

the slave was worse ; and not a few of the planters, by dint of defending their institutions against the arguments and misrepresentations of their assailants, came actually to delude themselves into a belief that slavery was legitimate, wise, and expedient—a positive good in itself. There were many, indeed, who thought differently, but who no longer dared to express their opinions freely on the subject.

It is natural that those planters who are of benevolent dispositions, and indulgent to their slaves, and who envy the northern proprietor, who, now that the Indians have passed away, has the good fortune not to share his country with another race, should be greatly irritated when the cruelty of the slave-holders, as a class, is held up to the reprobation of mankind. A deep sense of injustice, and a feeling of indignation, disinclines them to persevere in advocating the cause of emancipation. I was so much occupied and absorbed in my scientific pursuits that I never felt tempted to touch on this exciting subject, and therefore, perhaps, the planters spoke out their sentiments to me more freely. “Labour,” they said, “is as compulsory in Europe as here ; but in Europe they who refuse to work have the alternative of starvation ; here the slave who is idle has the alternative of corporal punishment ; for, whether he works or not, he must always be fed and clothed.” They complained to me much of the manner in which the escape of runaway slaves was favoured in the free States. Their innocence, they said, is always assumed, and the cruelty and harshness of their owners, taken for granted ; whereas the fugitives often consist of good-for-nothing characters, who would have been put into gaol in Europe, but who here are left at large,