

excesses the slave is exposed in the solitude of a plantation or a farm, where a rude *capataz*, armed with a cutlass (machete) and a whip, exercises absolute authority with impunity! The law neither limits the punishment of the slave, nor the duration of labour; nor does it prescribe the quality and quantity of his food.* It permits the slave, it is true, to have recourse to a magistrate, in order that he may enjoin the master to be more equitable; but this recourse is nearly illusory; for there exists another law, according to which every slave may be arrested and sent back to his master who is found without permission at the distance of a league and a half from the plantation to which he belongs. How can a slave, whipped, exhausted by hunger, and excess of labour, find means to appear before the magistrate? and if he did reach him, how would he be defended against a powerful master, who calls the hired accomplices of his cruelties, as witnesses."

In conclusion I may quote a very remarkable extract from the *Representacion del Ayuntamiento, Consulado, y Sociedad patriótica*, dated July 20th, 1811. "In all that relates to the changes to be introduced in the *captive class*, there is much less question of our fears on the diminution of agricultural wealth, than of the security of the whites, so easy to be compromised by imprudent measures. Besides, those who accuse the consulate and the municipality of the Havana of obstinate resistance, forget that, in the year 1799, the same authorities proposed fruitlessly, that the government would divert attention to the state of the blacks in the the island of Cuba (*del arreglo de este delicado asunto*.) Further, we are far from adopting the maxims which the

"Whereas some persons have *of late* been guilty of cutting off and depriving slaves of their ears, we order that whoever shall extirpate an eye, tear out the tongue, or cut off the nose of a slave, shall pay five hundred pounds sterling, and be condemned to six months imprisonment." It is unnecessary to add, that these English laws, which were in force thirty or forty years ago, are abolished and superseded by laws more humane. Why can I not say as much of the legislation of the French islands, where six young slaves, suspected of an intention to escape, were condemned, by a sentence pronounced in 1815, to have *their hamstrings cut!*

* A royal cedula, of May 31st, 1789, had attempted to regulate the food and clothing; but that cedula was never executed.