



From the New-York American.

Renwick's Life of John Jay.

It will not, it is hoped, be thought objectionable in the son and biographer of John Jay, to thus publicly expose the gross injustice done to his character, in the memoir of his life recently published in the 137th volume of Harpers' Select School Library. It is important to make the youth of our country acquainted with his acts and opinions, it is equally important that those acts and opinions be truly and not falsely represented, and more especially in relation to a subject indissolubly connected with the rights of humanity, and the destinies of the republic.

To those who are observant of passing events, it is well known that one of the modes adopted by the people of the South for securing the permanency of slavery, is by appealing to the cupidity of northern publishers, to restrain the American press from giving currency to any description of literature in the least degree adverse to human bondage. Various instances to this effect might be adduced, but the following are sufficient to explain the very peculiar character of Mr. Renwick's book.

In 1835, 'Harper and Brothers' published the narrative of two English clergymen who had visited us on a deputation to a portion of the American church. These intelligent travellers of course noticed, and with disapprobation, but in guarded and temperate language, 'the peculiar institution' of our country. The publication of such a book in New-York, was deemed an insult to the South, and a Carolina Journal took occasion to lecture the publishers upon their true interests, and it had shortly after the satisfaction of parading in its columns the following from the 'Brothers':

'To the Editor of the Columbia Telescope: Sir, we noticed in your paper of the 13th inst., (December 1835,) some remarks upon a book published by us, (Read and Matherson's Narrative,) in which you give us a word of caution respecting the publication of books containing offensive sentiments and statements on the subject of slavery.'

They then go on to declare that they had previously ascertained that Messrs. Read and Matherson 'were highly esteemed as gentlemen and Christians, and, therefore, they had not examined their work, and aver, 'We had no suspicion of it whatever. You have no doubt, Mr. Editor, that we have not only what is recommended to us as 'well written, and likely to be profitable, but we were also told that Mr. Ably was an abolitionist; and we would have nothing to do with him.'

The character of the journal to which this humble apology was offered, may be gathered from the following extract from its columns:

'Let us declare, through the public journals of our country, that the question of slavery is not, and shall not be, open to discussion—that the system is deeply rooted among us, and must remain forever—that the very moment any private individual attempts to lecture us on the subject, we will not only refuse to put him in operation to secure us from them, in the same manner his tongue shall be cut out, and cast upon the dung-hill.'

But this amiable gentleman was not the only next year they reprinted an English novel, without knowing that in one of its chapters were some 'offensive sentiments on the subject of slavery.' Again were they rebuked, and again did they confess and bewail their involuntary offence in a letter published in the Charleston Mercury.

'We were,' say they, 'entirely ignorant of the fact that the 'Woods and Fields' contained the objectionable matter referred to in your letter of the 2d inst., until after the work was published. By this we see it must be pretty generally understood in your section, as well as elsewhere, that we uniformly decline publishing works calculated to interfere, in any way, with Southern rights and Southern institutions. Our interests, not less than our opinions, would dictate this course, if there were no other less selfish considerations. Since we have seen the 'Woods and Fields' printed an edition of the 'Woods and Fields,' in which the offensive matter has been omitted.'

But merely to omit offensive matter, would have been negative merit. Hence, it was thought expedient by the Messrs. Harpers, to publish a volume containing a formal vindication of slavery from the Scriptures, and abounding with panegyrics on slaveholders, and vulgar abuse of abolitionists.

These are the men who have established a vast manufactory of books for the special use of the Common School children of the United States—books from which, as we have seen, they are pledged to exclude whatever may offend in any way, not only the Southern rights, but also with 'Southern institutions.' In this manufactory, Mr. James Renwick, Professor of Chemistry in Columbia College, is one of the operatives, and to him was assigned the task of fabricating a life of John Jay, of course, 'suitable for the Southern market.'

