Isabella directed that these Indians should be sent back to their native country, and that a policy of conciliation should be followed there instead of one of severity.

Bartolomé de las Casas, the celebrated bishop of Chiapa, accompanied Ovando to Hispaniola, and was a witness of the cruelties from which the Indians suffered under his administration. He came to Spain in 1517 to obtain measures in their favour, and he then made the suggestion to Charles that each Spanish resident in Hispaniola should have licence to import a dozen negro slaves. Las Casas, in his *Historia de las Indias* (lib. iii. cap. 101), frankly confesses the grave error into which he thus fell. “ This advice that licence should be given to bring negro slaves to these lands the clerigo Casas first gave, not consider­ing the injustice with which the Portuguese take them and make them slaves ; which advice, after he had appre­hended the nature of the thing, he would not have given for all he had in the world.” Other good men appear to have given similar advice about the same time, and, as has been shown, the practice was not absolutely new ; indeed the young king had in 1516, whilst still in Flanders, granted licences to his courtiers for the importation of negroes into the colonies, though Ximenes, as regent of Castile, by a decree of the same year forbade the practice. The suggestion of Las Casas was no doubt made on the ground that the negroes could, better than the Indians, bear the labour in the mines, which was rapidly exhaust­ing the numbers of the latter.@@1 He has sometimes on this plea been exonerated from all censure ; but, as we have seen, he did not exculpate himself ; and, though entitled to honour for the zeal and perseverance which he showed on behalf of the natives of the New World, he must in justice bear the blame due from posterity for his violation or neglect of moral principle. His advice was unfortunately adopted. “Charles,” says Robertson, “ granted a patent to one of his Flemish favourites, con­taining an exclusive right” of supplying 4000 negroes annually to Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico. “The favourite sold his patent to some Genoese mer­chants for 25,000 ducats”; these merchants obtained the slaves from the Portuguese ; and thus was first brought into a systematic form that odious “ commerce between Africa and America which has since been carried on to such an amazing extent,” the action of the Spaniards being “ imitated by all the nations of Europe who have acquired territories in the warmer climates of the New World.”

The first Englishman who engaged in the hateful traffic was Captain John Hawkins (*q.v.).* The English slave traders were at first altogether occupied in supplying the Spanish settlements. Indeed the reign of Elizabeth passed without any English colony having been permanently established in America. But in 1620 a Dutch ship from the coast of Guinea visited Jamestown in Virginia, and sold a part of her cargo of negroes to the tobacco- planters. This was the first beginning of slavery in British America ; the number of negroes was afterwards continually increased— though apparently at first slowly—by importation, and the field- labour was more and more performed by servile hands, so that in 1790 the State of Virginia, which is only a small part of the original colony so named, contained 200,000 negroes.

The African trade of England was long in the hands of exclusive companies ; but by an Act of the first year of William and Mary it became free and open to all subjects of the crown. The African Company, however, continued to exist, and obtained from time to time large parliamentary grants. By the treaty of Utrecht the asiento,@@2 or contract for supplying the Spanish colonies with 4800

