the other hand, maintained that they could do it easily if they pleased. To set the matter at rest, Mr. Taylor gave the negroes to understand that they should be paid for all the work done after the completion of the day's task; and what was the result? The task was finished by half-past one o'clock; and the very slaves who had before complained of excess of labour, received pay for four hours extra work." Other parts of this gentleman's evidence tend to prove that "when an offer was made to pay negroes for their labour, they were always ready to work; and that, if placed in a situation where they must work or starve, they would choose the former alternative."

The evidence of Mr. Jeremy, of Admiral Fleming, and of Mr. Knibb, and other respectable missionaries, must leave no doubt in the mind of any unprejudiced man, that the liberated negro will exert himself to obtain his livelihood, if, like the white man, he was encouraged by "the hope of reward which sweetens labour." It is not a little singular, that while it is pretended that a free black man would not perform his proper share of labour, in a climate congenial to his constitution and habits, it is now in the contemplation of the planters to import Europeans to cultivate the West India islands. The last Jamaica paper contains the following announcement of the fact:—

"*The Colonial Union.*—At a late meeting of the Middlesex branch of this association, it was resolved that the funds of the Union should be expended in defraying the passage money and outfit to this country of labourers from England and Scotland. The treasurer, we are happy to say, has now in his hands upwards of £5000. The project of importing white labourers cannot, by possibility, fail. There are thousands of acres of fertile land in the interior of this island, which can be purchased at five shillings per acre, and which may be settled with great advantage, as the mountain climate is delightful; and the poor white man, who may be now suffering every privation at home, would soon find every comfort for himself and his family. This is an object which Mr. Frater so laudably proposed to the House of Assembly, and for which a bill passed the various branches of the Legislature, during the last Session."

The editor of the *Liverpool Times* of last week, adverting to the subject of the proffered compensation to the slave-owner, observed that,—"Whatever the planters and others connected with the colonies may think, they may rely on it, that this is the very last time that they will ever have fifteen millions offered them by the nation. Both parties must be content to make some sacrifices, both of interest and opinion."

Our contemporary here seems to take it for granted that these fifteen millions are to be paid by Englishmen out of the taxes; but, admitting that the West India proprietors should accede to the Ministerial terms of settling this question, is it by any means certain that the people of this country will be satisfied with an arrangement which will add so enormous a sum to the taxation which now presses so grievously upon them as to be almost insupportable? We are not without our apprehensions that the people will not be willing to make such sacrifices in the cause of humanity; and a short time will show what their representatives in Parliament think of this mode of compensating the colonist.

As the subject of compensation to the West India proprietors, will soon become the "bone of contention" and as our opinions on this point have been often misrepresented, we hope we may be permitted to copy an extract from some observations made by the writer of this article, at the public meeting in our Music-hall, held April 28, 1826.

We trust we have no overweening respect for our own opinions, but as we do set some value upon consistency, we shall, without further preamble, proceed to explain our views on the question of compensation, respecting which our opinions have undergone little or no change during the seven years which have elapsed since that meeting:

"I know there are many, very many conscientious persons who cannot recognise the principle of compensation for the loss of a slave, because such recognition implies *right* of one man to the body of another man. Now I do not hesitate to assert and to maintain that the slave-holder may have a right to compensation for the loss of a slave, although he may have no right to the person of a slave for which he seeks to be compensated. This may appear paradoxical, but it is, unquestionably, equitable in the extraordinary predicament in which this country stands with respect to the holders of West India estates and securities. Sir, the situation in which we are placed with regard to this question, is unprecedented and anomalous. It is quite a case *per se;* and while I protest against the right of the colonist to possess slaves at all, I contend that in the eyes of humanity, he ought to be compensated for any actual injury he can prove that he has incurred by loss of their services. The ground upon which I rest my opinion on this point is, the notorious fact that the British Government have not only encouraged the traffic in African slaves, but have actually, in many instances, forced that odious commerce upon the colonists, at times, when the latter, for some reason or other, wished it to be diminished or actually abolished. It is also true that the British Government have derived immense revenues from the colonial system, and that the nation at large have directly promoted it by the almost general use of West India produce. I will illustrate my view of this part of the subject by an analogy which appears to me to bear a more close resemblance to the real state of the case than any that I have any where met with. It is well known that gaming establishments in Paris are not only tolerated but sanctioned by the Government, which participates in the emoluments derived from that vicious system. Now, let us for a moment suppose that the government, either stimulated by the efforts of a few virtuous and enlightened men, or by a lately sense of remorse for the past, should resolve to break up the very gambling establishments which they had heretofore encouraged, it will hardly be doubted that the proprietors, whose property would be sacrificed to this scrople of conscience, ought to be compensated for the actual loss they would sustain by the reform. Such proprietors would be placed with regard to the French Government, in a relative situation, as nearly as possible like that in which the British colonial proprietor stands with regard to the British Government; their argument and remonstrance would be exactly similar. They would say, and very justly, "You have hitherto not only tolerated, but encouraged our establishments, and have induced us to lay out large sums in buildings, and other things, which when you abolish our trade, will be of little or no value. You have, moreover, participated largely in the profits of the concern, and have countenanced the establishment by your presence; but now you turn upon us, and tell us we must break up our establishment, because you begin to think gaming is a vice that ought to be abolished. Do not, however, make us the exclusive victims of your new scruples; but if you will insist upon putting down our trade, at least share the loss with us, as you have shared the profits."

