A SUCCINCT HISTORICAL VIEW OF ST. DOMINGO.

CHAP. I.

From the Period of its Discovery, by Columbus, to its highest State of Prosperity in 1789.

Hayti, Hispaniola, or St. Domingo, the largest and most valuable of the West India Islands, is situated in the Atlantic ocean, between the island of Puerto Rico on the east, and Jamaica and Cuba on the west; a small part of the rocks and shelves which form the Bahama islands lie at no great distance to the north; and it is bounded on the south by the Caribbean sea, and ultimately by the continent of South America. It lies in the latitude of 18 deg. 20 min. north, and in 68 deg. 40 min. west longitude from Greenwich.30 It is in length, according to the best accounts, more than 450 miles from east to west, and 150 in breadth.31

This beautiful island was the sixth discovered by the enterprising and unfortunate Columbus in his progress towards the discovery of a new world, of the honor of which, in the appropriation of a name, he was to be deprived by the caprice of his contemporaries, in favor of an obscure adventurer, of no other merit in the discovery, than that of having trodden in his steps.* It was the first on which he formed a settlement, or made any stay in his first voyage, and appears to have afterwards received the principal marks of his consideration. To it he was directed by the natives of Cuba, where he had previously landed, as more rich in its mines of that fertile ore with which it was necessary to bribe the avarice of the Spaniards, to prolong that ardour of discovery which it had cost him so much labour to excite.

Columbus first arrived at Hayti, for so this country was called by its natives, on the 6th day of December, 1492. He landed at a small bay, which he called St. Nicholas, and then named the island Espagnola, in honor of the country

*When the prosecution of discoveries in Spain had fallen into the hands of private adventurers, Alonzo de Ojeda, who had accompanied Columbus in his second voyage, was among the first to propose an expedition under his own command. With this active and gallant officer sailed Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine gentleman, apparently of no ostensible character whatever; but having framed a fraudulent narrative of his voyage with some elegance, which formed the first description of any part of the new world, he obtained from its circulation the honor of giving name to America.
Map of St. Domingo. Reproduced with the permission of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Special Collections Library, the Pennsylvania State University Libraries.
by whose king he was employed: from thence he sailed along the northern coast till he found a more convenient harbour, which he named Conception, and where he first had access to the inhabitants, through the means of a female whom his people overtook, and prepossessed in their favor, by the usual means of trifling presents and gentle behaviour.

It is our wish to pursue in this place a sober narrative of fact, rather than to give loose to the fascinations of romantic description, or else the early Spanish writers have handed down such accounts of the aborigines of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica, as would warrant the most extravagant eulogy on their personal appearance, manners, and ingenuity. It may, however, naturally be supposed possessing the necessaries of life without labour, on a soil the most fertile, and in a benignant climate, in a state of the utmost simplicity, and consequently free from the general enemies to beauty, they would have personal advantages not to be expected in their descendants under the combined evils of slavery in a voluptuous state. Even the rigidity of history has been softened into the most pleasing descriptions of them: “They appeared,” says Robertson,* “in the simple innocence of nature, entirely naked, their black hair, long and uncurled, floated upon their shoulders, or was bound in tresses around their heads. —They had no beards, and every part of their bodies was perfectly smooth. Their complexion was of a dusky copper colour; their features singular, rather than disagreeable; their aspect gentle and timid; though not tall, they were well shaped and active.” “The industry and ingenuity of this race,” says another elegant writer, “must have exceeded the measure of their wants. Placed in a medium between savage life, properly so called, and the refinement of polished society, they were perhaps equally exempt from the bodily distresses and sanguinary passions of the former conditions, and from the artificial necessities and solicitudes of the latter.” They were unquestionably the most unoffending, gentle, and benevolent of the human race.†

That there were some grounds for a belief in the ingenuity ascribed to them by Peter Martyr‡ and others, as far as it related to their simple agriculture, and some progress in the arts of ornament as well as utility, may, perhaps, be proved by a fact of another nature which tends to illustrate the character of this people, while it may afford a lesson to our own times; —would that we could not say to our own country.

