

plantation, what steps I would take if I had inherited such a property from British ancestors. I thought, first, of immediately emancipating all the slaves, but I was reminded that the law humanely provides, in that case, that I should still support them, so that I might ruin myself and family; and it would still be a question whether those whom I had released from bondage would be happier, or would be prepared for freedom. I then proposed to begin with education as a preliminary step. Here I was met with the objection that, since the abolition movement and the fanatical exertions of missionaries, severe statutes had been enacted, making it penal to teach slaves to read and write. I must first, therefore, endeavour to persuade my fellow slaveholders to repeal these laws against improving the moral and intellectual condition of the slaves. I remarked that, in order to overcome the apathy and reluctance of the planters, the same kind of agitation, the same "pressure from without," might be indispensable, which had brought about our West Indian emancipation. To this my American friends replied, that the small number of our slaves, so insignificant in comparison to their two and a half millions, had made an indemnity to the owner possible; also that the free negroes, in small islands, could always be held in subjection by the British fleets; and, lastly, that England had a right to interfere and legislate for her own colonies, whereas the northern States of the Union, and foreigners, had no constitutional right to intermeddle with the domestic concerns of the slave States. Such intervention, by exciting the fears and indignation of the planters, had retarded, and must always be expected to retard, the progress of the cause. They also reminded