In another column of our paper our readers may find a letter on this subject written by the sensible intelligent correspondent, to whom we are indebted for the scheme for a safe paper currency, appended to an editorial article in our present publication.

The editor of the *London Times*, in the course of his remarks on the meeting at the London Tavern held on Monday last, pays a well merited compliment to a worthy of our excellent townsman Mr. James Cropper, which we shall in conclusion transcribe:—

"On this subject we have not room at present to enter, but we would recommend those who read the speeches delivered at the London Tavern yesterday, to confront them with an excellent pamphlet by Mr. Cropper, of Liverpool, entitled "Interests of the Country and Prosperity of the West India Planters mutually secured by the immediate Abolition of Slavery."

ABUSE OF THE PRESS.—CAUTION AGAINST EDITORIAL FIREBRANDS AND EVIL COUNSELLORS.

The most zealous and honest advocates of the liberty of the press are the most jealous of the abuse of that mighty moral and political engine, which may be worked for weal or woe, according to the conscience and discretion of those who set it in motion.

The present Administration have subjected themselves to much obloquy in consequence of one arbitrary measure, which, in their opinion, and that of Parliament, was rendered indispensable by circumstances which could be controlled by no other than desperate means. It is not our intention to re-discuss the nature of the Irish Coercion Bill, to which we should not have adverted but for the purpose of adding, that with this single exception the present Administration cannot be fairly tax'd, like their Tory predecessors, with exerting a "rigour beyond the law."

Whether it arise from a laudable repugnance to interfere with free discussion in its fullest latitude, or from some other motive, we shall not take upon us to decide; but the fact is, that they have permitted a portion of the press to indulge in the most criminal excesses, which would not be tolerated by any other government on the face of the earth. We are warm advocates for *cheap* knowledge, provided it be *useful* knowledge at the same time; but we have seen some most villainous political articles in those publications which certainly ought to be suppressed by law, as inimical to the morals of the people, and the stability and existence of all good government. We shall not specify the particular publication we have in our eye, nor should we have noticed to the subject at all had not some of the leading London journalists lately called the attention of the public and the Legislature to an atrocious and most insidious address to the people, the object of which is to encourage Englishmen to carry on their persons knives for purposes which are too plainly intimated to be mistaken by any man.

We shall here transcribe a passage from one of the publications to which we have adverted; and as ardent and sincere advocates for the liberty of the press and freedom of discussion, we call upon the Government to arrest the progress of such moral and political poison.

The writer, addressing himself to the working classes, says, "the fate of Culley and Brooke must have taught you, ere this, how the truncheon of the hired assassin can be most safely repelled." Then follows a communication, as if from a correspondent, in which the way in which the law is to be *kept*, is more particularly detailed, and which we give *verbatim*:—

"But now, Mr. Editor, I have a little bit of a secret to tell you: a word to the wise is enough, and *no mistake*. The sports of the great unbolled would at once be put an end to, if these hired bludgeons were fully convinced that, for the future, the working man always goes to public meetings with bread and cheese in his pocket,—a hard crust of bread, and a very small piece of cheese, *and also a KNIFE*; that of course; for surely you would not have the poor man bread his teeth against the hard crust, nibble at the cheese like a mere mouse? No: the working man must have a *knife*. It need *not* be made with a joint; *that* would be an unnecessary expense. A strong straight knife, cased in a sort of large scissor sheath, will serve admirably for cutting bread and cheese, and also for any other essential purposes. This cheese-knife may be made very sharp at the point, (in order that you may pick out any thing detrimental in your victuals, or &c.) but the back of your knife should increase in size up to the haft, where it should be very thick, indeed almost as thick as the back of a sword; but that's nothing to the purpose; I only mean that every working man should, at every public meeting, have in his pocket some bread and cheese, and also whatever may be; for it is a pity he should run the risk of being starved, or, &c."