When, among the numerous disasters of Columbus, he was wrecked on the eastern coast of the island, and if he had before impressed the natives with admiration of the superior nature of their visitors, was now placed in a situa-

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*Hist. of America, vol. i. 1. 2.
†Hist. Jamaica, Dallas's Hist. vol. i. 23.
‡De Rebus Oceanis, &c.
tion the best calculated to prove their natural equality, and even to tempt by an unlucky opportunity any inclination to their injury, instead of the smallest hostility. Guacanahari, the cazique, or king of this division of their island, of which it appeared to be governed by seven, having been informed of his misfortune, expressed great grief for his loss, and immediately sent aboard all the people in the place in many large canoes; they soon unloaded the ship of every thing that was upon deck, as the king gave them great assistance: “He himself,” says Columbus, who records it, “with his brothers and relations, took all possible care that every thing should be properly done both aboard and on shore; and from time to time he sent some of his relations weeping, to beg of me not to be dejected, for he would give me all that he had. I can assure your Highnesses,” he adds, “that so much care would not have been taken of securing our effects in any part of Spain; as all our property was put together in one place near his palace, until the houses which he wanted to prepare for the custody of it were emptied; he immediately placed a guard of armed men, who watched during the whole night, and those on shore lamented as much as if they had been interested in our loss.” They are supposed to have migrated originally from the neighbouring continent, and are ascribed by Sir Walter Raleigh to the Arrowauk tribe of Guiana.

Thus far we have preserved the necessary sobriety in collecting a description of the first inhabitants of St. Domingo; but when we come to speak of the territory itself, this caution ceases, for, no description that we have yet seen is adequate to the appearance, even at the present day, of a country which requires all the aid of romance to imagine, much less to describe. — Of fertility, which it requires but the fostering hand of man to guide to all the purposes of life, and of a climate the most salubrious among the Antilles, and in which longevity is general. — “In these delightful countries too,” observes Robertson, “Nature seemed to assume another form; every tree and plant, and animal, was different from those of the ancient hemisphere;” — Columbus boasted of having discovered the original seat of Paradise. — “In these delightful vales,” exclaims the Abbé Raynal, “all the sweets of spring are enjoyed, without either winter or summer. There are but two seasons in the year, and they are

*Letter of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. See his Life in Churchill’s Voyages, as written by his younger son Ferdinand, an ecclesiastic, and founder of the Columbine Library at Seville; also Herrera’s General History. [Awnsham Churchill (1658–1728) was a leading London publisher. His most famous work was A Collection of Voyages (1704).]
†Raleigh’s Voyages. [Sir Walter Raleigh (c.1552–1618) was an aristocrat, poet, and explorer who twice attempted to establish a colony at Roanoke, Virginia. He later turned his attention to Venezuela and Guyana in search of the legendary El Dorado and recorded his voyage in The Discovery of Guiana (1596), the book Rainsford seems to be referring to here.]
‡East and West Indies, vol.iv. 231 [Raynal, A Philosophical and Political History].
equally fine. The ground always laden with fruit, and covered with flowers, realizes the delights and riches of poetical descriptions. Wherever we turn our eyes, we are enchanted with a variety of objects, coloured and reflected by the clearest light. The air is temperate in the day time, and the nights are constantly cool.”—“In a country of such magnitude,” says Edwards,* “diversified with plains of vast extent, and mountains of prodigious height, is probably to be found every species of soil which nature has assigned to all the tropical parts of the earth. In general it is fertile in the highest degree, every where well watered, and producing almost every variety of vegetable nature and beauty for use, for food, and luxury, which the lavish hand of a bountiful providence has bestowed on the richest portion of the globe.” “The possessions of France in this noble island,” he continues, “were considered as the garden of the West Indies, and for beautiful scenery, richness of soil, salubrity, and variety of climate, might justly be deemed the paradise of the new world.”—“What you have said,” replies De Charmilly,† animadverting on the preceding passage, “is nothing when it is known that the extent of the French part is but one half of that of the Spanish division, and that this is yet more fertile than the French part, requiring only cultivators, &c.” Of even such an account, when contemplating the various parts of St. Domingo in which we have been, with an eye well accustomed to tropical scenery, and satiated with the luxury natural to its soil, we could be almost inclined to say too, this is nothing.

It is not to be wondered at, that the inhabitants should consider the Spaniards, on their first interview, as preternatural beings, a circumstance, however, very favorable to their intercourse, and which might have been turned to more advantage in a better purpose than that to which it was applied. They possessed gold, which they found in the beds of the rivers, or washed by the heavy rains from the mountains, and which they gladly exchanged for bells, beads, or pins. A prince, or cazique of the country, who visited Columbus, was carried in a sort of seat upon men’s shoulders, and derived great respect from his attendants. He was extremely courteous, and presented the admiral with many articles of curious workmanship, and received with complacency some trifles in return.