Mr. Renwick having no materials for his work, except such as were furnished in the biography of my father, written by me, and published in 1833 by the Harpers, before the South had assumed the course of their press and assembly, which he admits in his preface, was 'liberally granted.' In giving this assent, I did not at the time recollect the use which would necessarily be made of it.

At page 140 of his memoir, Mr. R. thus expresses himself:

'We have adverted, on more than one occasion, to the exertions of Jay in the cause of abolition. Enough has, perhaps, been said, to show the position he maintained in relation to this question. Yet, so much excitement has recently prevailed on this subject, that his course, perhaps, calls for a separate notice. While Jay's stand was a favorable one, and instrumental in obtaining a law for gradual emancipation in the State of New-York, it is obvious that he was not prepared to go the lengths of the modern abolitionists. He did not deny the abstract right of holding slaves, or stigmatize those who did; and he made use of the services of slaves, both received by inheritance, and obtained by purchase. With a sound view of the provisions of the Constitution, and of the rights of the States, his efforts at emancipation were limited to the State in which he lived; and his very proposal of an entire abolition, rendered his efforts more disinterested. If he forbore to apply to the General Government for the exertion of authority which neither by grant nor implication does it possess, he equally avoided any attempt at agitation in those States where the condition of society had not prepared them for his views; and he was not one of those sound statesmen and enlightened politicians, not those of a fanatic and disorganizer.'

Had John Jay been represented as an abolitionist, in the House of course would have had nothing to do with him; but if he could be made to justify 'the abstract right of holding slaves'—to declare that the federal government is restrained from exerting any authority in relation to Slavery; and lastly, if he can be made to rebuke his son as a 'fanatic and disorganizer' for being an abolitionist, the publishers will, in the language of the trade, have made a good hit, and the book will sell at the South. Mr. Renwick has a perfect right to sit in judgment upon his father's conduct and opinions, but he has no right to misrepresent them.

His 'full explanation' of my father's course is avowedly given in consequence of the recent abolition excitement, and obviously for the purpose of contrasting his conduct and opinions with those of 'modern abolitionists.' And here let it be observed that it has not been deemed expedient to suffer Mr. Jay to explain for himself. Not one single word, written by him on the subject of Slavery, is permitted to appear in the District of Columbia. That he 'was not prepared to go the lengths of the modern abolitionists' is true only to a certain extent.—At the time he was in active life, it was the almost universal opinion, in which he concurred, that a compulsory immediate emancipation was too hazardous to justify the experiment; he therefore advocated a compulsory gradual emancipation. Experience has since shown that Slavery may be immediately abolished without permanent injury to either party, and greatly to the eventual benefit of both master and slave. On the other points of the explanation, I will give my father the privilege of speaking for himself, and I will give only so much of his language as is contained in the very book which Mr. R. has abridged.

Mr. R. says he did? This assertion I regard as a strange mistake. If he ever had in his possession for one moment a slave received by inheritance, I am ignorant of the fact. But he made use of the services of slaves obtained by purchase. It did not suit the purpose of the book to include in the 'full explanation' Mr. Jay's own explanation of this part of his conduct, viz: 'I purchased slaves, and manumitted them at proper ages, when their faithful services should have afforded me a reasonable remuneration. In other words, he purchased their freedom, and for the money thus advanced, the servant paid him in labor. In this arrangement of course the servant joyfully acquiesced. In the whole course of his life, Mr. Jay never sold a slave. Yet with the knowledge that he manumitted every slave he purchased, Mr. R. affects to praise his disinterestedness in promoting abolition at the hazard of losing his property!'

We are next taught, that 'with sound views of the constitution and the rights of the States, his efforts at emancipation were limited to the State in which he lived.' Of course his example condemns every abolitionist in the free States.

