

nations of Europe, who boast of their civilization, have regarded as incontrovertible; that, for instance, without slaves there could be no colonies. We declare, on the contrary, that without slaves, and even without blacks, colonies might have existed, and that the whole difference would have been comprised in more or less profit, by the more or less rapid increase of the products. But such being our firm persuasion, we ought also to remind your Majesty, that a social organization into which slavery has been introduced as an element, cannot be changed with inconsiderate precipitation. We are far from denying that it was an evil contrary to all moral principles, to drag slaves from one continent to another; that it was a political error not to have listened to the remonstrances of Ovando, the governor of Hispaniola, who complained of the introduction and accumulation of so many slaves in proximity with a small number of free men; but, these evils being now inveterate, we ought to avoid rendering our position and that of our slaves worse, by the employment of violent means. What we ask of your Majesty, is conformable to the wish proclaimed by one of the most ardent protectors of the rights of humanity, by the most determined enemy of slavery; we desire, like him, that the civil laws should deliver us at the same time from abuses and dangers."

On the solution of this problem depends, in the West India Islands only, and exclusive of the republic of Hayti, the security of 875,000 free men (whites and men of colour)\* and the mitigation of the sufferings of 1,150,000 slaves. It is evident that these objects can never be attained by peaceful means, without the concurrence of the local authorities, either colonial assemblies, or meetings of proprietors designated by less dreaded names, by the old parent state. The direct influence of the authorities is indispensable; and it is a fatal error to believe "that we may leave it to time to act." Time will act simultaneously on the slaves, on the relations between the islands and the inhabitants of the continent, and on events which cannot be controlled, when they have been waited for with the inaction of apathy. Wherever slavery is

\* Namely: 452,000 whites, of which 342,000 are in the two Spanish islands (Cuba and Porto Rico), and 423,000 free men of colour, mulattoes, and blacks.