They had no idea of the imaginary value attributed by their visitors to gold, and readily pointed out the mountains, which yet retain their original name of Cibao,34 as the great repository of the ore they so much desired.

It was at this period that Columbus lost one of his ships through the care-

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*Historical Survey, chap. 19.
†Lettre à M. Edwards, p. 70.
lessness of a pilot, and experienced the tenderness which has been already mentioned. Of another of his vessels out of three, he had procured no intelligence since his arrival, and suspected some treachery in the captain who commanded it. The third was of course insufficient to receive the whole of his crew, and he was desirous to return to Spain. The simplicity of the natives, and their terror from the incursions of the people who inhabited several islands to the south east, whom they called Caribbeans,* and who were of a very opposite character to themselves, being fierce and warlike, and devouring the flesh of their prisoners, gave confidence to Columbus, in the proposition of leaving a part of his crew behind, which would embrace the two advantages of forming a settlement on the island, and enable him to return to Spain immediately. They agreed without a murmur, and even assisted in the erection of a fort which was to be afterwards used as a means of their own subjection.

Thirty-eight Spaniards were appointed to remain on the island, under the command of Diego de Arado, a gentleman of Cordova, to whom Columbus communicated his own powers, and every thing requisite for their establishment; having first endeavoured very successfully to impress the natives in their behalf, by acts of beneficence and exhibitions of power. He promised to revisit them soon, and in the interim to make respectable mention of them to their country. Columbus left the little colony on the 4th of January 1493, and arrived in Spain in the month of March following.

The departure of Columbus had not long taken place, when, as too often happens, the garrison he had left behind grew impatient of restraint, and threw off the command of their newly appointed governor. Regardless of the prudent instructions which had been given them, the men who composed it became insolently independent, and gratified their avaricious and licentious desires at the expense of the natives, making a wasteful prey of their gold, their women, and their provisions; thus, instead of supporting the estimation in which they were held; exhibiting themselves as the most depraved of human beings. At length the cazique of Cibao, whose country the Spaniards chiefly infested, cut off a part of the colonists, surrounded the remainder, and destroyed their fort.

Columbus having employed himself for six months at the court of Spain in

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* M. de Charmilly constantly confounds the character of the inoffensive aborigines of St. Domingo, with that of the Charaibs, or Cannibals, and of the African negroes in their present state of slavery, and thence draws deductions, which must consequently fall to the ground. [Many early European explorers viewed the Caribs as cannibals. The English term “cannibal” in fact derives from the native word “caribe,” signifying “brave or daring” (OED). There is no evidence that the Caribs ate humans.]
receiving the rewards of his distresses, and in interesting it in behalf of the splendid enterprize of which he was the author, no sooner accomplished his aim, and procured a sufficient fleet, under the papal sanction, on the part of the king of Spain, than he became impatient to revisit his colony. He accordingly departed on his second voyage, and after touching at several other islands towards the north west of his route, arrived at Hispaniola on the 22d of November following.

His surprize may easily be conceived to find that his colony no longer existed; and while the Spaniards in dismay were weeping over the fate of their countrymen, a brother of the friendly cazique Guacanahari arrived, and related to him the account of their fate.

Instead of wasting his time by a retaliation of injuries, Columbus set about the erection of a town, of which he traced the site in a large plain, near a spacious bay. He obliged every person in his suite, of whatever quality, to assist in a work so necessary to the common safety. This City, the first which obtained that appellation in the new world, was named Isabella, in honor of his patroness the queen of Castile.

Columbus experienced all the difficulties attendant on an infant colony, and a timely excursion in great pomp to the mountains of Cibao, which they found to answer the description of the Indians, in the possession of gold in considerable quantities, perhaps only saved the establishment from final ruin. As soon as concord was restored by the prospect of the mines, Columbus again purposed to leave his colony for the prosecution of new discoveries. He appointed his brother Diego, with a council of officers, to govern in his absence; and a body of soldiers, under the command of Don Pedro Margarita, were sent to visit the different parts of the island, and to establish the authority of the Spaniards. He then set sail on the 24th of April, but after an absence of five months, during which time he had not been distant many leagues, and had experienced the most disastrous circumstances, he returned almost dead to the colony, where he found a brother Bartholomew, whom he had not seen for thirteen years, who had arrived in his absence, and whose unexpected appearance, after sustaining distresses scarcely inferior to his own, so much revived his spirits as to produce a speedy convalescence.*