At the formation of the New York Manumission Society, he was placed at its head and retained the situation for five years. One of the first measures of the Society was to print an edition of 2,000 copies of an Anti-Slavery tract, dedicated 'to the honorable members of the Continental Congress, and the Society voted that each member of Congress, and of the Senate and Assembly of this State, be furnished with one of the pamphlets.' To this with a certified copy of the vote ordering its distribution. The preamble of the Constitution declared that 'the benevolent Creator and Father of men, having given them all an equal right to life, liberty and property, no sovereign power on earth can justly deprive them of either, but in conformity to impartial government and laws, to which they have expressly or tacitly consented.' The contents of the tract and its distribution to members of Congress, form a very striking commentary on the professions of the Society, and the efforts of this Society at manumission to the State in which he lived. The tract combatting the alleged necessity for slaves at the South on account of the climate, says 'There is not the least evidence of this, but much to the contrary. Whites are healthy and do the labor in the East Indies which blacks do in the West, in the same climate. The truth is, most of the whites who are born in the Southern States are not educated to labor, but the greater part of them are ignorant and intemperate, and it is thought a disgrace for a white person to get his living by labor. By these means the whites in general are vicious and all imbibe a haughty and tyrannical spirit by holding so many slaves.' Alas for John Jay's sound views of the rights of the States! In this 'incendiary publication' the Society presumed to admonish even the clergy of their duty. 'Why should the ministers of the Gospel hold their peace and not testify against this great and public iniquity? (holding slaves) is a sin which is commanded to lift up their voices and speak against it. Again: 'A number of churches in New England have purged themselves of this iniquity, and determined not to tolerate Slavery. If all the churches in these United States would come into the same measure, and imitate the Friends called Quakers in this article, would they not act more like Christian Churches than they now do?'

So far from confining his efforts to the State in which he lived, Mr. Jay entered into correspondence with an Anti-Slavery Society in England and another in France, and remarked in his letter to the former, 'We will cheerfully co-operate with you in endeavoring to procure advocates for the same cause in other countries.'

Before taking leave of the New-York Society, it may be interesting to offer the following instances of the fanaticism of our forefathers. In 1786, the Society offered a gold medal to the person who should deliver the best oration at the next annual commencement of the College in New-York (Professor Renwick's College), exposing in the best manner the injustice and impolicy of holding negroes as slaves. The next year, a competitor for the prize appeared, and on motion of the Mayor of the city, a committee was appointed to wait on the abolition student for a copy of his oration. The committee consisted of the Mayor, Alexander Hamilton, and Melancthon Smith. A committee was also appointed (Mr. Jay being still President) to wait on the printers of newspapers to request them to refrain from publishing advertisements for the sale of slaves, or for manumission slaves.'

To return to Mr. Renwick. He assures us Mr. Jay 'forbore to apply to the general government for the exertion of authority, which neither by grant nor by implication does it possess.' Small praise this, that Mr. Jay, who, it seems to us, was deemed competent for the office of Chief Justice of the U. States, forbore to ask Congress to do what we have here known it had no right to do.

By no means; it is only a sort of implied, irresponsible charge, that the son of John Jay, and those who act with him, are doing what his father forbore to do. There is as little truth in this as in the insinuation.

If Mr. R. only wishes to be understood, that Congress has no power to abolish slavery in the States, the following extract from an address by the officers of the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1835, will show him, that 'modern abolitionists' need no such aid from the American Anti-Slavery Society in Columbia College. 'We hold that Congress has no authority to abolish slavery in the Southern States, but in the French West India Islands. Of course, we desire no national legislation on the subject.'

It is true the abolitionists have applied to the general government to exert its authority for three objects, viz: 1. The abolition of slavery in the national Territories; 2. The suppression of the slave trade between the States; 3. The exclusion, in future, from the Union, of any new slave State.

