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From a Drawing by JOHN POLE, M. D. of Bristol, Eng.



# THE NON-SLAVEHOLDER.

"Whoso gives the motive, makes his brother's sin his own."

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## COMMUNICATION.

For the Non-Slaveholder.

A BRIEF MEMOIR OF PAUL CUFFEE.

BY W. J. ALLINSON.

Among the individuals who in various ages have attracted the notice of the public, a large proportion, perhaps, have been by nature endowed with little more than ordinary powers of mind. Some have been prominent for their virtues, others for their crimes. Many have been tossed into notoriety by the waves of political excitement, or have had their capabilities developed by extraordinary combinations of circumstances, in the absence of which they would have remained, with many of their superiors, obscurely in the shade. The subject of this little memoir is worthy of commemoration, because, although naturally placed in obscurity, with peculiar barriers in his way to distinction and honour, he made his way onward and upward, under the Divine blessing, by the mere force of individual worth;—cultivating and improving his capabilities and his opportunities, acting with a high sense of honour under the golden rule, and with religious enlightenment, yielding filial obedience to the Father of Spirits.

There may be a service in bringing the mem-

ory of such an one again into view, after he has been partially forgotten by the busy throng in the lapse of half a generation.

Paul Cuffee, the youngest son of a captured African, was born A. D. 1759 on the Island of Cotterhunker, near New Bedford, Massachusetts. John Cuffee, his father, having been kept during the chief part of his life in slavery, was enabled, through great diligence, faithfulness and economy, to purchase his freedom. He married an Indian woman, one of the aboriginal owners of the soil of Massachusetts, and left at his death an unproductive farm of 100 acres. The care of the widow and her six daughters chiefly devolved upon Paul. His three brothers became respectable farmers. To the mind of Paul, however, Commerce presented stronger attractions, and he entered, at the age of 16, with a view to qualifying himself for this pursuit, as a common hand in a whaling expedition bound for the Gulf of Mexico. He remained four years as a subordinate. In his third voyage, which was during the revolutionary war, he was made prisoner by the British, and detained three months at New York. Returning to Westport (Mass.), he spent two years in agriculture.

Paul, although only twenty years of age, was deeply impressed with a sense of the injustice by which the free negroes were excluded from all participation in the rights of citizenship in his native State: whilst, in taxation, and in every State burden, they had to sustain their full proportion. He determined to attempt a removal of this manifest wrong, and, aided by his brother, he respectfully memorialized the Legislature upon the subject, so effectually setting forth the true points of the case, that, in an age of strong prejudice, an act was passed securing to the free people of color all the privileges of citizenship. This is a fact which ought not to be forgotten, and the memory of Cuffee, and of those just lawgivers, should be respect-



ly cherished. The example was followed by other States, which induced the remark by Wilson Armistead that "the exertions of Paul Cuffee and his brother influenced permanently the welfare of the whole colored population of North America." Commencing business now on his own account, he began with an open boat, and obtained successively a schooner, a brig, and afterward, a ship. His career was not, however, a smooth one, but was beset with hardships and disappointments, which afforded the discipline necessary for the maturing of his powers. "He was more than once taken by pirates and pillaged of every thing," says William Allen, "but he seemed to possess that active courage, which is the offspring of a mind satisfied of the practicability of its plans, and conscious of the power to accomplish its purpose; he therefore resolutely determined to persevere in the course which he had marked out for himself, believing that, while he maintained integrity of heart and conduct, he might humbly hope for the protection of Providence." "In 1795," says the same writer, "he was master of a schooner of sixty-nine tons burden. On his arrival at one of the American ports, the people were filled with astonishment and alarm. A vessel owned and commanded by a black man, and manned with a crew of the same complexion, was unprecedented and surprising; suspicions were raised, and several persons associated themselves for the purpose of preventing him from registering his vessel, or remaining among them. On examination, however, his papers proved to be correct, and therefore the custom house officers could not legally oppose his proceeding in a regular course. Paul combined prudence with resolution, and on this occasion conducted himself with candour, modesty and firmness; his crew also behaved not only inoffensively, but with conciliating propriety. In a few days the inimical association vanished, and the inhabitants treated him and his crew with respect and even kindness." The name of this port was VIENNA, in Nanticoke Bay. Armistead says, "Many of the principal people visited his vessel, and at the instance of one of them, Paul dined with his family in the town. He sold his cargo, receiving in lieu of it 3000 bushels of Indian corn which he conveyed to Westport, where it was in great demand, and it yielded our hero a clear profit of a thousand dollars."

