

**AN APPEAL IN FAVOR OF
THAT
CLASS OF AMERICANS
CALLED AFRICANS**

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An Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans by Mrs. Child

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MRS. CHILD

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AN

APPEAL

IN FAVOR OF THAT CLASS

OF

AMERICANS CALLED AFRICANS.

By MRS. CHILD,

AUTHOR OF THE MOTHER'S BOOK, THE GIRL'S OWN BOOK,
THE FRUGAL HOUSEWIFE, ETC.

"We have offended, Oh! my countrymen!
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes,
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren!

COLBRIDGE.

BOSTON:
ALLEN AND TICKNOR.
1833.

TO
THE REV. S. J. MAY,
OF BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT,

This Volume

IS
MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A MARK OF GRATITUDE,

FOR HIS EARNEST AND DISINTERESTED EFFORTS

IN
AN UNPOPULAR BUT MOST RIGHTEOUS CAUSE.

P R E F A C E .

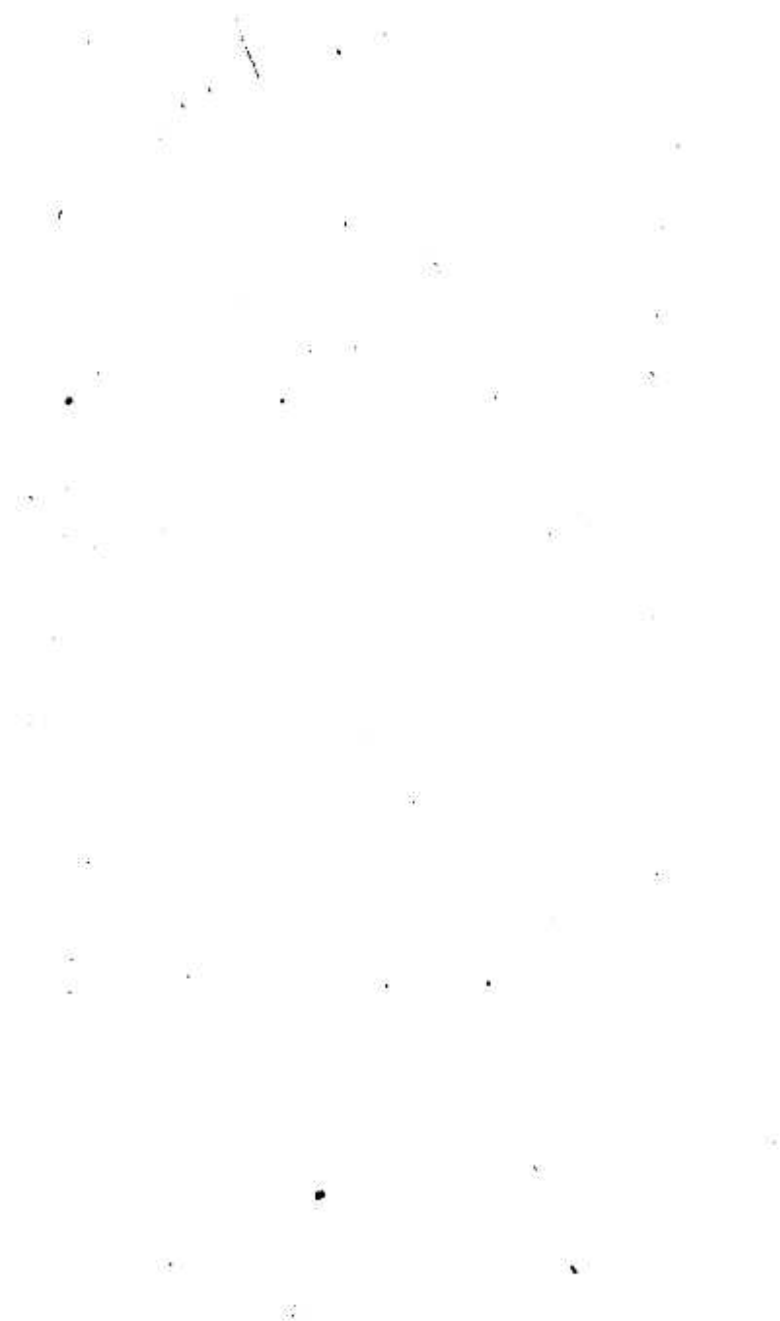
READER, I beseech you not to throw down this volume as soon as you have glanced at the title. Read it, if your prejudices will allow, for the very truth's sake:— If I have the most trifling claims upon your good will, for an hour's amusement to yourself, or benefit to your children, read it for my sake:— Read it, if it be merely to find fresh occasion to sneer at the vulgarity of the cause:— Read it, from sheer curiosity to see what a woman (who had much better attend to her household concerns) will say upon such a subject:— Read it, on any terms, and my purpose will be gained.

