

**ABRIDGMENT OF SIR T.
FOWELL BUXTON'S WORK
ENTITLED "THE AFRICAN SLAVE
TRADE AND ITS REMEDY"**

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Abridgment of Sir T. Fowell Buxton's Work Entitled "The African Slave Trade and Its Remedy"
by Thomas Fowell Buxton

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THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON

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OF

SIR T. FOWELL BUXTON'S WORK

ENTITLED

“THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE
AND ITS REMEDY.”

WITH AN

EXPLANATORY PREFACE AND AN APPENDIX.

PUBLISHED UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE “SOCIETY FOR THE EXTINCTION OF THE
SLAVE TRADE AND FOR THE CIVILIZATION OF AFRICA.”

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P R E F A C E .

THIS Abridgment is by no means intended to supersede the reading of the deeply interesting volume of which it pretends to give only an imperfect outline ; and still less to assume the critic's office towards a performance which, by general admission, has laid the philanthropic public under great and lasting obligations.

Its circulation at the present moment has been chiefly designed to economize the time and the expense of a numerous class of inquirers into the wrongs of Africa, and to prepare the minds of others for a season of approaching leisure, which may enable them to give to the whole subject a more attentive consideration.

The introductory chapter to a mere compendium must obviously be confined to a few remarks, calculated to bring into hasty review the author's leading discoveries, his principles, and his plan ; and to notice the progress they have already made in public opinion.

Sir Fowell Buxton's first object was to prove, by the present appalling extent of the Slave Trade, the deplorable failure of all preceding methods of extinguishing it, and next to establish the true remedy.

This remedy may be stated in a single sentence, and almost in his own words,—“ We must elevate the minds of the people of Africa, and call forth the capabilities of her soil.”

To the establishment of this theory all the resources of his mind have been directed ; and upon its correctness, the entire success of his plan depends. In the execution of the first part of his laborious duty, Sir Fowell Buxton conducts the reader through all the several stages of the dreadful traffic till he reaches its fatal close—and noting down the several items of the sad account, he at length reports the astounding total.

It is unspeakably painful and humiliating to learn, that after a lapse of more than thirty years of effort, an expenditure of more than fifteen millions of money, and a melancholy consumption of British life, sacrificed in vain attempts to abolish the trade by compulsory means, it has notwithstanding actually doubled within that period ; it still rages with increasing fury ; and the sufferings of its victims have been aggravated by the means employed for its prevention. For, whereas in the year 1808 the computation of negroes annually exported to America amounted to only 70,000, and even of this number only

25,000 were devoted to the countries at present engaged in the trade, it is now computed that 120,000 are annually transported to that continent; 50,000 are annually reduced to Mahomedan slavery; 300,000 more annually perish; and the entire annual loss to Africa amounts to 500,000 persons.

As the inevitable effect of such outrage and desolation, it may readily be conceived that Africa, though inexhaustibly rich in the resources of her soil, and, despite her losses, still teeming with inhabitants,—intensely desirous of obtaining European commodities and instruction—yet remains an uncultivated desert, degraded by superstition, and deluged in blood.

All these facts, Sir Powell Buxton has established by a plenitude of proof which admits of no material refutation. But the great problem was as yet unsolved. He had yet to discover a cure for these ever recurring and still increasing enormities, which should be simple and unexceptionable in principle, sure in its operation, and adapted not only to the purpose of putting down the Slave Trade, but likewise in good measure of repairing the evils it has occasioned.

In order to this, it was necessary to ascertain wherein its hidden vitality consisted,—the subtle element which thus sets all divine and human laws at defiance.

That secret he has detected in the enormous profit of the trade: a profit amounting to 180 per cent.; and absolutely incapable of being reduced below the level of successful smuggling!

This discovery at once suggested his own peculiar remedy; a remedy which neither underrates the intrinsic force of truth, even upon the most callous of mortals, the slave-dealers, nor rejects the collateral aid of a preventive policy, even though fruitless when employed alone; but which, while availing itself of both these, aims more especially at converting the grand incentive to the accursed traffic—the desire of gain—into one of the chief instruments for its destruction.

If the deluded Africans (the least guilty party) could once be brought generally to perceive that their own true interest, not less than their bounden duty, prohibits the Slave Trade;—that this traffic is not only an enormous crime, but also to them an incalculable loss;—that the labourer at home is worth more to his country than the same person would be as an exported slave;—that the profits of free industry and innocent commerce would, in their case, immeasurably exceed the gains of the Slave Trade; and, that the latter is, and always must be, to them an insuperable barrier against the successful prosecution of the former, then the result would be both speedy and certain. The slave traffic would be for ever abolished in Africa, by Africans themselves, acting under the united influence of Christian principle and enlightened self-love.

