

negroes with that of the serfs of the middle ages, and with the state of oppression to which some classes are still subjected in the north and east of Europe? These comparisons, these artifices of language, this disdainful impatience with which even a hope of the gradual abolition of slavery is repulsed as chimerical, are useless arms in the times in which we live. The great revolutions which the continent of America and the Archipelago of the West Indies have undergone since the commencement of the nineteenth century, have had their influence on public feeling and public reason, even in countries where slavery exists and is beginning to be modified. Many sensible men, deeply interested in the tranquillity of the *sugar and slave islands*, feel that by a liberal understanding among the proprietors, and by judicious measures adopted by those who know the localities, they might emerge from a state of danger and uneasiness, which indolence and obstinacy serve only to increase.

Slavery is no doubt the greatest evil that afflicts human nature, whether we consider the slave torn from his family in his native country, and thrown into the hold of a slave-ship,\* or as making part of a flock of black men, parked on the soil of the West Indies; but for individuals there are degrees of suffering and privation. How great is the difference in the condition of the slave who serves in the house of a rich family at the Havannah or at Kingston, or one who works for himself, giving his master but a daily retribution, and that of the slave attached to a sugar estate! The threats employed to correct an obstinate negro, mark this scale of human privations. The coachman is menaced with the coffee plantation; and the slave working on the latter is menaced with the sugar house. The negro, who with his wife inhabits a separate hut, whose heart is warmed by those feelings

\* "If the slaves are whipped," said one of the witnesses, before the Parliamentary Committee of 1789, "to make them dance on the deck of a slave-ship—if they are forced to sing in chorus; '*Messe, messe, mackerida*,' [how gaily we live among the whites], this only proves the care we take of the health of those men." This delicate attention reminds me of the description of an *auto-da-fe* in my possession. In that curious document a boast is made of the prodigality with which refreshments are distributed to the condemned, and of the staircase which the inquisitors have had erected in the interior of the pile for the accommodation of the *relaxados*, (the relapsed culprits.)