

long established, the increase of civilization solely has less influence on the treatment of slaves than many are disposed to admit. The civilization of a nation seldom extends to a great number of individuals; and does not reach those, who in the plantations are in immediate contact with the blacks. I have known very humane proprietors shrink from the difficulties that arise in the great plantations; they hesitate to disturb established order, to make innovations, which, if not simultaneous, not supported by the legislation, or (which would be more powerful) by public feeling, would fail in their end, and perhaps aggravate the wretchedness of those whose sufferings they were meant to alleviate. These considerations retard the good that might be effected by men animated by the most benevolent intentions, and who deplore the barbarous institutions which have devolved to them by inheritance. They well know, that to produce an essential change in the state of the slaves, to lead them progressively to the enjoyment of liberty, requires a firm will on the part of the local authorities, the concurrence of wealthy and enlightened citizens, and a general plan in which all chances of disorder, and means of repression, are wisely calculated. Without this community of action and effort, slavery, with its miseries and excesses, will survive as it did in ancient Rome,* along with elegance of manners, progressive intelligence, and all the charms of the civilization which its presence accuses, and which it threatens to destroy, whenever the hour of vengeance shall arrive. Civilization, or slow national demoralization, merely prepare the way for future events; but to produce great changes in the social state, there must be a coincidence of certain events, the period of the occurrence of which cannot be calculated. Such is the complication of human destiny, that the same cruelties which tarnished the conquest of America, have been re-enacted before our own eyes in times which we suppose to be characterized by vast progress, infor-

* The argument deduced from the civilization of Rome and Greece, in favour of slavery, is much in vogue in the West Indies, where sometimes we find it adorned with all the graces of erudition. Thus, in speeches delivered in 1795, in the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, it was alleged, that from the example of elephants having been employed in the wars of Pyrrhus and Hannibal, it could not be blameable to have brought a hundred dogs and forty hunters from the island of Cuba to hunt the maroon negroes. Bryan Edwards, vol. i, p. 570.