*Bartholomew Columbus had been dispatched by the great navigator to England, to negotiate with Henry VII. his project of discoveries, in case he should be disappointed in Spain, as he had been in Portugal. On his voyage, the negociator fell into the hands of pirates, who stripped him, and retained him several years a prisoner. At length, having escaped, he arrived in London, but in such poverty, that he was incapable of appearing at court on his mission, till, by drawing maps for sale, in the execution of which he was very ingenious, he procured decent clothing, and a moderate subsistence.
During the absence of Columbus, the soldiery under Margarita had repeated the conduct of the first colony, while the necessities even of abstemious Spaniards rendered them unwelcome neighbours to a race who, requiring very little food to support a life of indolence and innocence, made but proportional provisions when any care was necessary. Maize, with a few vegetables, and very little, if any animal food, formed their only necessary stock, and on this a body of men fortifying themselves in towns, must have made a formidable inroad. Famine, and the success of their former revolt, with long repeated grievance, at length provoked other attempts to rid themselves of the burthen, and Columbus was compelled to have recourse to arms, which he had hitherto with much solicitude avoided. The Indians were defeated by their precipitance: instead of the mode natural to them, of drawing the enemy into their fortresses, they rushed into an open plain, the Vega Real, and numbers being thrown into consternation by the first appearance of European warfare, the impetuosity of cavalry, (which they conceived, like the Thessalonians, to be Centaurs,) and the fierce onset of the dogs, * they yielded to Columbus an easy victory; and those who were not taken prisoners, and reduced to servitude, resigned themselves entirely to despair. Such was the disparity of power, that though near an hundred thousand Indians took the field with missile weapons of their rude fashion, the victory was obtained by two hundred foot, twenty horse, and twenty large dogs, which formed the whole disposable force of the Spaniards.

Columbus employed several months in passing through the island to complete its subjection, and impose a tribute on all the natives above the age of fourteen, which was one of the first effects of a policy adopted against his own inclination to gratify the avarice of the Spanish court, at which he was attempted to be undermined, and which proved afterwards, however moderately used by himself, a means of tyranny and cruelty in the hands of others. This taxation was an insurmountable infringement on the habits of the Indians, to whom restraint on labour was an intolerable evil. It induced an attempt at another kind of hostility, that of starving the appetites of the Spaniards, on the gratification of whose voracity they conceived so much to depend. They pulled up the roots, and suspended all their simple agricultural operations, and retiring to inaccessible mountains, they produced in themselves the effects they vainly hoped to produce in their usurpers. Few as were their wants, they were soon totally unsupplied, and more than a third part became victims to their self-created famine.

*Of the mode of introducing these combatants into Spanish tactics, some account will be found in a future chapter. [See section X of the appendix.]
It was at this time that divisions began to be created in the island through the intrigues of the enemies of Columbus in Spain; they procured one Aguado, a groom of the bed-chamber, to be sent as commissioner to Hispaniola, who displayed all the insolence of mean minds disordered by sudden elevation. To relieve himself, and obtain an explanation with his enemies before his monarch, Columbus returned to Spain, leaving his brother Bartholomew as adelantado, or lieutenant-governor, and through a misplaced trust, appointing Francis Roldan, a gentleman of rank and character, chief justice.

Though as usual experiencing difficulties in his passage, he so far gained over Ferdinand and Isabella, as to obtain further provisions for his colony, in a digested plan, and on a more permanent and extensive scale. Women, artificers, and husbandmen, were joined to the new expedition, but, as all his acquisitions received some alloy, to these were unadvisedly added the criminals from the jails, that fatal resource for population which has so often miscarried. It was almost two years, however, before Columbus set out on his third voyage, and several months after before he returned to Hispaniola, having in the interim discovered the continent of America, the crown of all his enterprises, and of all his sorrows. He returned weary and sick, but he found the colony in a state that admitted of no repose.

Don Diego Columbus had, at the desire of his brother, during his absence, removed the colony to a more eligible station on the opposite side of the island, where he had founded a city, which he dedicated to St. Domingo, or Dominica, in honor of the name of his father, and which remained so long the seat of Spanish dominion in the new world.

