of scripture, that the domestics whom our translators call servants, were in those days universally considered as the most valuable part of their master’s property, and classed with his flocks and herds.

That the practice of buying and selling servants thus early begun amongst the patriarchs descended to their posterity, is known to every attentive reader of the Bible. It was ex- pressly 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 sold himself either to discharge a debt, or to procure the means of subsistence, he was to be treated not as a slave צבר, but as a hired servant שביו, and restored to freedom at the year of Jubilee. Unlimited as the power thus given to the Hebrews over their bond-servants of hea- then extraction appears to have been, they were strictly pro- hibited from acquiring such property by any other means than fair purchase. “ He that stealeth a man and selleth him,” said their great lawgiver, “ shall surely be put to death.”@@1

Whilst slavery, in a mild form, was permitted amongst the people of God, a much worse kind of it prevailed amongst 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.

Of this hateful commerce we shall not attempt to trace the progress through every age and country, but shall content ourselves with taking a transient view of it amongst the Greeks and Romans, and a few other nations, in whose customs and manners our readers must be interested.

One can hardly read a book of the Iliad or Odyssey, without perceiving that, in the age of Homer, all prisoners of war were liable to be treated as slaves. So universally was this cruel treatment of captives admitted to be the right of the conqueror, that the poet introduces Hector, in the very act of taking a tender and perhaps last farewell of his wife, when it was surely his business to afford her every consolation in his power, telling her, as a thing of course which could not be concealed, that, on the conquest of Troy, she would be compelled

**To bear the victor's bard commands, or bring The weight of water from Hyperia's spring..**

At that early period, the Phoenicians, and probably the Greeks themselves, had such an established commerce in slaves, that, not satisfied with reducing to bondage their prisoners of war, they scrupled not, for supplying their foreign markets, to kidnap persons who had never kindled their resentment. In the fourteenth book of the Odyssey, Ulysses represents himself as having narrowly escaped a snare of this kind laid for him by a false Phoenician, who had doomed the hero to Lybian slavery; and as the whole narrative, in which this circumstance is told, is an artful fiction, intended to have the appearance of truth to an Ithacan pea- sant, the practice of kidnapping slaves could not then have appeared incredible to any inhabitant of that island.

Such were the manners of the Greeks in the heroic age; nor were they much improved in this respect at periods of greater refinement. Philip of Macedonia, having conquered the Thebans, not only sold his captives, but even took mo- ney for permitting the dead to be buried;@@2 and Alexander, who had more generosity than his father, afterwards razed the city of Thebes, and sold the inhabitants, men, women, and children, for slaves.@@5 This cruel treatment of a brave people may indeed be supposed to have proceeded, in the first instance, from the avarice of the conqueror; and in the se- cond, from the momentary resentment of a man who was savage and generous by turns, and who had no command of his passions. Weshall not positively assign it to other causes;

but from the manner in which the Spartans behaved to their slaves, there is little reason to imagine that, had they rcceived from the Thebans the same provocation with Alexander, they would have treated their captives with greater lenity.

It has been said, that in Athens and Rome slaves were better treated than in Sparta. But in the former city their treatment cannot have been good, or their lives comfortable, when the Athenians relished that tragedy of Euripides in which Hecuba, the wife of Priam, is introduced as lament- ing that she was chained like a dog at Agamemnon’s gate. Of the estimation in which slaves were held in Rome, we may form a tolerable notion from the well-known fact, that one of those unhappy beings was often chained at the gate of a great man’s house, to give admittance to the guests in- vited to a feast. In the early periods of the commonwealth it was customary, in certain sacred shows exhibited on solemn occasions, to drag through the circus a slave, who had been scourged to death, holding in his hand a fork in the form of a gibbet.@@4 But we need not multiply proofs of the cruelty of the Romans to their slaves. If the inhuman combats of the gladiators admit of any apology on account of the martial spirit with which they were thought to inspire the spectators, the conduct of Vedius Pollio must have proceeded from the most wanton and brutal cruelty. This man, who flourished not in the earliest periods of the republic, when the Romans were little better than a savage banditti, but in the polished age of Augustus, frequently threw such slaves as gave him the slightest offence into his fishponds to fatten his lampreys; and yet he was suffered to die in peace. The emperor, indeed, upon coming to the knowledge of his cruelty, ordered his lampreys to be destroyed, and his ponds to be filled up; but we do not recollect that any other punishment was inflicted on the savage master.

The origin of slavery in Rome was the same as in every other country. Prisoners of war were of course reduced to that state, as if they had been criminals. The dictator Camillus, one of the most accomplished generals of the republic, sold his Etrurian captives to pay the Roman ladies for the jewels which they had presented to Apollo. Fabius, whose cautious conduct saved his country when Hannibal was victorious in Italy, having subdued Tarentum, reduced thirty thousand of the citizens to slavery, and sold them to the highest bidder. Coriolanus, when driven from Rome, and fighting for the Volsci, scrupled not to make slaves of his own countrymen ; and Julius Cæsar, among whose faults wanton cruelty has never been reckoned, sold at one time fifty-three thousand captives for slaves. Nor did the slaves in Rome consist only of foreigners taken in war. By one of the laws of the twelve tables, creditors were empowered to seize their insolvent debtors, and keep them in their houses till, by their services or labour, they had discharged the sum they owed. The children of slaves were the property not of the commonwealth, or of their own parents, but of their roasters ; and thus was slavery perpetuated in the families of such unhappy men as fell into that state, whether through the chance of war or the cruelty of a sor- did creditor. The consequence was, that the number of bondmen belonging to the rich patricians was almost incredible. Cains Cæcilius Isidorus, who died about seven years before the Christian era, left to his heirs lour thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves; and Augustus once put twenty thousand of his own slaves on board the corn ships.

Though many laws were enacted by Augustus and other patriotic emperors to diminish the power of creditors over their insolvent debtors ; though the influence of the mild spirit of Christianity tended much to meliorate the condi- tion of slaves even under Pagan masters ; and though the emperor Hadrian made it capital to kill a slave without a just reason, yet this infamous commerce prevailed univers-

@@@1 Lev. xxi. 16

@@@2 Justin, lib. iii. cap. 4.

@@@3 Justin et Arrian.

@@@4 Cicero de Div. lib. i. cap. 26.