Does Mr. R. mean to imply that neither by grant nor by implication, has Congress authority to effect these objects? If so, he differs from DANIEL WEBSTER, who, on such subjects, is at least of equal authority with the Professor. JOHN JAY, also, in a letter which Mr. R. has read, says that slavery ought not to be permitted in any new State; and that the authority of Congress to prevent the migration and importation of slaves into any of the States, does not imply that he is to be even 'questionable.' Did Mr. R. mean to contradict these doctrines of JAY and WEBSTER? If not, what did he mean?

Mr. Jay's views were those of an 'enlightened politician.' Indeed! And does the Professor mean to condemn those politicians who measure out political rights to our citizens according to the temper of their skin? In his 'full explanation' of my father's views in relation to the rights of colored people, he says 'It is not more than any other has exposed them to contumely and violence, is that black men have naturally, and ought by law to enjoy, the same rights as white men. Mr. R. knew, but conceals the fact, that on this point Mr. Jay went the whole length of the abolitionists of the present day. 'I wish,' said he, 'to see all unjust and unnecessary discriminations everywhere abolished, and that the time may soon come when all citizens shall be free and equal partakers of the same political rights.' In the preamble of the Constitution of the Society over which he presided, it is declared to be the duty of Christians to endeavor to enable the slaves 'to share equally with us in our civil and religious liberty to which they are by nature as much entitled as ourselves.' In accordance with these views the original Constitution of New-York, drafted by him, withheld no political rights on account of complexion. If, then, Mr. Jay was an 'enlightened politician,' where will Mr. R. find another holding the same views, unless in the ranks of 'modern abolitionists?'

It certainly borders on the ridiculous, for the Professor, after analyzing my father's character, and submitting it to the various tests in his laboratory, gravely to announce to the world, as the result of his labors, the important discovery that John Jay was not a FANATIC and DISORGANIZER. But he should be recollected, that in the dialectic intended, he believes it sinful to burden a woman, and he children, with a load of burden, is a fanatic; and he writes—'Till America comes into the prayers to heaven for (gradual emancipation) He drafted and signed a petition to the Legislature of New-York, beginning, 'Your memorialists, deeply affected by the situation of those who, FREE BY THE LAW OF GOD, are held in slavery by the laws of this State.'

But holding such opinions, how came he to 'use the services of slaves received by inheritance,' as

they had 'ascertained that he was highly esteemed as a gentleman'; that they 'had no suspicion of him whatever,' and that since they had been informed of the character of the work, they had printed an edition of the life of John Jay, 'in which the offensive matter has been omitted.'

I have no wish to say anything unpleasant to Mr. R.; and sincerely regret that he has rendered it necessary, but I would, indeed, be recreant to honor and to duty could I witness the sordid sacrifice of one of the biggest features of my father's character on the altar of slavery, and refrain from protesting against the obscene rite, because a Professor of Columbia College was the officiating minister. WILLIAM JAY.

SPEECH OF THOMAS PAUL, A COLORED STUDENT OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, DELIVERED BEFORE THE MASSACHUSETTS ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, JANUARY 27th, 1841, in the Representatives' Hall, Boston.

MR. PRESIDENT: I have often asked myself, what posterity would think of the strange contest in which the abolitionists are engaged. Here we meet, time after time, newspapers are printed and speeches delivered, to prove what? Why, that a man is a man, and that he is the only human possessor of himself. But these propositions are self-evident; and self-evident propositions, we all know, though the most difficult to be proved, are the most easily understood, because they need no proof. The mind sees their truth intuitively, without the aid of reasoning. The attempt to prove them, therefore, would be ridiculous, were it not for the consideration of the amazing state of delusion and vassalage to which prejudice reduces the mind when unlightened by reason.