TRADE WITH FRANCE.

The political animosity which it was the interest of the aristocracy of Britain to foster in the minds of our countrymen against France, during the late war, led to many warped and erroneous views of the nature of our commercial intercourse with this country, which eighteen years of peace have not fully rectified. It is pleasing to observe, however, that more correct modes of thinking on this subject are fast gaining ground, and that the illiberal and childish notion that there is a natural enmity and incompatibility of interest between the two nations is rapidly fading away before the light and intelligence of the age. The opinions and example of the leading men in both countries have not been without their effect on the mind of the great body of the people; and it is now comparatively rare to meet with a commercial man who speaks of the commercial interests of the two countries as placed by nature itself in opposition to each other. Nature has so diversified the face of the globe, that there are no two countries which may not carry on a commercial intercourse mutually beneficial, and which are not so similar in their climate, their geographical situation and natural productions, but that there must always be an advantageous interchange of commodities, and facilities for carrying on certain branches of trade in the one which are not so readily found in the other. Nations will be found pursuing their true interests in this respect, when they take as their guides, not the dogmas of political prejudices, nor the dicta of party zeal which pass current in moments of national excitement, but the enlightened principles which recognise the human race as one family, having a common interest and stake in each other's welfare, and which bring the experience of the past to direct with caution and skill the increasing information and intelligence of the present age.

In this point of view we have observed with much satisfaction the approaches that have of late years been made to a proper understanding with France with regard to the commercial relations of the two countries; and we are proud to think that Britain was first to set an honorable example of a more liberal and just policy. To promote a correct appreciation of that policy, and to obtain that extensive and practical information which may lead to a satisfactory adjustment of those relations on the true principles of reciprocity, Dr. Bowring, whose equity and zeal for the public accounts of France led to such important and beneficial results in this country, has been sent out with full powers and ample means placed in his hands by the British Government, and the Bourbon Government, to the most satisfactory. He has been met in the same spirit in which he received his commission. The utmost readiness has been manifested by the Government and the commercial men of France, to throw open to him the sources of information; and we trust soon to have the gratification of reporting to our readers the complete and satisfactory fulfilment of the important mission with which he has been charged, and which could not have been placed in abler hands.

SUPPRESSION OF FIRES.—FIRE POLICE.

Such is the alarming frequency and magnitude of fires in Liverpool that some of the insurance companies, if our information is correct, have found it necessary or prudent to advance the premium to the great detriment of the trade and commerce of the port. It has often been proposed to form a fire police in this town, but so true is it that "what is every body's business is nobody's," that hitherto no progress has been made in forwarding so useful a work. The reports of such an establishment being on the point of completion generally prevail immediately after every considerable fire; and we do not remember a night without locking the stable door after the steed is stolen. There are few subjects of more importance than averting or abating these calamities, attended as they often are with the loss of human life and immense sacrifice of property. Under this impression we suggest for the consideration of the Fire-police Committee, if it should ever be appointed, a few practical hints for the more readily suppressing fires.

