volution in the mother country, which has produced in all its dependencies anarchy and maſſacre, the condition of the negro-ſlaves was better than that of the bond- men among the ancient Germans. “ Thoſe of them who cultivated the plantations were attached to the ſoil, and could not be drawn off to pay debts, or be ſold ſeparately from the eſtate on which they lived. This gave them a laſting property in their huts and little ſpots of ground, which they might ſafely cultivate with­out dread of being turned out of posseſſion, or transfer­red contrary to their intereſt and feelings from one pro­prietor to another. They were under the protection of law as ſoon as they arrived in the colony. Proper misſionaries were appointed for the purpoſe of training them up to a certain degree of religious knowledge, and am­ple funds were allotted for the maintenance of thoſe eccleſiaſtics. On ill treatment received from his maſter, or on being deprived of his allowance of food and rai­ment, the ſlave was directed to apply to the king’s at­torney, who was obliged to proſecute the maſter forth­with. That officer was alſo bound to proſecute, if by any other means he heard of the abuſe ; the law adding as the reaſon, *This we will to be obſerved, to check the abuſe of power in the master."*

We wiſh it were in our power to say, that in the Britiſh West India colonies ſlaves are equally protected by law as they were in the French iſlands under the old go­vernment, and that the ſame care is taken of their mo­ral and religious improvement. This, however, we are afraid, cannot be ſaid with truth. In the iſland of Ja­maica, before the paſſing of the *conſolidated slave act,* not many years ago, a white man, whether proprietor or not, who had killed a negro, or by an act of ſeverity been the cauſe of his death, was, for the firſt offence, intitled to benefit of clergy, and not liable to capital puniſhment till a repetition of the crime.@@ By the pre­ſent law, it is enacted, “ That if any perſon, whether owner or ſuperintendant of ſlaves, ſhall be convicted of having, by any act of paſſion or cruelty, occasioned the death of any negro, it ſhall be capital for the first offence : and for the greater ſecurity of the property, and as a check on thoſe who may have the puniſhment of ſlaves in their power, it is particularly required, that every ſurgeon or doctor belonging to each eſtate ſhall ſwear to the cauſe of the death of each negro, to the beſt of his knowledge and belief ; and if any negro dies, and is interred by the owner or overſeer, without the doctor’s having ſeen or been ſent for to ſuch negro, in this caſe, the owner or overſeer cauſing the negro to be ſo interred is liable to a proſecution for ſuch con­duct.”

This law muſt doubleſs be productive of good effects ; but being a colonial act, it cannot have the vigour of the *Code Noir;* nor do we know of any attorney in the iſland who is *obliged* to defend the rights of the negroes, or proſecute the maſter whoſe cruelty has by any means

come to his knowledge. The juſtices and veſtry of cach pariſh are indeed conſtituted *a council oſ protection,* for the expreſs purpoſe of making full enquiry into the bar­barities exerciſed on ſlaves, and bringing the authors to puniſhment at the public expence ; and by a new ſlave-act of Grenada, the juſtices are required annually to no­minate three freeholders to be *guardians oſ the slaves,* who are to take an oath to ſee the law duly executed @@\*. Theſe are benevolent regulations ; but we doubt if pro­tection can be ſo promptly afforded by a council of guardians as by an individual attorney who has no other em­ployment. In ſome of the other Britiſh iſlands, we have been confidently told that the unfortunate ſons of Afri­ca have no protection whatever againſt the tyranny of a sordid owner, or the caprice of a boyiſh overſeer @@(m) ; though it is added, that the humanity of many maſters more than ſupplies the want of laws in every reſpect but that of improvement, and that the attachment of others has in them a like effect. In ſome caſes good ſenſe, a regard for their reputation, and a well-informed conviction of their intereſt, induce men to treat their ſlaves with diſcretion and humanity. The ſlaves of many a planter posseſs advantages beyond what the la­bourer even of Britain enjoys @@\*;” yet theſe advantages all depend upon the good will of his maſter ; and in no part of the Britiſh colonies are the ſlaves attached to the ſoil. This ſingle circumſtance, together with the total neglect of their moral and religious culture, makes their ſituation much leſs eligible than was that of the French ſlaves under the old government ; and affords a ſtriking proof of what the humane author whom we have just quoted well obſerves, that “ thoſe men and nations whom liberty hath exalted, and who therefore ought to regard it tenderly in others, are conſtantly for reſtrain- ing its bleſſings within their own little circle, and de­light more in augmenting the train of their dependants than in adding to the rank of fellow-citizens, or in diffuſing the benefits of freedom among their neigh­bours.”

Having given this ample detail of the rise and pro­greſs of ſlavery in the world, and ſhown that it has pre­vailed in every age, and under all religions, we ſhall now proceed to enquire whether a practice ſo general be in any inſtance lawful ; and if it be, how it muſt be modi­fied, in order to be rendered consiſtent with the rights of man and the immutable laws of virtue.

That in a ſtate of nature one man has a right to ſeize upon another, and to compel him by force to la­bour for his ſubſiſtence, is a position which we believe has never been ſeriouſly maintained. But independent communities ſtand to each other in the very ſame rela­tion that individuals do in a ſtate of nature ; and there­fore if in ſuch a ſtate the man of greater bodily ſtrength or mental ſagacity would have no right to convert his weaker neighbour into personal property, neither can

than of a *black man* who would treat them with the greateſt cruelty. Voyages *to the Coast of Africa by Messrs Saugnier and Brisſon,* p. 332. 335. Engliſh Tranſlation.

@@@(M) In Barbadoes there is ſaid to be a law for the protection of ſlaves, which is the moſt insolent trifling with juſtice and humanity that the writer of this article has ever ſeen. It is enacted, forſooth, “ That if any man ſhall, of *wantonness,* or only of *bloody-mindedneſs,* or *cruel intention, wilfully kill* a negro or other ſlave, if his own, he ſhall pay into the public treaſury *fifteen pounds Sterling !* See *Dickson's Letters on Slavery,* p. 4.

@@@[mu] Neil's Observations on the Treatment of Negroes in the island of Jamaica.

@@@[m]\* Edward's History of the West Indies, book iv. chap 5.

@@@[m]\* Ramsay's Essay, p. 66. and 91.