

a few generations removed from the absolute barbarism of their ancestors, but also were prevented by policy and law from attaining any of that intellectual progress which they might have made in the sunlight of the more civilized atmosphere to which they had been transplanted.

But in ancient times, the frequency of wars, and the severity of the law of universal custom, which allowed the conqueror to reduce the conquered nations to slavery, not only rendered slave labour cheap, but a large portion of those in servitude were either of the same or kindred races with their masters, and often of equal or superior breeding and education. Plutarch tells us that some of the Athenians who were taken prisoners in the ill-fated Sicilian expedition, during the Peloponnesian war, and reduced to slavery, mitigated the severity of their lot, by reciting to their masters verses of Euripides in whose poetry the Syracusans took particular delight, and that a number of them were even rewarded with their liberty, for which they formally expressed their thanks to the poet on their return home. Very eminent writers of ancient times, passed a part at least of their lives in a state of slavery, among them the fabulist Æsop, the great stoic philosopher Epictetus, and even Plato, who on his return from Syracuse, by the treachery of the Lacedæmonian ambassador with whom he sailed, was sold into slavery at Ægina, and was afterwards ransomed by Anniceris, for the sum of thirty minæ. Other friends of Plato having contributed the sum to repay Anniceris, the latter expended it by purchasing for the philosopher the famous garden of the Academy. At Rome men of great literary ability were found among the slaves, such as the poet Terence, and Cicero's freedman Tiro, to whom he writes in such affectionate terms in some of his letters, the whole of which, that have been preserved to posterity, were collected and edited by the faithful Tiro after Cicero's death, forming the largest body