In common with many others whose education has been restricted, he desired to furnish his offspring with those advantages, the want

of which he had keenly felt. During the severity of the winter he taught navigation to his own family, and to young men in the neighborhood. There being neither tutor nor school in the vicinity, he convened a meeting to arrange for supplying the deficiency, but, a jarring of sentiment rendering all efforts fruitless, he undertook the matter himself, built at his own expense a schoolhouse on his own grounds, and made a donation of it to the public.

In 1806 he owned, besides considerable real estate, a ship, two brigs, and several smaller vessels.

Upon religious conviction of the principles of the Society of Friends, he was, on his own application, admitted into membership, and apprehending himself called to the work of the Gospel Ministry, his appearances in their meetings were acceptable to Friends, both in this country and in England.

Having bestowed much attention upon the Colony at Sierra Leone, and having corresponded upon the subject with persons in Europe, he came to the conclusion, that, by a voyage thither, he might promote the best interests of his fellow men. The following letter, addressed, 6th mo. 1810, to some Friends in Philadelphia, indicates the healthful tone of mind in which he projected the undertaking.

*"Esteemed Friends*—Taking into consideration my former prospect of a voyage to Sierra Leone, if God permits and my Friends see with me, it looks as though such voyage or visit may be undertaken this coming fall. It would feel very pleasant to me if some solid Friend could feel Truth to open the way to accompany me, as I may have need of advice; yet I trust the good and allwise Adviser never fails those who are truly dependant on him, and on him alone.

I am, your ever well-wishing friend,

PAUL CUFFEE."

Encouraged by his own Monthly Meeting, and by the African Institution in London, he embarked, early in the year 1811, in his brig "Traveller" which was navigated by eight colored men and an apprentice boy: his nephew Thomas Wainer being the Captain. Arrived at the colony, he made himself useful to his brethren, suggesting various improvements, and at his instance was formed a respectable society called "the Friendly Society of Sierra Leone." An Epistle from this society addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" evinces, by the christian fragrance of the spirit which pervades it, that it emanated from minds that



were "joined unto the Lord." Therein the pertinent query is put to all religious professors, "whether it is agreeable to the testimony of Jesus Christ, for one professor to make merchandize of another." This epistle, signed by sixteen respectable colored men, may be found in Armistead's "Tribute for the Negro," page 466.

This voyage, it should be understood, was undertaken at his own expense, and from motives of pure benevolence. He was however encouraged to procure a cargo at Sierra Leone, and to proceed with it to England, to do which in an American vessel requiring a special license, W. Wilberforce, W. Allen, Z. and A. Macauley interested themselves in obtaining one, which Wm. Allen forwarded in a letter to Paul Cuffee. He arrived at Liverpool in the 7th month 1811, and had at first to encounter the result of an evil effort to create a prejudice against him, which was soon overcome by the steady clear-sightedness and faithful energy of the excellent Wm. ALLEN, who truly appears, through his useful life, to have been ever ready for every good word and work. Leaving his nephew at the colony, he took on board a person whom he found there, solely with a view to teach him navigation for the benefit of the colony.

At Liverpool many persons of distinction visited his vessel and the testimony of some of these visitors was, that for cleanliness it exceeded any other in the port. They were also amazed in observing the colored sailors, all of whom were capable of steering the ship, and of taking the altitude of the sun; and several of them quite competent to manage the vessel. The Liverpool Mercury of that day says of the crew; "They were remarkable for their good conduct and proper behaviour, and the greatest cordiality appeared to prevail among them." The Duke of Gloucester and other distinguished characters were much gratified in their intercourse with him, and he was authorized by the Board of the African Institution in London, (by whom he was consulted respecting the best means to benefit Africa) to carry to Sierra Leone from the United States a few worthy colored persons, to instruct the Colonists in Agriculture and Mechanic arts. He returned to the Colony, "carrying with him some goods as a consignment to the FRIENDLY SOCIETY, to encourage them in the way of trade." Having attended to the apprehended requirings of duty in Africa, he returned to his native land.

In search of suitable colonists to take with

him in compliance with the authority of the African Institution, by whom he was authorized to take at first "six or eight persons," he visited the principal cities of our Union, holding conferences with the most respectable men of color, and at the same time urging the formation of beneficial associations, one of which, founded by him in Burlington, N. J., still continues (in the personal knowledge of the writer) usefully in operation. Many others traceable to him may also still exist.

