the more powerful and enlightened nation have a right to carry off by force, or entice by fraud, the subjects oſ a weaker and more barbarous community for the pur­poſe of reducing them to a ſtate of ſervitude. This is a truth ſo obvious as to admit neither of proof nor of denial.

In thus ſtating the caſe between two independent na­tions, we have in our eye that traffic in ſlaves which is carried on between the civilized Europeans and the bar­barous Africans: and the utmoſt length which we think an apologiſt for that trade can go is to contend, that we may lawfully purchaſe ſlaves in thoſe countries where from time immemorial they have been a common branch of commerce. But the European right to purchaſe cannot be better than the African right to ſell ; and we have never yet been informed what gives one Afri­can a right to sell another. Such a right cannot be na­tural, for the reaſon which we have elſewhere aſſigned (ſee Right) : neither can it be adventitious ; for ad­ventitious rights are immediately derived from the mu­nicipal law, which is the public will of the ſtate. But the ſtate has no authority to deprive an innocent man of his perſonal freedom, or of the produce, of his own labour ; for it is only to ſecure theſe, by protecting the weak from the violence of the ſtrong, that ſtates are formed, and individuals united under civil govern­ment.

It may perhaps be ſaid, that by patiently ſuhmitting to governments which authoriſe the traffic in human fleſh, men virtually give up their perſonal liberty, and veſt their governors with a right to ſell them as ſlaves : but no man can veſt another with a right which he poſſeſſes not himſelf ; and we ſhall not heſitate to af­firm, that in a ſtate of nature, where all have equal rights, no individual can ſubmit himſelf to the abſolute diſpoſal of another without being guilty of the greateſt crime. The reaſon is obvious. From the relation in which men ſtand to one another as fellow-creatures, and to God as their common Creator, there are duties in­cumbent upon each peculiar to himſelf; in the perform­ance of which he can be guided only by his own rea­ſon, which was given him for that very purpoſe. But he who renounces his perſonal freedom, and ſubmits un­conditionally to the caprice of a maſter, impiouſly at­tempts to ſet himſelf free from the obligation of that law which is interwoven with his very being, and chooſes a director of his conduct different from that which God has aſſigned him. A man therefore cannot put him­ſelf in a ſtate of unconditional ſervitude ; and what he cannot do for himſelf, he ſurely cannot authorize others to do for him either by a tacit or by an open conſent.

Theſe conſiderations have often made us regret that writers, for whoſe talents and integrity we have the higheſt reſpect, ſhould, without accurately defining what they mean by flavery, have peremptorily affirmed, that, conſiſtently with the law of nature men may be redu­ced to that ſtate as a puniſhment for crimes, or to diſcharge debts which they cannot otherwiſe pay. That a criminal, who has forfeited his life to the laws of his country, may have his puniſhment commuted for hard labour, till death in the courſe of nature shall put a pe­riod to his terreſtrial exiſtence, is a truth which we ap­prehend cannot be controverted ; but to make ſuch a commutation of puniſhments conſiſtent with the laws of nature and of nature’s God, it appears to us that the

kind and degree of labour muſt be preciſely aſcertained, and the conduct of the criminal not left to the capricious direction of any individual.

Puniſhments can be juſtly inflicted only for one or other of two ends, or for both. They may be calcula­ted either to reform the criminal or to be a warning to the innocent ; and thoſe which moſt effectually anſwer both theſe purpoſes are ſurely to be preferred to ſuch as anſwer but one of them. For this reason we conſi­der hard labour as a much fitter puniſhment for moſt crimes than death : but to intitle it to preference, the kind and degree of the labour muſt be aſcertained by the law ; for if theſe circumſtances be omitted, and the of­fender delivered over as a ſlave to the abſolute diſpoſal and caprice of a private maſter, the labour to which he is condemned, inſtead of operating to his reformation, may be converted into the means of tempting him to the commiſſion of new crimes. A young woman, in the ſtate of ſervitude, would hardly be able to maintain her virtue againſt the ſolicitations of a maſter who ſhould promiſe her liberty or a remiſſion of toil upon her yield­ing to his delires ; and the felon, who had long been accuſtomed to a life of vagrancy and idleneſs, would not ſtrenuouſly object to the perpetration of any wickedneſs to obtain his freedom, or even a diminution of his daily task. Indeed ſuch temptations might be thrown in his way, as human nature could not reſiſt but by means of much better principles than felons can be ſuppoſed to posseſs. He might be ſcourged into compliance ; or his labour might be ſo increaſed as to make him for a little respite eagerly embrace the moſt nefarious propoſal which his maſter could make : for being abſolute property, there is no earthly tribunal to which he could appeal for juſtice ; and felons do not commonly ſupport themſelves under trials by pious meditation on a future ſtate.

By reaſoning in this way, we are far from meaning to insinuate that ſlave-holders in general torture their ſlaves into the commiſſion of crimes God forbid ! Many of them we know to be religious, humane, and benevolent : but they are not infallible ; and ſome of them may be inſtigated, ſome of them undoubtedly have been inſtigated, by avarice and other worſe principles, to compel creatures, who are ſo abſolutely their dependents, to ex­ecute deeds of darkneſs too hazardous for themſelves. But the morality or immorality of any action, and the moral fitneſs of any ſtate, are to be judged of by their natural tendency, if the one were univerſally practiſed and the other univerſally prevalent (ſee Moral Philo­sophy, n⁰ 156.) : and as the natural tendency of abſo­lute domeſtic slavery among such creatures as men is to throw the moſt powerful temptations to vice in the way both of maſter and of ſlave, it muſt be in every inſtance, even when employed as a puniſhment, inconſiſtent with the fundamental principles of moral virtue.

Some writers indeed have maintained, and the civil law ſeems to ſuppoſe, that children are the property of their parents, and may by them be ſold as ſlaves in caſes of urgent neceſſity : but if we duly conſider how pro­perty is acquired (ſee Property), and attend to the natural conſequences of slavery, we ſhall ſoon be con­vinced that this opinion is very ill founded. The rights of parents reſult ſrom their duties ; and it is certainly the duty of that man who has been the inſtrument of bringing into the world an intellectual and moral being.