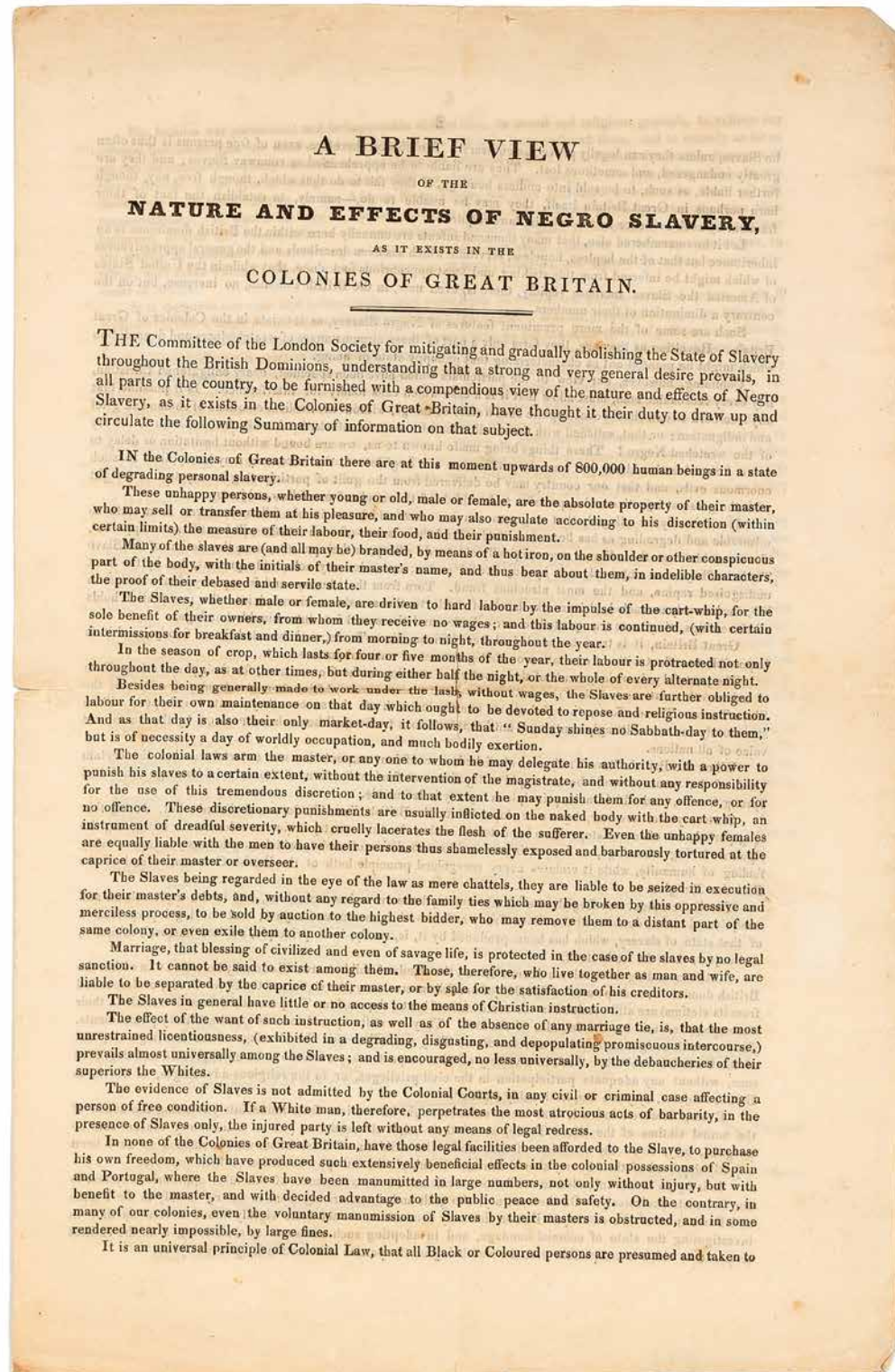


(London Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions)

A Brief View of the Nature and Effects of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain

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A BRIEF VIEW
OF THE
NATURE AND EFFECTS OF NEGRO SLAVERY,
AS IT EXISTS IN THE
COLONIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

THE Committee of the London Society for mitigating and gradually abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions, understanding that a strong and very general desire prevails, in all parts of the country, to be furnished with a compendious view of the nature and effects of Negro Slavery, as it exists in the Colonies of Great Britain, have thought it their duty to draw up and circulate the following Summary of information on that subject.

