

We must say a few words ere we close in reply to the sensible and good-spirited letter of Mr. Laird. This gentleman falls into an error when he says that we expressed "great doubt that any benefit would arise from the contact of Africans with Europeans, and civilized men of their own race" in the West Indies. What we questioned was the attainment of such an amount of benefit as would qualify them to become the civilizers of Africa. This Mr. Laird's scheme implies, and this he was bound to show. What is his reply? They will acquire, he tells us, "some knowledge of tropical agriculture;" 2, "some knowledge of the law they live under;" 3, "some idea of the decencies of life;" and 4, "some notion of a purer faith than paganism." That these elements will be adequate to the regeneration of Africa he does not affirm; and we think he will hesitate long before he does affirm it. Till then our argument remains untouched.

In reply to our suspicions respecting the numbers of Africans, who "might be got for food and protection" Mr. Laird says:—

I will state a case which will show that in that unhappy country it is to be done. In June 1833, I was on the Niger a few miles below the confluence of the Tchadda. The Felatahs made a slaving excursion, and swept the West Bank of the Niger from Rabbah downwards. From the deck of my steamer, I counted six towns in flames at one time; the miserable inhabitants that escaped across the stream, there about 1200 yards wide, encamped under my guns on the eastern bank; the decks of my vessel were crowded with suppliants for "food and protection." Here was a case where I might have saved thousands of lives, if I could have offered them a permanent refuge. In the same year a chief on the Calabar river died: his war canoe was pulled by forty men: a few days after his death, the canoe came down the river with the skulls of those men placed on the thwarts where in life they had sat, the whole having been sacrificed at his funeral.

These are just such cases as we imagined. Not for a single moment should we deprecate the extension of British "protection" to such sufferers, and "food" follows of course. But what we have objected to is the offering of such protection *with the view of shipping off the parties to the West Indies*. If we could protect them in their homes, or if we had a home in Africa to offer them, we should have nothing to say against it: but to offer protection for the purpose of shipping off the parties to the West Indies, is only doing ourselves under the plea of kindness, what the slave-traders are doing by open hostility.

To our opinion that an extensive "re-emigration to Africa is a fallacy," Mr. Laird replies,—“Is he not aware that it has commenced?” And he quotes the return of "sixty-eight Africans, principally captured slaves, originally taken into the Bahamas, and afterwards removed to Demerara," together with that of "seventeen emancipated slaves," who "bought up the time of their apprenticeship" in the same colony. But these cases prove nothing to the purpose. Mr. Laird relies on the return of large numbers, and on large numbers of those who left their native shores, not by force, but voluntarily. That "mysterious sympathy in the mind of the negro with his country," which draws him back to it when he had been torn from it by violence, cannot surely be reckoned upon as existing powerfully in those who desert it from choice.

CASE OF NELSON HACKETT.

From the *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter*.

[Application having been made by Mr. Scoble, on behalf of the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, for the facts in connection with this important case, which was the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, we lost no time in communicating such information as was at hand, promising to make further inquiry, and communicate the result. Charles H. Stewart, Esq., of Detroit, being on a visit to this city, and knowing he was in possession of the material facts, we immediately applied to him on the subject. He very promptly wrote out a narrative of the facts for publication, and we have great pleasure in laying it before our readers. Mr. Stewart is an Irishman by birth, is a lawyer of high respectability in Michigan, and President of the Anti-Slavery Society of that state. The most implicit confidence may be placed in his statements. The circumstances attending this case are of a most important character.—Sir Charles Bagot has probably been most ingloriously imposed upon—and the British government will, we doubt not, provide against the recurrence of a similar event.]

Hackett was a slave in Arkansas. In the spring or summer of 1841, he was at a race course with his *legal* master, and was desired to take home a race-horse. The home was at a considerable distance, and Hackett, finding himself well mounted under circumstances that permitted absence, directed his course towards liberty—the incessant subject of solicitude with this unfortunate class. At this time he had in care the outside coat of the master, and he also had his gold watch: in what manner this last was obtained is not known. After many perils, he succeeded in finding and effecting his way through the long route intervening between Arkansas, in the remote south-west, and Canada, at its northern frontier: he passed through Detroit, in the state of Michigan, and took up his abode at London, or somewhere in the vicinity of Windsor, opposite to Detroit. In the course of the summer or fall he was followed. A person on behalf of his alleged owner consulted a lawyer of much respectability, Mr. George F. Porter, whether there was any mode by which Hackett could be recaptured into slavery. Mr. Porter, being an abolitionist, gave no encouragement. The application to him shows the governing motive of the master, and that he desired to repossess himself of the person of Hackett, not so much perhaps on account of his actual value, as

that his recaption, and the dreadful punishment that awaits the falling aspirant of liberty, might deter others from a like attempt.

