

with a view to its abolition, which have been occasionally manifested for many years past, have within the last few years assumed an aspect and importance, vitally affecting the people of the States, in which a slave population exists to any considerable extent.

Whatever opinions may be entertained by others or by us, of slavery *and the abstract*, the circumstances under which it exists in the States of this Union, are such as to forbid a general emancipation, even if the desire to accomplish it were universal, whilst the present ameliorated condition and general treatment of slaves are such as to leave the friends and advocates of emancipation no hope of bettering their condition, generally, by the success of their exertions. It is believed that most erroneous notions on this subject, (particularly as relates to the condition and treatment of slaves,) are generally entertained in the non slaveholding sections of the country; and that it is the superficial and imperfect views taken of the matter by such of the citizens of the non-slaveholding States, as are actuated by good and humane intentions, that have caused the misguided zeal and efforts which have become so threatening in their consequences. They have looked principally to evils (as they suppose them) to be remedied, without due consideration, or being, from their local situations, qualified to form just conceptions of the many and various difficulties to be encountered, and damages to be apprehended in carrying into effect their wishes and views. We have no doubt but that a large portion of our fellow-citizens who have engaged in, and are zealously pursuing measures to effect a general emancipation of slaves, are actuated by the best motives, and conscientiously believe themselves to be performing a sacred duty of humanity; but we are equally confident that many of the most intemperate and noisy declaimers upon the subject, are influenced by very different motives.

We cannot permit ourselves to believe that it is the *deliberate* purpose of any respectable portion of the people of the United States, much less of the constituted authorities of the General or any State Government, to infringe the rights of the States where slavery exists, or of the citizens holding slaves; yet it cannot be denied, and ought not to be concealed, that opinions have been expressed as