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BEFORE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Nisbet's tract caused Rush to publish *A Vindication of the Address, to the Inhabitants of the British Settlements* (1773), which before the end of the year drew the fire of another proslavery Philadelphian, the anonymous author of *Personal Slavery Established* (1773). Applauding Nisbet's efforts, the writer took on not only Rush's *Vindication*, but also Philadelphia's entire antislavery community. As he reviewed each of the "late publications on the subject of personal Slavery," two aspects of his argument stood out in bold relief. First was his evaluation of the slave trade as a positive good. Far from manstealing, the slave trade was a "generous disinterested exertion of benevolence and philanthropy, which has been the principal means of heaping wealth and honours on Europeans and Americans, and [of] rescuing many millions of Africans, *as brands from the fire*, and even compelling them to the enjoyment of a more refined state of happiness, than the partiality of fate has assigned them in their native state." No nineteenth-century southerner would value the transfer of Africans to America any more highly. A second striking point in this pamphlet was the manner in which the unknown author labeled emancipationists. In his mind they were *visionary, fanatical, enthusiastical, ignorant, distempered, and designing*—all terms that became entrenched in the proslavery glossary of overworked epithets well before the rise of radical abolitionism in the nineteenth century.²⁴

The third response to the Philadelphia emancipationists was the least distinguished. Written by Bernard Romans, a widely traveled adventurer, and included in his *Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (1775), it merely demonstrates the varied literary reactions to the work of American emancipationists in the era of the American Revolution.