

LETTER.—No. I.

SIR,

I HAVE seen in the papers accounts of large Associations, and applications to government for the abolition of slavery. Religion, humanity, and the generosity natural to a free people, are the noble principles which dictate those measures. Such motives command respect, and are above any eloquent words can bestow.

Altho I fully applaud, and join in the wish to see slavery abolished, I must however confess, that what I have collected, on the means for obtaining the end, out of those channels has given me no satisfaction.

The subject is in my opinion, of higher moment than has been represented: Slavery is not only contrary to the feelings of freemen, but to the principles of a free government; it not only viciates it, but it must also be considered, that in America the evil is a deep-rooted and daily increasing one; that to effect a cure, palliatives are dangerous, and no more applicable to it, then they are in the mortification of gangrened bodies; that to heal this political and moral evil, and to do strict justice on all sides, is a difficult task: For which reason, I presume, that this matter must only be considered, and even decided, on the ground of philosophical and political argument. On this very scale I shall try to state the nature of the question, and the measures for a radical cure of the evil.

Agreeable to the order mentioned, I shall take up the subject; first on philosophical ground. Innumerable are the beings on the globe, yet the eternal wisdom has classed them all, gradually descending from animated to inanimated nature; distinguishable differences of form, size, strength, weakness, ferocity, mildness, sensibility, inertness, inanimation, are existent. Those differences have been proved by philosophical enquiry, to proceed by gentle tints and shadows, till observation on those subjects is set at nought.

No less wonderful is a something similar order in the vegetable and mineral kingdoms: In those we find also, well divided classes, graduated, connected, yet all marked out in different characters; such instances are numerous, but beyond my strength to investigate, and beyond the limits of this paper: however, in order to throw light on the ideas I have communicated, I will select, and consider at large, a few examples out of the animal kingdom.

From the elephant to the smallest insect, visible to the eye by a microscope only, what a gradation of sizes, of animals, does there stand between those two extremes; strength, sagacity, and temper, are objects no less gradually diminishing, and form distinct characters, between individuals of the great sum of animated beings.

An other gradation is remarkable; nature goes not from one species of animals abruptly to the next; there are beings who separate one sort from the other, and partake in their form, and habit, something of both; those I call intermediate beings.

Examples of this description are plentiful: for instance amphibious; of these, the sea-horse, the sea-cow, the sea-horse, the sea-dog, the beaver, the otter, &c. partake at once of the nature of fish, and of some land animal they have resemblance to. Only one more of these I beg leave to mention: on the Cape of Good Hope, a duck, at once fish and fowl, is often met with, the form is that of a common wild duck, but the wings are constructed like the fins of a fish; those ducks fly horizontally over the water to hunt the fish swifter in swimming than they are; but their power of flying is over as soon as their wings become dry; they lay their eggs in cliffs on shore, and there breed their young ones; this I presume is one of the intermediate beings, between fowl and fish.

In several species of animals, altho likeness is apparently great, how different is their nature: This we will exemplify by the lion, and a large dog, of which there is in Asia a species of a kind and shape, almost next to the lion, called the lion-dog: Ancient history records that such an one was given to Alexander, King of Macedonia; this needs no further description, for even to this day the breed is not extinct; the Mogul, and other Asiatic Princes, hunt the lion still with them; a single one, armed with a steel collar, and breast harness, fights on equal chance, and two of these vanquish the lion easily. The bull-dog, and the wolf with the short muzzle, the small spaniel with the fox, the domestic cat with the tyger, have all striking resemblances, but how different are, they in character, habit and temper.

Among animals avowed to be of the same kind, the differences are no less perfectly ascertained. This field is as extensive as the former: It would tire the attention to walk thro all the images it is able to furnish; hence I shall keep within short bounds of the most common objects. From the before-mentioned Asiatic lion-dog, to the little long-haired delicate Spanish dog, which lies snarling in the lap of a lady, or cowardly barks out of a basket, lined with cotton, what a difference of character, strength &c. and how many sizes, and species, stand between these two dogs. The noble Arabian horse, the swift tartarian, the barb, the English hunter, the heavy and large offsprings and the dwarf Norwegian horse, are all horses, yet how differently are they marked out.

In the human species, differences are no less striking and absolute. The Patagonian giants, the dwarfs of Laponia, the elegantly proportioned figure, and beautiful color of our ladies, and of some European nations; the Chinese; the copper-colored men; the blacks with long hair; the white negro with red spots and white hair, called kakerlak by the Dutch; the African, and southern Papoe negro, with short woolly hair, are all of the specie called mankind, but how greatly do they differ, not alone in color and figure, but also in original character.