Restless spirits will sometimes be found, however inconsistently, in the highest stations, and political troubles arise from very unexpected sources; such was the case with Roldan, whose appointment was to have preserved peace and order; and, when Diego had reduced to subjection what remained of the island unsubdued by his brother, this man excited rebellion among his countrymen, and even the Indians, with such artifices, as caused the most alarming effects, and was only quelled by the temperate, conciliatory, and expedient policy of Columbus. Of the bad consequences of this restoration of tranquillity, however, was the re-establishment of Roldan, and a concession to the avarice of the Spaniards, which was the first step in reducing the Indians to actual slavery. Lands being allotted to the mutineers in different parts of the island, the Indians of the district were appointed, in lieu of their tribute, to cultivate a certain portion of ground for the use of their new masters, from the characters of many of whom may be easily derived the origin of numberless calamities to that unhappy people.

Of the mutiny, the effects were by no means terminated in appearances,
the progress of discovery was stopped, and such false representations were
made by his opponents, that a knight of Calatravia, called Francis de Bova-
dillo, was sent to supersede Columbus, and by means known only to courts,
to send him immediately a criminal in chains to Spain. Thus closed the fif-
teenth century in St. Domingo, a period which, while it saw the founder of
an empire disgraced and wretched, afforded a better prospect to the colony
than had hitherto appeared. Such provisions had been made for working the
mines, and cultivating the country, as assured not only its existence, but a
considerable revenue to the monarch, who suffered Columbus to be circum-
vented and abused.

Bovadillo proceeded, as might be expected, to render himself popular, by
gratifying the entire inclinations of his countrymen. He numbered all the re-
main ing Indians, and dividing them into classes, distributed them as prop-
erty among the Spaniards, who, disregarding the only true means of obtaining
wealth by agriculture, sent them to the mines, and imposed on them such a
disproportioned labour as threatened their utter and speedy extinction.

To prevent this dreadful event, and preserve the shew of decency to the
world, on the arrival of Columbus in Spain, and his appeal to the justice of
Ferdinand, another knight of the military order of Alcantara, Nicholas de
Ovando, was sent to replace Bovadillo. Regulations were adopted to prevent
the licentious spirit which had arisen in the colony under his government;
and, to check the inordinate progress of wealth, the gold was ordered to be all
brought to a smelting-house, where one half should become the property of
the crown. Columbus remained in Spain many months soliciting attention in
vain, till his proposition of an attempt at discoveries to the east was accepted;
and he sat out on his fourth voyage in May, 1502.

Ovando brought to St. Domingo the most respectable armament hitherto
seen in the new world, consisting of thirty-two ships, with two thousand
five hundred settlers. On his arrival, Bovadillo, with Roldan and his accom-
plices, were ordered to return to Spain.

Columbus having experienced some inconvenience from one of his vessels,
altered the course in which he steered, and bore away for St. Domingo, with
a hope of exchanging it for some ship of Ovando’s fleet; eighteen of which,
however, he found laden, and preparing to depart for Spain. He requested
permission to enter the harbour, (first acquainting Ovando with his destina-
tion,) that he might negotiate an exchange, and avoid a violent hurricane that
he saw approaching, and which he advised the departing fleet also to avoid. To
neither of these objects did he obtain an acquiescence. He, however, took pre-
cautions against the tempest, and saved himself, while nearly the whole of the
eighteen ships of his enemies were lost. In them perished Bovadillo, Roldan,
and the greater part of those who had persecuted Columbus and the Indians, with the whole of their ill-gotten wealth, amounting in worth to upwards of fifty thousand pounds sterling; a sum at that time equal to many multiplications of its value at present.

Columbus did not long remain on the inhospitable shore of a country to which he was refused access, by those who owed to him entirely its possession, but prosecuted his voyage in the fruitless hope of discovering the Indian ocean.

In the mean time Ovando, who had received a commission more favorable to humanity than his predecessors, relieved the Indians from compulsory toil, and the colony, though retarded by deficiency of labourers, began to advance in its approaches to a regular society; but, alas! in no instance is the constant variance between justice and expedience in what is called the social state to be more regretted than in the present. The Spaniards became incapable, without the assistance of the inhabitants, (which no inducement could procure) to cultivate the soil, or to work the mines, and many of the new settlers died of disorders incident to the climate, not yet understood, while others quitted the island when deprived of their slaves. These circumstances demanded some attention, and the consequence once more returned to the unoffending Indians.