The war with Great Britain breaking out, he went to Washington to obtain the favour of government in carrying with him those persons (with their effects) who had volunteered to accompany him. His plan was highly approved, yet Government refused to sanction such intercourse with an enemy's colony. He thus experienced delay, but improved the time in maturing his plans.

On his return from Washington to Philadelphia C— W—, a Maryland slaveholder, entering the stage in which he was seated, touched him and said—"Your proper seat is outside with the driver." Paul meekly took the indicated seat. Soon after a distinguished member of Congress entered, and seeing him exclaimed, "Mr. Cuffee, this is not a proper seat for you," and constrained him to enter and to sit beside him. He was treated by several passengers with respectful consideration, and on reaching the Hotel was ushered first into the dining room and treated with marked distinction. "This," said the slaveholder, "taught me a lesson of good manners." The same person was subsequently referred to James Forten of Philadelphia for some information and service to himself—and was amazed to find himself in the presence of a colored gentleman, of noble bearing, and of more thorough intelligence on the subject in hand, than any other person he had met with. At once gratified, astonished, and stung with the reflection of the injustice he had done, he expressed himself to a Friend in terms of the warmest admiration of James Forten, and declared that he wished never to have any thing more to do with the colored race as property—a race capable of producing, under favourable circumstances, such results as he had seen in Forten and Cuffee.

On the close of the war Paul sailed, taking with him 38 Africans, whom, after a voyage of 55 days, he landed in Sierra Leone. As this number far exceeded his commission, he generously and magnanimously bore the ex-



pense of thirty himself, providing also for them on their arrival, thus contributing for the benefit of the colony out of his private funds, about \$4000. On presenting his passengers to the Governor, that officer gave to each family a town lot, and 30 to 50 acres of land located about two miles distant.

During his sojourn in Africa, he penned an address to his African brethren, fraught with pious exhortation. He forcibly presented to their attention the duty of assembling themselves to worship the Lord their God in spirit and in truth. He recommended "that early care be taken to instruct the youth while their minds are tender, that so they may be preserved from the corruptions of the world, from profanity, intemperance and evil company." On departing, he took a paternal leave of the Colonists, who pressed upon him with tokens of overflowing affection—"I leave you," he said, "in the hands of Him who is able to preserve you through time, and crown you with that blessing which is prepared for all who are faithful to the end."

He "ceased to be mortal" in 1817 in his 59th year. During his illness of six months, he was engaged in correspondence and in other efforts for ameliorating the condition of the colored race, and was comforted in finding that his views had been adopted by able and benevolent individuals.

His *entrance into life* was marked with serenity. "Feeling that his end was near," (says Peter Williams,) "he called his family together to bid them adieu. It was an affecting scene of inexpressible solemnity—of tears and bitter anguish on the one hand, and christian firmness and resignation on the other. His wife and children and several other relatives being assembled around him, he reached forth his enfeebled hand, and after shaking hands with each and giving them some pious advice, he commended them to the tender mercies of Jehovah and bade them all a final farewell." Taking leave of one of his neighbors he said, "not many days hence and ye shall see the glory of God. I know that my works are all gone to judgment before me." Soon after he added, "It is all well—it is all well."

Paul Cuffee was in person well formed and prepossessing—tall and athletic—of noble bearing. He was noted for humility, gravity, civility, fortitude, patience, and for a soundness of discretion which caused his advice to be much sought after. What education he possessed, was acquired through his own indefatigable exertions. In acquiring rudimental knowledge, he had but a little occasional assistance. In a

conversation with Professor Griscom Paul said that, having resolved upon learning navigation, he took private lessons of a young man—that at the end of the first lesson "it was all as black as midnight"—at the end of the second lesson, he "thought there was a little gleam of light"—the third lesson produced a fresh accession of light—and thus he persevered till all was entirely plain to him. In reply to a question put to him by Dr. G., he said—"there were always three things that I paid attention to—latitude, lead, and look out." In two weeks' time he obtained such a knowledge of navigation as enabled him to command a vessel. Yet his voyages extended to the West Indies, to England, to Russia, to Africa and to various ports in the U. States. It is scarcely necessary to add to what we have written, that although he had opportunities of considerable emolument from trafficking in intoxicating liquors and in slaves, he conscientiously abstained from such unrighteous gain. That earnest love to man which is an accompaniment of true love to the Supreme, was too decidedly a ruling principle with him, to admit of his wilfully engaging in any pursuit that would be adverse to the well being of any portion of the human family. On the contrary he was, as we have seen, very ready to spend his substance, and to devote his time and energies, for the benefit of such of his fellow creatures as came within the range of his influence.