The history of every age shows the truth of this assertion. At one time, we see Galileo thrown into prison by the Inquisition, because he had made some discoveries tending to confirm the Copernican system, and forced to purchase his liberty by retracting his opinions. Again, before the sacred page was punctuated, some of the Alexandrian fathers placed a punctuation mark in one of our scriptures. The same boldness, which they showed in this innovation, denounced it as a heresy; and Epiphanius declared it blasphemous, and the sin against the Holy Ghost. When, therefore, we see the control which prejudice, aided by circumstances and encouraged by self-interest, has in times past exercised over the human mind, and the tenacity with which it has held its deluded victims, stopping up the avenues of improvement, clipping the wings of genius, and retarding the progress of truth—we are reminded of those spheres of energy that have been crippled, and whose spheres of energy have been curtailed by its influence—when we see the tremendous power which reformers have brought to bear against the prevailing sins of the ages in which they lived, the firm opposition they encountered, and the long and arduous struggles which preceded a better state of things—we are led, by analogical reasoning, to believe, that the contest in which we are engaged is not an unnatural one—that it is not so dissimilar in its character and measures to others which have preceded it, as to be altogether new and untried.

In all moral reforms, too, there is a striking similarity in the various passions, qualities and traits of character called forth. The same zeal and boldness of the reformer—the same caution, distrust and timidity of the conservative, wincing at this phrase, trembling at that expression, and, when the light of truth is shown, the same headlong rush of the people, who, for want of something better, would fall

'Prove their doctrines orthodox By mobocratic blows and knocks'—the same rapid speed of truth when once elicited by reason and argument—and the same general results. How was it five years ago in regard to the question of slavery? The abolitionists were the moral leaven, and a miracle from God himself. All saw it, but no one durst expose his own breast to the pitiless pellets of the gathering storm. The pulpit and the press, instead of being faithful to their trust, were the panders to the general lust. But mind, like matter, must have its legitimate scope. How absurd was the attempt of the ancient king to chain the Hellespont! And yet not more so than the attempt of the modern republicans to bind the human mind.

There are always some spirits who will resist such unnatural domination. And such a spirit was found in the father of American anti-slavery. In that dark hour, he arose to cheer us on our gloomy pathway. The shafts of criticism, and sarcasm, and denunciation, which rang against his buckler, told only where he stood up unscathed, in his moral and intellectual might, and bearing down all opposition. The result is well known, nor does Mr. Garrison need any eulogy from me.

The task of a reformer is far from being an agreeable one. The hidden agonies which he endures, are common eyes; and, if they were, few would know how to approach or dare to meddle with them. He scatters his truths among the body politic, and the effect is electrical. He is greeted at once with smiles and frowns, with blessing and cursing, with eulogy and abuse. Now he is almost stifled with the caresses of devoted friends, and anon he is exposed to the fury of a blood-thirsty mob. But, if it were not for the noble advocacy of those who stand by him, he would be almost restored to their ranks. Much may depend upon accidental circumstances for the success of the reformer, but more depends upon himself. In him are found the great qualities of the head and heart. For the burden of proof is upon him, and he is to answer cavils, refute sophistry, and prove his propositions, while slanderers are crucifying his reputation, and assassins are aiming deadly daggers at his heart. All moral reformations have been attended with more or less persecution, and the American abolitionists stand prominently distinguished in this respect. Not that those of their ranks, who have been imprisoned and murdered, can bear comparison numerically with other reformers. But the light of religious toleration had not dawned upon the Inquisition; and the dogma, that ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, is a newly discovered truth. But the Americans, with the moral and intellectual light of the nineteenth century, should have known better than to shoot down a man for his noble advocacy of those burning truths. They present the rare spectacle of a nation boasting of equal rights, while a large part of the population are the most oppressed and degraded beings that crawl on the face of the earth. If they have fled from the fire of tyranny in the old world, it is to light up a still more horrid one in the new, whose lurid glare serves only to show more distinctly the hollow mockery of their hypocritical professions. If they have driven the millions of wretched beings from the home of their fathers, it is only to make room for the still more imbruted slave, and to introduce a civilization which has been a curse to half of mankind. And thus they have become guilty of the double atrocity of immolating two races of men upon the bloody altars of their avarice and ambition. The red men are fast disappearing from our midst, and soon the halloo of their hunters, long since heard upon every margin of the sea, will be succeeded by the mournful wails of the wretched beings, who are being driven from their forests, and sing their requiem. But the place of the Indian is being fast supplied by that of the slave, upon whose devoted intellect is pouring out the wretched alternative of removing to the far west is denied him. The wide world, with its joys and sorrows, its pleasures and pains, its paths to wealth and poverty, to distinction and disgrace, is limited to the plantation on which he toils the lifelong day.