Plinius gives a description of men, living in the interior parts of Africa; they have ears standing upwards, like horses' ears, their mouth is a long shaped wolf's muzzle, and they have nails like a bear, standing stiff at the end of their fingers. This kind of men carried on bloody wars against the Ethiopians, and were finally rendered tributary by the latter: they have been seen, in the armies of the Ethiopians, in their wars with the Egyptians, and Romans. When I travelled in the Asiatic southern Hemisphere, a Prince, sovereign of one of those islands, gave me a description of the same kind of men, living in some islands next to him: This Prince was a stranger to Plinius's account, and the unprovoked narrative, and perfect resemblance of his description was the first confirmation I obtained that Plinius had told no tale; but I have since, in Europe, seen a female of that monstrous specie, brought from Africa to Marseilles. This creature was thought to be of the monkey kind, but her knees confirmed me in the belief, that she was of the intermediate beings, by which nature goes from one specie to another, and probably those creatures stand between mankind and the monkey specie: The knees of this female stood forwards, like those of men, but in general all quadrupedes have the knees of their hind legs standing backwards: She answered also the description given by Plinius, and by the Asiatic Prince.

From this perusal, little doubt can remain that all those quoted distinctions are explanatory proofs of the immutable order of the universe, instituted by the infinite wisdom of the Almighty: Can human law change the system, or by intermixing species, overthrow the fixed order of nature, and improve the original? Is it in the power of men, to make out of a cur a bull dog; out of a Norwegian dwarf-horse, a noble Arabian; out of the voracious wolf, a companionable Newfoundland dog; out of the wild musk-bull, a domestic ox, to till his ground; out of the Laponian dwarf, a Patagonian giant? If this can be done, then he can also make out of the sheep-hairy African negroe, a spirited, noble, and generous American Freeman!

My next letter I shall make shorter; the length of this I could not avoid.

R U S T I C U S.

PARISIAN INTELLIGENCE.

PARIS, Nov. 26. Frosty Nights.

M. DUPONT, a Member of the National Assembly, is a great advocate for the Caisse d'Escompte. He pretends that it never stopped payment; on the contrary, he affirms, with confidence, that it daily pays now between three and four hundred thousand livres, and refuses no bills or notes. He farther remarks, that the Bank of England, so renowned for its exactness, when the Pretender was in Scotland did not cease payment, it is true; but discharged its notes in shilling

and sixpenny pieces; which operation went on so slowly in the payments, that not a thousand pounds sterling were paid in a day. And yet, says M. Dupont, it was never ascertained, that the Bank of England had become bankrupt. The said member insists, that the nation ought in justice and gratitude, either pay what she owes to the Caisse, or aggregate it to the National Bank, according to M. Necker's plan.

A new plan of a National bank has been proposed by a M. Cabanis; it is very concise, and in all probability will be adopted. It excludes the Caisse d'Escompte, which will be reimbursed.

A very generous present was sent to the National Assembly by the Nuns of Maubeuge. They are sorry, they say, in the letter that accompanies the gift, that it is not in their power to send any plate (they gave it all to Louis XV) to create the specie; but, to make amends, they offer to the nation an annual income of 147,000 livres (6125l.) The national Assembly received it with demonstrations of gratitude and joy.

There is a scheme of melting the bells of all the churches. They may be of some service.

Since the Members of the National Assembly gave their buckles, no silver ones are to be seen in the streets. It is true, that the apprehension of being stopped by some daring fellows, who, under pretence of serving their country, strip you of whatever visible silver or gold they can find on you, does not a little contribute to render almost every individual generous. I have sent mine, and my sister her gold ear-rings, and thimble to the Mint.

Yesterday, as it was reported, was the day appointed by the Aristocratic party to produce a counter-revolution. All the districts were under arms from midnight till ten o'clock in the morning. Thank God, it was a false alarm; and I do not imagine we shall experience another shock within this year. The national Assembly begins to acquire a consistency, and the provinces in general seem satisfied, and adopt all the articles passed at the National Assembly with seeming satisfaction. His Majesty remains in statu quo, and there is no probability of his hunting this autumn.

The Duke of Bourbon and his son have left Turin.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, Nov. 19.

We have already mentioned the Articles of the Constitution decreed this day.

A Report was read from the Committee of War, the beginning of which deserves to be noticed. "Although it be neither the interest of France, nor the wish of Frenchmen to make conquests, we must nevertheless have an army always on foot, and ready for action, to resist the attacks of powerful and armed neighbours, &c."

To keep up such an army, two methods are proposed. First, Personal service by every Frenchman, without distinction, for four years, at least once in his life; allowing such only as are incapable of personal service to find substitutes. Second, Volunteers willing to serve for pay, to open a field for those whose inclination may lead them to the profession of arms. No man, after serving once, to be ordered out a second time, but by his own consent; and in case of war, bachelors, to take the field before married men.

This report was ordered to be printed. [The business of Friday is related in the former part of this letter.]

Saturday, Nov. 21.

The Canons of St. Genevieve having offered to present their magnificent library to the city of Paris, it was this day proposed to ratify the gift; but the Assembly declined giving any opinion on the subject.