The next thing known is that the agent went to Canada, and there had Hackett arrested for theft—stealing a coat, gold watch, and horse of A. B. (the master). Considerable interest was excited among the coloured people, by a proceeding which they well knew to be but a vindictive persecution for daring to assert self-liberty; but they found that Hackett was in custody, like any other alleged criminal upon informations sworn in Canada, and that he must abide the due trial of the charge at the ensuing assizes or circuit, to be held at Sandwich, in February or March, 1842. Nothing could be done until then, and Hackett and friends abided patiently the arrival of court.

The arrest was in the fall, probably October or November, 1841. It appears that Hackett was kept a very close prisoner—a lawyer, Mr. Baby, alone was permitted access to him during his confinement. After Hackett was thus arrested, his claimant had him indicted before a grand jury of Arkansas, for larceny; and procured from the governor of that state a demand on the governor of Canada for the surrender of Hackett. These papers were sent to the colonial government, and were received by Sir Charles Bagot about the time of his arrival in Canada. It is not known what kind of private applications or representations were made to Sir Charles, but it is probable, may almost certain, that he was altogether imposed upon—that Hackett was represented as a great criminal, and that British sense of right was appealed to, to know if their government would screen villany, and reward with impunity the robber—that Hackett's colour, and the strongly extenuating circumstances of his case, were altogether suppressed. That misrepresentation was freely made I know, from the fact that his captors alleged in Detroit that Hackett had committed a rape, under aggravating circumstances, on his master's daughter—a charge not only without evidence of any kind, but which I ascertained to be false, and to have been suggested for the mere purpose of creating feeling against Hackett. Sufficient discredit is at once given to it, by the fact that it was not the subject of indictment. Had so aggravated an offence existed, it would readily have been seized on as the ground of demand on a foreign government not bound by treaty or usage to surrender, in place of the light one of larceny. It may also have been represented to Sir Charles, that, along the borders, the magistrates give up to each other those petty criminals who seek by flight across our dividing line an impunity from crime. Such is the fact. The surrender is unauthorized by law: it is the exercise of force—the exchange of neighbours' courtesy, and is winked at all round. There is a great difference between this border surrender of hen-roost pilferers, and the deliberate official action of the British nation, in its highest and most solemn sanction, forming a precedent in the usage of nations. The American slave-owner had also so managed as to secure the co-operation of those possessed of influence on the Canadian frontier, and poor Hackett became a miserable victim to combined power, skill, and wealth, while he lay a captive in British confinement, trusting with implicit confidence to the accused's sacred palladium—that boast of Britain's constitution—a trial by his peers. Neither himself nor a single friend were aware of the measures pursuing: they were prepared for trial, and for nothing else.

At any rate Sir Charles Bagot, deceived or not, ordered the surrender of Hackett, and gave warrant to the jailor at Sandwich to surrender him, and a letter to Colonel John Prince, of Sandwich, her Majesty's Consul (a kind of local attorney-general) and to all British authorities, to aid and assist in the delivery of Hackett to a man of the name of Davenport, who runs the ferry between Detroit and Windsor.

The mode of executing this warrant showed the parties' own consciousness of impropriety. It was not done in that open, fearless manner which imparts dignity to the law, and proclaims its sovereignty; but at nine or ten o'clock of a winter's night in the Canadas, when the severity of the season had housed every person and animal, during the month of February last, a party of men were collected, a boat was prepared, Hackett was seized without a moment's intimation, and hurried across the Detroit river amid masses of floating ice, and incarcerated in the Detroit goal. Whether or not the demand on the Sandwich jailor had been previously made, is not known; but it probably was, and every arrangement had doubtless been leisurely made, though secretly.

In Detroit, Hackett was immured in a private cell. He was some days there before the fact was known, but it leaked out. I made application to see him: his being there at all was denied. I finally made application to our Supreme Court, and obtained a *habeas corpus*. I was then admitted to see Hackett, and shown the papers connected with his arrest. Hackett candidly avowed the fact, that he had used the horse as the means of procuring freedom. He had no way of restoring either it, watch, or coat; no demand was made for any of them. At his arrest he still had all of them, and all were received and used by his captors, as they admitted.

The papers then consisted only of the letter of Sir Charles Bagot's secretary, in official form, to Colonel Prince and other authorities, and an authenticated copy of the warrant of surrender. The indictment had been left with the colonial government, and its contents were stated to me by the agent and counsel of the captors. Sufficient evidence, however, was afforded, that the colonial government, whether rightly or discreetly, yet, in fact, had duly surrendered Hackett. The question then was—should we of Detroit contest the matter? We could have done so: a foreign warrant was of no validity with us. Hackett was illegally in