it, the inhabitants were as regularly purchased for slaves by some of the adjoining states, as they were afterwards by the maritime Europeans. ,

Without prosecuting farther the history of slavery, we pass to the consideration of its present state in the world, and, in particular, the revolutions which have taken place in that worst department of the system which we have been last occupied in examining.

Before describing the altered position now held by negro slavery, it must be remarked that the slavery of white men is by no means yet extinct. Details on this subject will be found in the articles devoted to those countries in which, under various modifications, bondage still prevails; and here a sentence or two must suffice for summing up the result. The nature of that slavery which still prevails among most Asiatic nations, modified in the Mohammedan states by some precepts of their religion, but nowhere en­tirely extirpated, is familiarly known to most readers, and information regarding it is sufficiently easy of access. The branch of it in which Europeans are most nearly interested, is that atrocious system of piracy which, carried on for cen­turies by Algiers and the other Barbary states, filled the cities of Northern Africa with Christian prisoners, but has in the present generation been nearly destroyed by the ex­ertions of our own government, aided by the subsequent expeditions of the French. But the snake is scotched only, not killed ; and European captives are still said to pine in Morocco, Tunis, and Tripoli. In a preceding para­graph we have considered the villeinage of the dark and middle ages as being a species of slavery. There is no sound reason for regarding it in any other light ; and, however far the serf’s condition may be superior to that of the slave who belonged to a Roman patrician or a West In­dian planter, his servitude is still so utterly repugnant both to humanity and religion, as to make us ashamed of the fact that, in a shape not much improved, it exists still in Christian provinces of northern Europe. The article Russia has described the status of the boors or unfree peasants in that empire ; and in more than one kingdom bordering on it, villeinage has never been completely abo­lished till our own times.

But slavery in its most horrible shape, long averted by the spirit of Christianity from those whom Christians were compelled to consider as their fellow-men, has, in regard to the unfortunate people of Africa, been maintained with unrelenting severity by men and nations professing to be disciples of the gospel. The present age has seen the truth mightily triumph in reference to this dark blot of the civilized world ; but the evil is not yet entirely eradicated, even where its atrocities have been most decisively con­demned ; and in several extensive regions of the globe, no acknowledgment of error has yet been extorted.

Slavery is still lawful over a large part of the American continent. It extends throughout the empire of Brazil, and is general in the southern provinces of the United States. On the declaration of independence, however, seven of the thirteen British provinces which then formed the confede­ration, abolished slavery absolutely ; and the example was followed by two or three of the rest, as well as by several of those afterwards added to the Union. On the whole, in­cluding the remnants of bondage in some of the Spanish republics, it has been calculated that the continent of Ame­rica now contains 4,000,000 of black and coloured slaves. Of these the United States possess about 2,000,000, making about a sixth part of their whole population ; but, as the slaves are unequally distributed, they amount in several pro­vinces to half the number of the free whites, and in some places make up a much larger proportion. The French and Spanish colonics in the West Indies, in which likewise slavery remains unabolished, have a slave population amounting to at least 400,000 souls.

For the British colonies, the exertions of benevolent and enlightened men during the last fifty years, have at length effected a mighty change, the history of which can here be but too briefly told.

1. The Slave Trade. If the merit of originating the great scheme of abolition is to be shared by every one who, either through word or writing, has expressed convictions of the inhuman injustice involved in the slave-trade, or sug­gested means for its destruction, our list of emancipation­ists would both be long, and would commence at an early date. But the honour of having planned that systematic co-operation, which alone could effect the end, does clear­ly belong to the Society of Friends ; and in the series of efforts by which that religious body heralded the exertions of our eminent statesmen, the leading part was acted by An­thony Benezet, a French protestant, who, educated in Eng­land, became a Quaker and a citizen of Philadelphia ; and to William Dillwyn, an American, and a member of the same sect. The former, besides unwearied personal exer­tions, published, in 1762, the work which first attracted in this country general notice to the slave-trade ; the other, visiting England in 1774, opened communications between the American philanthropists and those of our own coun­trymen who had already engaged in the same cause Among these latter, the foremost place belongs to the ho­noured name of Granville Sharp.

This able and excellent man had been induced to interest himself in a class of questions, which arose about the middle of the eighteenth century. West Indian planters, after having brought negro slaves to England, were accustomed to carry them back to the colonies, or even to sell them to others for that destination ; and the opinion of eminent lawyers had sanctioned the practice as legal. Instances of crying hardship aroused the sympathy of individuals: Granville Sharp rescued several victims ; and, in the year 1772, he obtained a decision of the English judges in the famous case of the negro Somerset, that, as soon as a slave sets his foot on English ground, he becomes free.@@1

At length, in May 1787, there was instituted in London a Society for the Suppression of the Slave Tradc. Besides Dillwyn and Sharp, its most distinguished member was Thomas Clarkson, a young graduate of Cambridge, who, led to study the subject as the theme of an academical es­say, had solemnly devoted his life to the cause of negro emancipation. But the Society immediately numbered among its supporters several men of rank and influence ; and, among other converts, its founders had gained, even before their organization, William Wilberforce, then mem­ber of Parliament for Hull, and afterwards for Yorkshire.

Although our own days have witnessed a sharp contest in the last stages of those measures, it is not very easy for us to conceive the magnitude of the obstacles which then opposed themselves, even to the most cautious approach towards the subject. Fear of exposure felt by individuals who knew themselves guilty of malpractices, was aided by fear of pecuniary ruin, felt by many who had no other reason for dreading in­quiry ; and, among the public men of the nation, the corrupt influence of private interests biassed many, while others were influenced by more honest fears for the effects which change might have on the prosperity of the colonies. The Society determined, from the first, to keep the question of slave emancipation studiously in the background. They pro­claimed their aim to be, simply, the abolition of the trade in slaves ; maintaining, and endeavouring to convince the public, that the slave population of the colonies could be

@@@1 It must be noticed, however, that, a very few years ago, it was decided by Lord Stowell, that slaves who bad gained freedom in this way did, on their return to the colonies, become slaves anew.