Sir Fowell Buxton has laboured successfully to prove that such a result is attainable; he cites many instances of chiefs and nations thoroughly impressed with the impolicy and misery of the Slave Trade, and earnestly desirous to exchange it for the advantages of British alliance and commerce; and he thence deduces a strong presumption that the same salutary conviction might, by the use of appropriate means, become permanent and universal.

This field he now selects for renewed efforts of British philanthropy. His plan is to elevate the native mind by aiding the general diffusion of religious truth; to subvert the Slave Trade by disclosing the wonders of the native soil; by promoting agriculture; and by encouraging legitimate commerce; to cherish free industry and trade by all the appliances of British capital, skill, and example; and to throw over the nascent civilization and prosperity of Africa, the ample shield of British protection.

Such are the principal means he now suggests for raising a continent from its ruins, and redeeming from thralldom a tenth part of the whole family of mankind.

In all this, it may be repeated, there is nothing opposed to past experience, nor above the range of human probabilities. Providence, too, appears at the present epoch to have prepared peculiar facilities for its accomplishment. Peace prevails almost universally; a highway is now opened through the Niger into the interior of Africa; the power of steam overcomes all difficulties of navigation; and a race of emancipated negroes is rising up in our West India colonies, and else where, to become the messengers of peace and freedom to their fatherland.

But benevolence, in this instance, is but one among the many motives to such a project. Our own interests as a nation are deeply involved in its success. The proposal is not now, either to found empires or to plunder them, but to make the countless myriads of Africa the growers of whatever articles of raw produce we chiefly need, and the consumers, in return, of whatever manufactures their own social advancement may most require. It is surely needless to dwell upon the obvious advantages of this reciprocity. But a momentary allusion to the most important article—cotton, the grand desideratum of British enterprise, and the future hope of Africa—will instantly disclose the intimate connexion existing in this case between the interests of humanity and of commerce.

One plausible objection, and one only, has been urged against Sir Fowell Buxton's plan, namely, its possible tendency to aggravate and perpetuate slavery. Domestic slavery in Africa, unhappily, is not a mere concomitant of the Slave Trade, but an institution prevailing

throughout that vast continent from time immemorial. It is argued that the impulsa now proposed to be given to the cultivation of the soil will necessarily increase the value of human labour, and consequently add to the severity and permanence of the servile condition. But it seems to be overlooked that the same hazard, in a greater or less degree, must necessarily attend the downfall of the Slave Trade in Africa by whatever means it be effected; unless, indeed, it were designed to exclude her future industry from the marts of the civilized world. All that can be done in such a case, therefore, is to employ the best counteractives against so great a calamity. And surely, that plan which endeavours to extinguish the Slave Trade by actively promoting the diffusion of religious truth, and by throwing the whole weight of its example and influence among the natives into the scale of free labour, is least of all methods chargeable, whatever be the result, with the sin of wilfully aggravating or perpetuating the domestic slavery of Africa.

Philanthropy and commerce unitedly recommend this great effort to rescue Africa from her thrall and misery. But it must not be forgotten, that our duty rests upon higher and more imperative considerations even than these. If it be needful to be just before we are generous, then justice puts in her first claim to this service. As a nation, we owe to Africa a debt which our utmost efforts can never wholly cancel. We ourselves have been deeply implicated in the Slave Trade, and are still responsible for many of its appalling consequences. To millions of the untimely dead we never can make the least reparation: to millions more of the expatriated and unhappier living, slight indeed, even at the best, would be any compensation we could bestow during the wreck of life which yet remains; but for that unnumbered population which still struggles and pines in its native wilds beneath the double curse of Slave Trade and of barbarism, originally inflicted by ourselves, much, very much,—though far from enough,—may now be done, which can only be done effectually, so far as human prescience may judge, by adopting the suggestions of Sir Fowell Buxton.

To renew the depraved and savage passions by the influences of a transforming creed,—to assuage the sense of unutterable wrongs by the consolations of a tranquillizing faith,—and over the moral darkness of ages to pour the reflections of a brighter and more blessed hope,—these indeed are the Divine work of the Christian Missionary, and to him, with all prayers for his success, must this paramount duty be affectionately consigned. But it is not too much for those who are now desirous to co-operate with him in urging the inferior motives of human conduct into the same benevolent service, and in bringing the whole range of secular means to bear upon the social improvement of