But why attempt to portray the atrocities of American slavery? It is ever and anon, come to our ears, like a whisper in that whirlwind that rages at the south. We read of deeds of barbarity, but they come mostly from the perpetrators of them, or from persons entrusted in stripping them of their terror. If the victims themselves, who have been whipped and burnt to death, could break the silence of the grave, they could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up the soul. If the abolitionists of that system could be restored to their senses, and be allowed to testify to the moral feelings, and to the shock to the sensibilities of our nature. If the monster herself could become visible to our natural as well as to our mental sight,

and stalk into the midst of this assembly reeking with the tears and blood of her victims, well might she exclaim, as she lifted the veil from her horrid features, well might she exclaim in the language of the veiled prophet of Khorassan—

'Here, judge if hell, with all its power to damn, Can add one curse to the foul thing I am.'

But, sir, the great characteristic of American slavery, and that which distinguishes it from all other species of oppression, is that hatred of the free colored man which makes his condition little superior to that of servitude itself. The slave escapes from the southern to the northern States, and just begins to congratulate himself on his freedom, and to boast of his superior condition, as he is met by a more dreaded foe, though dressed in different habiliments, baffling all his schemes and enterprises. Though his flesh is not bared to receive the lash, and his limbs are unfettered, yet he feels his immortal mind dragged to the dust by a weight far more galling than chains, and more torturing than fetters. The gates that lead to intemperance, licentiousness and death are unbound, and he is permitted to enter them and die; but the road to the hill of science is guarded by a bear, and he sits at the entrance, hissing and gnashing his teeth against him. The distant view is all that blesses his longing sight. The fragrance of the enamelled fields comes floating to him on every breeze, and he has the mortification to behold others plucking the flowers, and revelling in the sunny pastures. All the motives that excite in the citizen enterprise, virtue and patriotism, lie dormant in his breast. These inestimable qualities are to him mere words 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing'—the practical emanations of minds with whom science is a mere name, and sympathy a mere name, as if it were a mere beast, his animal powers alone are strengthened and indulged; but when he has once tasted the proffered cup of intemperance, licentiousness and crime, like other rational and accountable beings, he becomes responsible for his acts, and dearly pays the penalty of violated law. Is it strange, then, that he does not stand out in the dignity of his nature, when so many of the attributes of humanity and the springs of human action are enfeebled by disease, and he is reduced to a mere brute, when he does the most profitable occupation are bolted and barred against him? Is it strange that, goaded to madness by his accumulated wrongs, he sometimes lays aside his pacific character, and turns upon his tormentors and rends them? Surely not. His patient endurance, under such provocations, ought to be a passport to public favor; and though he seldom indulges in retaliation, it argues not that he is insensible to his degradation, but that he is actuated by a manly and noble spirit, that he is actuated by a manly and noble spirit, that he is actuated by a manly and noble spirit.

It is not the colored man alone, who is to be benefited by the abolition of slavery. Its effects will be most salutary upon the white population, and particularly upon the slaveholder. I speak not of the deleterious influence of slavery upon the morals of the south—that is too well known—but the dispositions of the slaveholders are spoiled by it. Accustomed to the implicit obedience of their slaves, they cannot bear contradiction from freemen, and the signal of their wrath they take upon the whites, who are plunged by their lawless conduct into the deplorable influence of slavery upon the morals of the south—that is too well known—but the dispositions of the slaveholders are spoiled by it. 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