The Baron de Comere, who has long been employed on calculations of finance, presented a plan, which he requested leave to read at the bar. This could not be granted; but the plan was referred to the Committee of Finance, with an instruction to take it into immediate consideration.

Wednesday, Nov. 25.

The following articles of Constitution were decreed:

"The present municipalities of all cities, towns, parishes, or communities, under whatever title or qualification, are suppressed and abolished; and, in the mean time, Magistrates now in office shall continue their functions, till others be appointed in their room.

On a petition from the City of Metz, setting forth that the Liberty, by a new arrest, had acknowledged that liberty and union surrounded the King and National Assembly, and professing their sincere repentance for the error into which report had led them, the Assembly decreed, that the attendance of the Members of that Parliament at the bar should be dispensed with; and the petition from the City in their behalf printed in the minutes.

A discussion took place on the necessity of defining, in clear and precise terms, the crime of treason against the State; but as this will make part of the labours of the Committee of Constitution, the matter was referred to that Committee.

The first part of the pension list, containing twenty four quarto pages, is published. The

plan of the work, is to divide the whole into seven parts; the first to contain, in alphabetical order, the names of all those who enjoy pensions of 20,000 livres and upwards, with the age of the pensioner, the date of the pension, and the reasons for which it was given; the second, from 8,000 livres to 20,000; the third, from 2,400 to 8000; and so on.

The result of the first part, which is said to be very incorrect, is that eighty-six persons share among them annually 2,895,623 livres. Of these ten are Ladies; fifteen superannuated, or discharged Ministers; twenty six persons, whose services were never heard of; five whom the nation would recompence more liberally, and thirty, for whose zeal and talents ten thousand livres would be a liberal reward. The reasons most commonly assigned for granting these pensions are, to make good a pension no longer paid by some foreign Prince, or to reward political services.

Marshal Broglie enjoys four several pensions, making together 70,000 livres.

Thursday, Nov. 26.

The sitting in the morning of this day was remarkable for the extraordinary progress made in the organization of the primary and intermediate Assemblies.

A Deputy from Guadaloupe proposed, in the name of the West India Deputies, to appoint a Committee of planters and merchants to receive and examine all plans of Constitution for the Colonies; to which, he observed, the principles of Constitution for the Continent where not properly applicable. The consideration of this proposition was postponed.

A decree was passed, forbidding all persons holding or exercising public offices to receive any present or gratification of any kind or nature, on pain of being punished as guilty of extortion; and it was ordered to be presented immediately for the Royal sanction.

The consideration of M. Necker's plan for a National Bank was resumed.

The prevailing opinion seemed to be, that the general state of the finances is not yet sufficiently investigated to enable men to judge of the advantages or disadvantages of such a plan.

The Assembly ordered the Committee of Finance, in concert with the first Minister, to draw up a detailed account of the demands that require ninety millions over and above the actual revenue for the year 1790, with an estimate of ways and means for raising that sum; and adjourned the further discussion till Saturday.

The Bishop of Treguier has published a second mandate, in which he retracts all that he said in his former against the revolution and the proceedings of the National Assembly. In consequence of this recantation, the same indulgence has been solicited for him that was granted to the parliament of Rouen and Metz, but hitherto without effect.

Saturday, Nov. 28.

M. Guillotin called the attention of the Assembly to some amendments which he conceived highly necessary to be added to the provisional reform of criminal jurisprudence. These were the same penalties for criminals of all ranks and conditions; the same punishment for all capital offences; a decapitation by a machine constructed for the purpose, instead of an executioner; and the proscution of the absurd prejudice which extends the infamy of a criminal to his family. It was agreed to consider them on Tuesday next.

A report was read from the Committee of Finance, containing the state of the public treasury on the first of November, and an estimate of the probable receipt from that time to the end of the present year, which including the plate carried to the Mint, and the subscriptions to the loan of eighty millions, did not exceed forty millions of livres.

LONDON, Dec. 3.

The affairs of Europe never wore so singular and even whimsical an aspect as at present:

The Head of the House of Austria oppressing the Catholic Church; and the Catholic Church offering the riches of the Sacred Temples at the shrine of Liberty! The Patriots of Holland Refugees in Brabant, and the Patriots of Brabant Refugees in Holland! Prussia the restraint of Dutch, and the hope of Flemish freedom! The great Protestant Alliance of England, Prussia, and Holland, considered as the shield of the most zealous Catholics in the world.

The campaign is now intirely finished in the North. The Swedish fleet is returned to Charls-croon, and the Russian to Revel. The troops too, of both the powers, in Finland, are put into winter quarters.

A very extraordinary circumstance occurred on Wednesday night, at the entrance of Covent-Garden Theatre. A gentleman, who made an unsuccessful attempt to gain admission, was returning home, and on putting his hand into his pocket for his handkerchief, discovered a purse with eight guineas and some silver. This must have happened through the mistake of one of the light fingered gentry, who, in the preffure of the croud, mistook the gentleman's pocket for his own.