The subject I have chosen admits of no encomiums on my country; but as I generally make it an object to supply what is most needed, this circumstance is unimportant; the market is so glutted with flattery, that a little truth may be acceptable, were it only for its rarity.

I am fully aware of the unpopularity of the task I have undertaken; but though I expect ridicule and censure, I cannot *fear* them.

A few years hence, the opinion of the world will be a matter in which I have not even the most transient interest; but this book will be abroad on its mission of humanity, long after the hand that wrote it is mingling with the dust.

Should it be the means of advancing, even one single hour, the inevitable progress of truth and justice, I would not exchange the consciousness for all Rothchild's wealth, or Sir Walter's fame.



AN APPEAL, &c.

CHAPTER I.

BRIEF HISTORY OF NEGRO SLAVERY.—ITS INEVITABLE EFFECT UPON ALL CONCERNED IN IT.

The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,
And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul depressed; dejected — even to love
Of her dull tasks and close captivity.

WORDSWORTH.

My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which this earth is filled.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
It does not feel for man.

COOPER.

WHILE the Portuguese were exploring Africa, in 1442, Prince Henry ordered Anthony Gonzalez to carry back certain Moorish prisoners, whom he had seized two years before near Cape Bajador: this order was obeyed, and Gonzalez received from the Moors, in exchange for the captives, ten negroes, and a quantity of gold dust. Unluckily, this wicked speculation proved profitable, and other Portuguese were induced to embark in it.

In 1492, the West India islands were discovered by Columbus. The Spaniards, dazzled with the acquisition of a new world and eager to come into possession of their wealth, compelled the natives of Hispaniola to dig in the mines. The native Indians died rapidly, in consequence of hard work and cruel treatment; and thus a new market was opened for the negro slaves captured by the Portuguese. They were accordingly introduced as

early as 1503. Those who bought and those who sold were alike prepared to trample on the rights of their fellow beings, by that most demoralizing of all influences, the accursed love of gold.

Cardinal Ximenes, while he administered the government, before the accession of Charles the Fifth, was petitioned to allow a regular commerce in African negroes. But he rejected the proposal with promptitude and firmness, alike honorable to his head and heart. This earliest friend of the Africans, living in a comparatively unenlightened age, has peculiar claims upon our gratitude and reverence. In 1517, Charles the Fifth granted a patent for an annual supply of four thousand negroes to the Spanish islands. He probably soon became aware of the horrible, and ever-increasing evils, attendant upon this traffic; for twenty-five years after he emancipated every negro in his dominions. But when he resigned his crown and retired to a monastery, the colonists resumed their shameless tyranny.

Captain Hawkins, afterward Sir John Hawkins, was the first Englishman, who disgraced himself and his country by this abominable trade. Assisted by some rich people in London, he fitted out three ships, and sailed to the African coast, where he burned and plundered the towns, and carried off three hundred of the defenceless inhabitants to Hispaniola.

Elizabeth afterwards authorized a similar adventure with one of her own vessels. "She expressed her concern lest any of the Africans should be carried off without their free consent; declaring that such a thing would be detestable, and call down the vengeance of Heaven upon the undertakers." For this reason, it has been supposed that the Queen was deceived — that she imagined the negroes were transported to the Spanish colonies as voluntary laborers. But history gives us slight reasons to judge Elizabeth so favorably. It was her system always to preserve an *appearance* of justice and virtue. She was a shrewd, far-sighted politician; and had in perfection the clear head and cold heart calculated to form that character. Whatever she might believe of the trade at its beginning, she was too deeply read in human