Columbus, persevering through misfortune, this year again paid a visit to his favorite isle, after having been not only unsuccessful in his attempt at farther discoveries, but a sufferer by complete shipwreck, and detained near twelve months in the island of Jamaica, which he had discovered nine years before, but of which no farther notice had been taken.47 Ovando appears to have been cautious of admitting into the country, under his government, a man of such vast powers, and to whom belonged, by the most determinate of all rules, the dominion of a world he had found: he at length, however, furnished the means for his escape, and received him with every public honor on his arrival at St. Domingo.

He remained only a month upon the island; with his usual ill-fortune, encountering violent storms, sailed seven hundred leagues with jury-masts on his way to Spain, where, exhausted by his sufferings, and disgusted with the dissimulation and injustice of a monarch whose reign he had immortalized, he died fifteen months after,* aged fifty-nine years. It is useless to lament in this place the melancholy end of a man whose memory is eternized. The recollection of it rather communicates a balm to the sorrows of inferior multitudes; and the details of history will apply the event with advantage to the instruction of future ages.

*On the 20th of May, 1506.
A few months before Columbus, died his patroness Isabella; so that a powerful influence was withdrawn from the interests of humanity, as they regarded the new world; and as Ovando began to experience the ill effects of a liberal conduct, he began also to relax in the execution of the royal edicts. He made a new distribution of the Indians among the Spaniards, with the difference only, that they were to be paid for their labour, reduced the royal share of the gold to one third, and afterwards to a fifth part; for which he obtained, (with better success than Columbus,) the sanction of the court.

Notwithstanding the apparent mildness of the present governor, it was at this period that the rage for cruelties commenced which have stained the page of history with more horrors than can be conceived by those possessing even an ordinary love for the species. No treachery was too gross, no violation of sex or dignity too painful for this unhappy people in the hands of the Spaniards; all regulations tending to mitigate the rigour of their servitude were forgotten, while their labour was increased. Ferdinand conferred grants of them as rewards to his courtiers, who farmed them out, being no longer treated or considered but as animals of an inferior species, of no other use than as instruments of wealth, and I could almost say, subjects of oppression. At their expense, however, the colony increased in riches and in consequence; for with such rapidity and success were the mines explored, that for several years the gold brought into the royal smelting-house, amounted in value to more than half a million sterling, (according to the present standard of money). Sudden fortunes arose among private persons, which tempted others to embrace the opportunity of enriching themselves both at the expense of health and reason; and the effect was for a time highly advantageous to the colonists, and to the government of the mother country. Like the progress of a conflagration, however, the blaze was short in proportion to its extent. The same exertions which exhausted the unhappy Indians enriched the Spaniards, both as related to the nature of the operations, and to the government of Ovando, who is described to have introduced much wisdom and justice into his jurisdiction over his countrymen, but a proportionate rigour towards the original inhabitants of the country.

Ovando first gave a permanence to the laws he had established by executing them impartially, the only means of procuring regard for any establishment. He seems also to have attended to every object of advantage to the colony, and, among others, endeavoured to turn the attention of some of the Spaniards to the more laudable pursuits of agriculture. Having obtained from the Canary Islands some slips of the sugar-cane, which thrived exceedingly, he tempted them to form plantations, and to erect sugar-works, which fortunately became an important support when the bowels of the earth were exhausted. The conduct and success of Ovando soon apprized Ferdinand of
the value of those discoveries, he had hitherto appeared to depreciate, and on the author of which he had conferred only disgrace and misery; he accordingly set about forming commercial and ecclesiastical regulations, and at length established a system of policy the most profound, and every way calculated to secure to Spain the entire advantages of her colonies.

While these provisions were taking place for its government, some circumstances began to make their appearance, for which, however to be dreaded, no remedy could be found; and therefore, notwithstanding all other advantages, immediately threatened the dissolution of the colony. The consumption of the natives, which was the natural consequence of the inconsiderate oppression of the Spaniards, (and in whom rested the source of all their prosperity,) became so evident, as to afford serious cause for alarm. Fatigue, to which they were unequal; diseases, the result of an inattention to their change of habit; famine, the effect of preferring so long the search of wealth in the mines to agriculture; and self-violence, the consequence of despair, conspired so forcibly, as to reduce their number upwards of 40,000 in the space of fifteen years, there remaining but about 60,000 out of more than a million, to which the original population amounted.