In nine cases out of ten a moderate supply of water in the early stage of the fire would suppress it, but it is not to be had, and half an hour, and frequently much more time elapses, before a single engine is brought into operation. In order to remedy this serious defect we would recommend that the large water carts, used for watering the dock quays, when put up at night, should be filled with water, ready to be conveyed to the site of the fire as soon as the horses could be yoked to. Formerly, before the water companies were established, fire water carts were most effective in cases of fire. There was a public pump in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bridewell, where the fire-bell was kept, and on the first alarm the large casks in these carts were filled from this or other pumps, and conveyed away with great expedition to the scene of action. The driver of the first cart that arrived on the spot was, we believe, entitled to half a guinea, and the consequence of competition was that water was much more readily supplied than is the case at present. It is well known that potash mixed with water renders it much more effective in extinguishing fire than ordinary water, and it would be very easy to have a quantity kept where the large water-carts were put up in order to be mixed while the horses were being yoked. With respect to ledgers, account books, and other combustible matters, the most effectual mode of preserving them, where it can be done, is to have them lowered down into a dry well, excavated in the cellar, and furnished with a strong iron door. Such a safe would be truly a safe, as the rubbish falling upon it would protect the contents from injury, while the flame, if it should even come into contact with the strong doors, would produce little or no injury, as it is the interest of fire to burn upwards and not downwards. Generally speaking, however, the doors of such a safe would be so completely buried in the rubbish that no fire could exist for the want of atmospheric air. There is another, although less effective mode of preventing account books in a safe from being consumed, namely, to have them tightly packed, which is easily done by means of something similar to the wooden screw used to stretch hats with. With such a screw the books, although they did not half fill the safe or iron chest, might be pressed tightly against its sides, in which position they will resist fire much longer than when lying loose. In order to illustrate the utility of this kind of packing we have only need to state that a ream of paper, which is packed very closely, and wrapped compactly, will resist fire in a manner which would astonish any person who never witnessed the circumstance.

The importance and necessity of having an immediate supply of water must be too apparent to require comment; suffice it to mention one instance which occurred within our own knowledge, and which proves the utility of the regulation in the United States of America which compels the citizens to keep fire-buckets constantly on their premises. In 1825 the tobacco warehouse of Messrs. Swanwick and Co., in this town, was discovered to be on fire, and on one of the partners entering the premises he found two of the floors in flames. Fortunately the place was supplied with water buckets, and a fire was soon got under, which, if it had not been thus checked in its early stages, would have been attended with dreadful consequences. Six buckets saved the warehouse, and probably all the premises in the neighbourhood.

Anticipating the early formation of a fire-police in Liverpool, we intend shortly to resume the subject for the purpose of pointing out some suggestions which will, we trust, be well worth their attention.

(To be continued.)

WORKHOUSE ACCOUNTS.

We think we may take credit to ourselves for the fidelity and accuracy of our reports of proceedings at public meetings; and it is a subject of regret to us, that in our anxiety to give a correct narrative of what occurs, our journal should at any time become the vehicle of imputations upon private character. At the vestry meeting, on the 23rd inst., (a copious report of which we gave in our last paper,) Mr. Turner made a charge against Mr. Henshaw and others, which it seems has occasioned considerable pain to Mr. H. and his friends, as it is supposed to impute to Mr. Henshaw the fabrication of accounts for articles furnished to the Workhouse, and a participation by him in the price. For charges so serious, we understand it was Mr. Henshaw's intention to seek redress against Mr. Turner in a court of law. We have, however, received a letter from Mr. Turner, which we subjoin, and which we conceive will render legal proceedings quite unnecessary, as Mr. Turner there disclaims all intention of imputing improper conduct to the parties he mentioned in his speech, and he states that all he meant to allege was, that Mr. Foster and Mr. Henshaw had erroneously stated the Workhouse stock account, by which the expense per head of maintaining the paupers is apparently less than the actual cost. It is unfortunate that Mr. Turner should have so worded or bear so different a meaning from the unimportant charge he meant to make, but as his letter is on this point most distinct and unequivocal, we think Mr. Henshaw and his friends may rest quite satisfied with it.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LIVERPOOL MERCURY.

SIR,—Though I willingly admit the accuracy of your report of the proceedings at the late vestry, I must complain, that owing to the refusal of the Rev. Chairman to permit me to explain, I am fearful the few words I did say said may be perverted into a meaning foreign to my intention; for though I never hesitate to avow my opinions openly, I never wish to accuse any man wrongfully. At the vestry meeting I certainly said that Messrs. Foster, Henshaw, and Company had charged entries in the Workhouse books, when taking stock of articles, for four times as much as they were worth, but when interrupted, I was about to explain that this had not been done for any personal or sinister purpose, but merely to make it appear that the Workhouse expenses for the twelve months were less than they really were. Mr. Henshaw assures me, and requests me to state, that he was not aware of any such proceeding until after the accounts were made up, and that the only alteration he made was in the price of calum.—

Yours, &c. ROBERT TURNER.

Gloucester-place, 30th May.

LIVERPOOL ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

We have to congratulate our readers, and more especially such of them as reside in Liverpool and the neighbourhood, on at length possessing an institution combining, in an eminent degree, instruction with rational amusements