IN the Colonies of Great Britain there are at this moment upwards of 800,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery.

These unhappy persons, whether young or old, male or female, are the absolute property of their master, who may sell or transfer them at his pleasure, and who may also regulate according to his discretion (within certain limits) the measure of their labour, their food, and their punishment.

Many of the slaves are (and all may be) branded, by means of a hot iron, on the shoulder or other conspicuous part of the body, with the initials of their master's name, and thus bear about them, in indelible characters, the proof of their debased and servile state.

The Slaves, whether male or female, are driven to hard labour by the impulse of the cart-whip, for the sole benefit of their owners, from whom they receive no wages; and this labour is continued, (with certain intermissions for breakfast and dinner,) from morning to night, throughout the year.

In the season of crop, which lasts for four or five months of the year, their labour is protracted not only throughout the day, as at other times, but during either half the night, or the whole of every alternate night.

Besides being generally made to work under the lash, without wages, the Slaves are further obliged to labour for their own maintenance on that day which ought to be devoted to repose and religious instruction. And as that day is also their only market-day, it follows, that "Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to them," but is of necessity a day of worldly occupation, and much bodily exertion.

The colonial laws arm the master, or any one to whom he may delegate his authority, with a power to punish his slaves to a certain extent, without the intervention of the magistrate, and without any responsibility for the use of this tremendous discretion; and to that extent he may punish them for any offence, or for no offence. These discretionary punishments are usually inflicted on the naked body with the cart-whip, an instrument of dreadful severity, which cruelly lacerates the flesh of the sufferer. Even the unhappy females are equally liable with the men to have their persons thus shamelessly exposed and barbarously tortured at the caprice of their master or overseer.

The Slaves being regarded in the eye of the law as mere chattels, they are liable to be seized in execution for their master's debts, and, without any regard to the family ties which may be broken by this oppressive and merciless process, to be sold by auction to the highest bidder, who may remove them to a distant part of the same colony, or even exile them to another colony.

Marriage, that blessing of civilized and even of savage life, is protected in the case of the slaves by no legal sanction. It cannot be said to exist among them. Those, therefore, who live together as man and wife, are liable to be separated by the caprice of their master, or by sale for the satisfaction of his creditors.

The Slaves in general have little or no access to the means of Christian instruction.

The effect of the want of such instruction, as well as of the absence of any marriage tie, is, that the most unrestrained licentiousness, (exhibited in a degrading, disgusting, and depopulating promiscuous intercourse,) prevails almost universally among the Slaves; and is encouraged, no less universally, by the debaucheries of their superiors the Whites.

The evidence of Slaves is not admitted by the Colonial Courts, in any civil or criminal case affecting a person of free condition. If a White man, therefore, perpetrates the most atrocious acts of barbarity, in the presence of Slaves only, the injured party is left without any means of legal redress.

In none of the Colonies of Great Britain, have those legal facilities been afforded to the Slave, to purchase his own freedom, which have produced such extensively beneficial effects in the colonial possessions of Spain and Portugal, where the Slaves have been manumitted in large numbers, not only without injury, but with benefit to the master, and with decided advantage to the public peace and safety. On the contrary, in many of our colonies, even the voluntary manumission of Slaves by their masters is obstructed, and in some rendered nearly impossible, by large fines.

It is an universal principle of Colonial Law, that all Black or Coloured persons are presumed and taken to

Folio (33 x 21.5 cm / 13" x 8.5"). pp. [1] 2-3 [4 (blank)]. Light vertical and horizontal center folds, three short tears to the horizontal fold, near fine, with a contemporary drawing of a few survey lines and diagrams very lightly sketched in ink and pencil on the final blank page. The Society states its case against slavery in the Colonies of Great Britain, where: "there are at this moment upwards of 800,000 human beings in a state of degrading personal slavery." It provides a brief but detailed description of "the immoral, inhuman, and unjust" nature of the Slave Trade, and of the absolute power of slave owners.

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