This diminution continued with such rapidity, as to occasion a stagnation not only of the colonial improvements, but of the common operations of life, which demanded immediate relief, and Ovando in consequence adopted an expedient which was again the source of enormities that seemed to increase in proportion to the progress of their society. The description will afford a

*M. Charmilly, (Lettre à M. Edwards,) has a long, and, in some respects, sufficiently accurate calculation, to prove the original diminutive population of St. Domingo, in opposition to Mr. Edwards’s general description of the massacre of a million of inhabitants. He falls, however, as is usual with those influenced by a spirit of party, into self-contradictions and inconsistency: for he alludes to a perfect knowledge of the topographical antiquities of the country, the existence of which he has proved to be impossible; and he supposes his author to have believed in the instantaneous sacrifice of a million of persons in the four chief mines of the country. General assertions are certainly distracting, and Mr. Edwards is too frequently superficial; but in this instance he is perfectly right. It is from Herrera, the most correct and intelligent of the Spanish historians, whom Dr. Robertson has also adopted, that the fact in the present text is derived, and not Oviedo, to whose amplifications M. de Charmilly ascribes the supposed error. Benzoni states the original population at two millions. [Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557) lived in Hispaniola and was named historiographer of the Indies in 1523. He wrote *La historia general y natural de las Indias* and *Las Quinquagenas de la nobleza de España* (1526–35). Girolamo Benzoni (c.1509–?) wrote *Historia del Mondo Nuovo* (1565). His exaggerated estimate is perhaps due to the work’s fiercely anti-Spanish slant and his attempt to paint the Spaniards as particularly barbarous masters. Estimates of the size of the native population when the Spaniards arrived at Hispaniola in 1492 range from 100,000 to 2,000,000. A census taken in 1507 revealed that their numbers had fallen to 60,000.]
mild example of the temper and conduct experienced by the simple, and benevolent beings of whom, Columbus, with an ingenuousness natural to great minds, had spoken in such exalted terms to the Spanish court. He proposed to seduce the inhabitants of the Lucay Islands, which had been previously discovered, to Hispaniola, “under the pretence that they might be civilized with more facility, and instructed to greater advantage in the Christian religion, if they were united to the Spanish colony, and placed under the immediate inspection of the missionaries settled there.” Ferdinand, deceived by this artifice, or willing to connive at an act of violence which policy represented as necessary, gave his assent to the proposal. Several vessels were fitted out for the Lucayos, the commanders of which informed the natives, with whose language they were now well acquainted, that they came from a delicious country, in which the departed ancestors of the Indians resided, by whom they were sent to invite their descendants to resort thither to partake of the bliss enjoyed there by happy spirits. That simple people listened with wonder and credulity; and fond of visiting their relations and friends in that happy region, followed the Spaniards with eagerness. By this artifice above forty thousand were decoyed into Hispaniola to share in the sufferings which were the lot of the inhabitants of that island, and to mingle their groans and tears with those of that wretched race of men.†

The ardour for discovery, which had languished during the anxiety for the wealth of the mines, began to be renewed by an expedition under Juan Ponce de Leon, (who commanded under Ovando in the eastern district,) to the island of Puerto Rico, which in a few years was subjected to the fate of Hispaniola. Ovando also commissioned an officer, named Sebastian de Ocampo, to ascertain the insular situation of Cuba, which Columbus had supposed to be a part of the neighbouring continent.

But though late and unexpected, by a perseverance the most constant, a degree of justice was at length to be accorded to Columbus in the person of his son Diego. Almost wearied out in the courtly delay which had exhausted his father, he determined upon the bold alternative of an appeal against his monarch to a council for Indian affairs, which he had himself established. Unequal as the parties were, and recent as was its own existence, the court honourably sustained its integrity, and determined on the side of justice, even against the king: with this decision, and the support of powerful connections,

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*The same with the Bahamas.
†Hist. of Amer. vol. i. p. 263. I have quoted this from Dr. Robertson, as the best and most moderate description. His authorities are, Herrera, Dec. J. lib. 7. c. 3.; Oviedo, lib. 3. c. 6.; Gomara Hist. c. 41. [Francisco López de Gómara (c. 1511–66?) wrote La Historia General de las Indias (1552).]
subsequently acquired by marriage, he soon obtained (though but a partial concession of his rights) the government of St. Domingo, and such privileges as enabled him to arrive in the island with more splendour and magnificence than had hitherto been witnessed: Ovando was of course recalled. That splendour, and the numerous retinue with which it was supported, while it added lustre to the settlement, effected no other change to the unhappy aborigines, than the seal of a more determinate slavery, by a numerical division of them among the Spaniards, according to the rank of the latter.

