

and that on which alone I shall at present dwell, is that by making liberty a condition of good conduct a stigma is inevitably cast upon labour. All know how completely toil is a badge of degradation in slave colonies. One of the principal objects of their institutions should be the destruction of this most injurious prejudice. The plan to which I have alluded must necessarily foster it. The enfranchised negro feels his own superiority to his comrade chiefly in his freedom from compulsory labour. Thus enfranchised negroes in slave communities prove, in general, an idle and a dissolute part of the population. Any scheme by which they should be called one by one to freedom would probably only augment the ranks of the useless, at the expence of the useful, portion of the community.

This error our government avoided, by placing the negro population simultaneously in a state of apprenticeship. Thus, we adopted the second of those plans which were just now enumerated — namely, universal but gradual emancipation. But, in doing this, we committed what some have considered two capital mistakes.

The first of these was the fixing a definite term for the apprenticeship. It is difficult to conceive how it could have been imagined, that with certain freedom before them at the end of six years, the negroes were to hug their remaining chains during the whole of that period, and apply themselves quietly to heavy and continuous labour. And, on the other hand, the masters, having nothing to gain and nothing to lose by their conduct towards their apprentices, and certain of being deprived of all power over them at the end of the stipulated time, were too often tempted to make the most of their brief authority, and to employ the arm of the law, wherever they could influence those who