language or Roman name was heard of ; and there is no good evidence that it began among ſavages. The word OF, in the Old Teſtament, which in our verſion is rendered s*ervant,* ſignifies literally a sla*ve,* either born in the family or bought with money, in contradiſtinction to שביד, which denotes a hired servant : and as Noah makes uſe of the word עבד in the curſe which he de­nounces upon Ham and Canaan immediately after the deluge, it would appear that ſlavery had its origin be­fore that event. If ſo, there can be little doubt but that it began among thoſe violent perſons whom our tranſlators have called *giants* @@\*, though the original word כפלים literally ſignifies *aſſaulters of others.* Thoſe wretches ſeem firſt to have ſeized upon women, whom they forcibly compelled to miniſter to their pleaſures ; and from this kind of violence the progreſs was natural to that by which they enſlaved their weaker brethren among the men, obliging them to labour for their bene­fit, without allowing them fee or reward.

After the deluge the firſt dealer in ſlaves ſeems to have been Nimrod. “ He began,” we are told, “ to be a mighty one in the earth, and was a mighty hunter, before the Lord.” He could not, however, be the firſt hunter of wild beaſts ; for that ſpecies of hunt­ing must have been practiſed from the beginning ; nor is it probable that his dexterity in the chase, which was then the univerſal employment, could have been ſo far ſuperior to that of all his contemporaries, as to en­title him to the appellation of the “ the mighty hunter before the Lord.” Hence most commentators have concluded, that he was a hunter of men ; an opinion which they think receives ſome countenance from the import of his name, the word *Nimrod* ſignifying a re­bel. Whatever be in this, there can belittle doubt but that he became a mighty one by violence ; for being the ſixth ſon of his father, and apparently much young­er than the other five, it is not likely that his inheri­tance exceeded theirs either in extent or in population. He enlarged it, however, by conqueſt ; for it appears from Scripture, that he invaded the territories of Aſhur the ſon of Shem, who had ſettled in Shinar ; and obli­ging him to remove into Aſſyria, he ſeized upon Ba­bylon, and made it the capital of the firſt kingdom in the world. As he had great projects in view, it ſeems to be in a high degree probable that he made bond- ſervants of the captives whom he took in his wars, and employed them in building or repairing the metropolis of his kingdom ; and hence we think is to be dated the origin of poſtdeluvian ſlavery.

That it began thus early can hardly be queſtioned ; for we know that it prevailed univerſally in the age of Abraham, who was born within ſeventy years after the death of Nimrod. That patriarch had three hundred and eighteen ſervants or ſlaves, born in his own houſe, and trained to arms, with whom he purified and con­quered the four kings who had taken captive his bro­ther’s ſon @@\*. And it appears from the conversation

which took place between him and the king of Sodom after the battle, that both believed the conqueror had a right to conſider his priſoners as part of his ſpoil. “ Give me (ſays the king) the *ρersons,* and take the *goods* to thyſelf.” It is indeed evident from numberleſs paſſages of ſcripture, that the domeſtics whom our tranſlators call s*ervants* were in thoſe days univerſally conſidered as the moſt valuable part of their maſter’s property, and claſſed with his flocks and herds. Thus when the ſacred hiſtorian deſcribes the wealth of Abra­ham, he ſays, that “ he had sheep and oxen, and he-aſſes, and men-ſervants, and maid-ſervants, and ſhe-aſſes, and camels.” And when Abimelech wiſhed to make ſome reparation to the patriarch for the unintended injury that he had done him, “ he took ſheep and oxen, and men-ſervants, and women-ſervants, and gave them unto Abraham, and reſtored to him Sarah his wife.” The riches and power of Iſaac and Jacob are eſtimated in the very ſame manner. Of the former it is ſaid, that “ the man waxed great, and went forward and grew, until he became very great : for he had poſſeſſion of flocks, and poſſeſſion of herds, and great ſtore of ſer­vants, וצבדה of ſlaves ; and the Philiſtines envied him.” The latter, we are told, “ increaſed exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-ſervants, and men-ſervants, and camels, and aſſes @@\*.”

That the practice of buying and selling ſervants thus early begun among the patriarchs deſcended to their poſterity, is known to every attentive reader of the Bible. It was expreſsly authoriſed by the Jewiſh law, in which are many directions how ſuch ſervants were to be treated. They were to be bought only of the hea­then ; for if an Israelite grew poor and fold himſelf ei­ther to diſcharge a debt, or to procure the means of ſubſiſtence, he was to be treated not as a ſlave צבד but as a hired servant and reſtored to freedom at the year of Jubilee. “ Both thy bond men and thy bond­maids (ſays Moſes) ſhall be of the heathen that are round about you : of them ſhall ye buy bond men and bond-maids. And ye ſhall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a poſ­ſeſſion ; they ſhall be your bond-men for ever @@\*.” Un­limited as the power thus given to the Hebrews over their bond-servants of heathen extraction appears to have been, they were ſtrictly prohibited from acquiring ſuch property by any other means than fair purchaſe : “ he that stea*leth* a man and ſelleth him,” ſaid their great lawgiver, “ ſhall ſurely be put to death

Whilſt ſlavery, in a mild form, was permitted among the people of God, a much worſe kind of it prevailed among the heathen nations of antiquity. With other abominable cuſtoms, the traffic in men quickly ſpread from Chaldea into Egypt, Arabia, and over all the eaſt, and by degrees found its way into every known region under heaven @@(d).

Of this hateful commerce we ſhall not attempt to trace the progress thro’ every age and country, but ſhall con-

@@@[m]\* Gen. vi. 4.

@@@[m]\* Gen. xii. 16. xx. 14. xxiv. 35. xxvi. 13, 14. xxx. 43.

@@@[m]\* Lev. xxv. 39, 40, 44, 46.

@@@[m]\* Lev. xxi. 16.

@@@(d) If credit be due to a late account of China, the people of that vaſt empire have never made merchandiſe of men or women. The exception, however, is ſo ſingular, that we ſhould be glad to ſee it better authenticated ; for it is apparent from works of the moſt undoubted credit, that over all the other eaſtern countries with which we are acquainted ſlavery has prevailed from time immemorial, and that ſome of the Indian nations make long journeys into Africa for the ſole purpoſe of buying ſlaves.