negroes annually, which had previously passed from the Dutch to the French, was transferred to Great Britain ; an English company was to enjoy the monopoly for a period of thirty years from 1st May 1713. But the contract came to an end in 1739, when the complaints of the English merchants on one side and of the Spanish officials on the other rose to such a height that Philip V. declared his determination to revoke the asiento, and Sir Robert Walpole was forced by popular feeling into war with Spain. Between 1680 and 1700 about 140,000 negroes were exported by the African Company, and 160,000 more by private adventurers, making a total of 300,000. Between 1700 and the end of 1786 as many as 610,000 were transported to Jamaica alone, which had been an English possession since 1655. Bryan Edwards estimated the total import into all the British colonies of America and the West Indies from 1680 to 1786 at 2,130,000, being an annual average of 20,095. But this, he admits, is much less than was in his time commonly supposed. The British slave trade reached its utmost extension shortly before the War of American Independence. It was then carried on principally from Liverpool, but also from London, Bristol, and Lancaster ; the entire number of slave ships sailing from those ports was 192, and in them space was provided for the transport of 47,146 negroes. During the war the number decreased, but on its termination the trade immediately revived. When Edwards wrote (1791), the number of European factories on the coasts of Africa was 40 ; of these 14 were English, 3 French, 15 Dutch, 4 Portuguese, and 4 Danish. As correct a notion as can be obtained of the numbers annually exported from the continent about the year 1790 by traders of the several European countries engaged in the traffic is supplied by the following statement :— “ By the British, 38,000 ; by the French, 20,000 ; by the Dutch, 4000; by the Danes, 2000; by the Portuguese, 10,000; total 74,000.” Thus more than half the trade was in British hands. “ At present, ” said Robertson, writing in 1791, “the number of negro slaves in the settlements of Great Britain and France in the West Indies exceeds a million ; and, as the establishment of servitude has been found, both in ancient and modern times, extremely unfavourable to population, it requires an annual im­portation of at least 58,000 to keep up the stock.” The slaves in the Spanish dominions and in North America, he thought, probably amounted to an additional million.

The hunting and stealing of human beings to make them slaves, which were already practised in Africa for the supply of the central states of that continent,· as well as of the markets of northern Africa, Turkey, and other Mohammedan countries, were greatly aggravated by the demand of the European colonies. The native chiefs engaged in forays, sometimes even on their own subjects, for the purpose of procuring slaves to be exchanged for Western com­modities. They often set fire to a village by night and captured the inhabitants when trying to escape. Thus all that was shock­ing in the barbarism of Africa was multiplied and intensified by this foreign stimulation. To the miseries thus produced, and to those suffered by the captives in their removal to the coast were added the horrors of the middle passage. Exclusive of the slaves who died before they sailed from Africa, 121/2 per cent. were lost during their passage to the West Indies ; at Jamaica 41/2 per cent. died whilst in the harbours or before the sale, and one-third more in the “seasoning.” Thus, out of every lot of 100 shipped from Africa 17 died in about 9 weeks, and not more than 50 lived to be effective labourers in the islands. The circumstances of their subsequent life on the plantations were not favourable to the in­crease of their numbers. In Jamaica there were in 1690 40,000; from that year till 1820 there were imported 800,000; yet at the latter date there were only 340,000 in the island. One cause which prevented the natural increase of population was the in­equality in the numbers of the sexes ; in Jamaica alone there was in 1789 an excess of 30,000 males.

It may be truly said that from the latter part of the 17th century, when the nature of the slave trade began to be understood by the public, all that was best in England was adverse to it. Among those who denounced it— besides some whose names are now little known, but are recorded with the honour they deserve in the pages of Clarkson—-were Baxter, Sir Richard Steele (in *Inkle and Yarico),* the poets Southern (in *Oroonoko),* Pope, Thomson, Shenstone, Dyer, Savage, and above all Cowper (see his *Charity,* and *Task,* bk. 2), Thomas Day (author of *Sand­ford and Merton),* Sterne, Warburton, Hutcheson, Beattie, John Wesley, Whitfield, Adam Smith, Millar, Robertson, Dr Johnson, Paley, Gregory, Gilbert Wakefield, Bishop Porteus, Dean Tucker. The question of the legal exist­ence of slavery in Great Britain and Ireland was raised in consequence of an opinion given in 1729 by York and Talbot, attorney-general and solicitor-general at the time,

@@@1 The Spaniards, in the space of fifteen years subsequent to the discovery of the West Indies, had, as Robertson mentions, reduced the natives of Hispaniola from a million to 60,000.

@@@2 The Spaniards were prevented from forming establishments on the African coast by the Bull of Demarcation (“Inter cætera”) of Pope Alexander VI. (1493), which forbade their acquiring territory to the east of the meridian line of 100 miles west of the Azores. They could therefore supply their American possessions with slaves only by contracts with other powers.