We know that with each of us the end of time is near, and that the mortal frame of the Monarch, the Statesman, the Slave, the Beggar and the Millionaire shall alike be laid beneath the ground, and "return to the dust as it was;" and not less certain is the approach of the period, when, freed from all distinctions of earthly rank or of color, all shall stand before the Father of the Universe, who will recognise his own image in each, though alas by many how degraded! Who, at that time, would not rather be as this once sable follower of the Redeemer who has made him whiter than snow, than to exchange position with the proudest son of Earth who shall be rejected from the glorious PRESENCE with the fearful word DEPART. And who, whilst remembering that the Universal Judge will then regard each act of oppression as *done unto him*, can lend his support to the system, and to the legal enactments, which, at this moment, are causing thousands of the colored race to quake with terror, and to sicken with dismay.

May He who made the heart awoken us to a



saving knowledge of Himself, and of our own condition.

"Ere the long night silence cometh, and with us it is not day."

## THE NON-SLAVEHOLDER.

PHILADELPHIA, TWELFTH MONTH 9, 1850.

### DISCONTINUANCE OF THE NON-SLAVEHOLDER.—

The present number completes our Fifth volume, and closes the NON-SLAVEHOLDER as a monthly publication.

The Editor has not come to this conclusion from any feelings of doubt or discouragement in relation to the truth or progress of the principle which has been *specially* advocated in these pages. On the contrary, he has great cause to rejoice in its increased and extensive adoption, both amongst the members of the religious Society of Friends and by other Christian professors. The subscribers to the paper have also gradually increased, and the evidences which have reached the Editor of the general favor with which it has been received, are more numerous than he had any reason to anticipate. In discontinuing the Non-Slaveholder, other means, he trusts, will be used to disseminate from time to time, amongst those who have been its readers, information of such facts and measures as may be interesting on the subject of abstinence from the products of slavery.

At no period since the day of the Missouri compromise, has the anti-slavery cause been more deeply involved in gloom, to our view, than at the present juncture. In watching the gradual yielding of the North and the corresponding triumph of the South during the last year, we have seen strong evidence that to whatever extent the political or federal union of the States may have operated in producing the change, the influence of northern commerce in the products of slave labor, or, as the N. Y. Tribune terms it, "Cotton politics," has been the grand means by which the slaveholders have accomplished their purposes. The proceedings of Congress during the late sitting, and the public manifestations of sympathy with slavery which now prevail in the northern States, furnish a mournful but fitting comment on the dereliction of principle which has marked the course of most of the professed abolitionists during the anti slavery agitation of the last seventeen years. In the celebrated Declaration of Sentiments issued by the Anti-Slavery Convention of Philadelphia, and dated the 6th

day of December, A. D., 1833, we find the following paragraph;—

"We shall encourage the labor of freemen rather than that of slaves, by giving a preference to their productions."

Not only has this solemn pledge been totally disregarded by abolitionists generally, but the principle on which it was founded has been openly denied and repudiated by many of the most zealous, prominent, and influential anti-slavery writers and lecturers. We have labored, however feebly, to recal our fellow abolitionists to their duty in this respect; nor have we failed to press upon the attention of the members of the religious society with which we are connected, the palpable discordancy between their general practice and their avowed anti-slavery principles. In withdrawing from the responsible position which he has occupied for five years past, the Editor does not expect to eat "the bread of idleness," but hopes to earnestly seek his future path of duty, and to be enabled to walk in it through "that higher assistance which imparts the faith that can remove mountains." It will give him much pleasure to continue the private correspondence with which he has been favored, and to answer inquiries from any who feel an interest in the "Free Labor movement," and also, so far as he may be able, to furnish information relative to the facilities for obtaining free labor goods, and on the general subject.

In conclusion he would earnestly and affectionately entreat his beloved friends and readers to "remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;" and to believe that "bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure," who "despiseth the gain of oppression."

**BILLS TO SUBSCRIBERS.**—Bills were sent some time since to subscribers who owed for more than the present volume. We now forward bills to *all* who appear as debtors on our books. Any errors will be cheerfully corrected; but it is hoped the amounts justly due will be promptly forwarded in all other cases, that the editor may not be subjected to pecuniary loss in addition to the time and labor which he has willingly devoted to the publication.

**VISIT OF G. W. TAYLOR TO THE WEST INDIES.**—Many of our readers will doubtless feel interested in the information that our friend George W. Taylor, proprietor of the Free Produce store in this city, embarked at New York, on the 9th ult., in the British steamer "Merlin" for the island of St. Thomas. He expected to visit other West