The destruction of the labourers proportionally decreasing the produce of wealth to their masters, naturally excited an impatience in those who had been glutted with wealth, and satiated with dissipation. They had already begun to contemplate other countries, whose inhabitants were yet unexhausted; they had established a pearl-fishery at the small island of Cubagua, and lodged a small colony on the continent, at the gulf of Darien, under the brave and enterprising, though as usual, unfortunate, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, when Diego Columbus made a proposition to which they readily acceded. This was the establishment of a colony in the neighbouring island of Cuba, to which an armament immediately embarked under the command of Diego Velasquez, one of the companions of the great discoverer on his second voyage. The only circumstance concerning this expedition, as it regards the island which is more immediately under our consideration, besides its relief from a number of discontented members, was the opposition of Hatuey, a cazique, or prince, who having fled thither from St. Domingo, indignant at the destruction of his innocent subjects, might naturally be expected to oppose the intrusion of their destroyers into the place of his refuge. His feeble party (for they were of the same inhostile nature with his former subjects) were soon dispersed, himself taken prisoner, and condemned to the flames under the barbarous maxim, which considered him only as a slave, who had taken arms against his master. “When Hatuey,” says Dr. Robertson, *“was fastened to the stake, a Franciscan Friar, labouring to convert him, promised him immediate admittance into the joys of Heaven, if he would embrace the Christian faith.” — “Are there any Spaniards,” says he, (after some pause), “in that region of bliss which you describe?” “Yes,” replied the monk, “but only such as are worthy and good.” “The best of them,” rejoined the indignant cazique, “have neither worth nor goodness; I will not go to a place, where I may meet with one of that accursed race!”

Another expedition soon took place from St. Domingo, to assist in the discovery of the South Sea, by the justly celebrated Balboa, from whose incur-

sions in the continent on which he was established, he had sent home such quantities of gold, as tempted a number by no means contemptible to join him. It comes not into my promise to shed fruitless tears on the perverted fortunes of this truly great man; his name, consigned to unfading memorials, has, I trust, its use with those who possess a fertile mind without the power to sustain its operations. — Though the passage to the Indian ocean was not obtained, as was expected, they reached the South Sea, and prepared the way for more important discoveries.

In 1514, died more peaceably than he had lived, Bartholomus, the uncle of the present Governor; a man of very respectable powers, and an unsullied character; who had occasionally filled offices of high importance in the island, and who, it would appear, was more closely connected with its history than his contemporaries have enabled us to state.

The government of Diego Columbus was neither inefficient nor violent; neither did he want inclination or ability to render the colony both prosperous and happy: but that justice which had been unwillingly accorded him, on the part of the deceased Monarch, was, as much as possible, impeded by every political artifice that could be employed. The meaner officers of the government were encouraged to thwart the authority of the governor, in a variety of measures, and at length the power of distributing the Repartimientos was created into an office, and conferred upon Roderigo Albuquerque, the relation of a confidential minister called Zapata. On the loss of this necessary advantage, in addition to the embarrassment he had already experienced, Diego resolved on returning to Spain for the purpose of remonstrance: leaving behind him the best administration in his power, reached his destination in safety, but he soon found with very small hopes of redress in the object of his voyage.

In his new capacity Albuquerque discovered no other care than to repair his own indigent circumstances, for which purpose he first ordered a renumeration of the Indians, (now reduced to 14,000,) and then put them up to sale in different lots. This was the only stroke wanting to complete the extinction of this unhappy race, by a consequent separation from the habitations to which they had been accustomed, and the imposition of additional labour for the indemnification of their purchasers.

As is too frequently the case when political injuries become irreparable, those measures which, earlier adopted, would have preserved a sacrificed people; now served, only to excite useless controversy and public disturbance; the Monks, who, since the ecclesiastical establishment of Ferdinand, had arisen to considerable power, began to oppose their eloquence publicly to the system on which the natives were reduced to absolute slavery, or rather,
consigned to perish in progressive misery. They could not be insensible to the impolicy of the measure; and, no doubt, impressed with the inutility of a mission to a people who were rapidly ceasing to exist, they had early remonstrated, but appear to have been easily silenced, till the present period. Even now, but a part of the mission, the Dominicans, stood forth to represent the mild precepts of religion; the Franciscans attached themselves to the more popular cause; and while they could not unblushingly defend the Repartimientos, palliated the principle on the ground of expedience, so often improperly assumed in society.

The consequence was, an application to the king by both parties, of which the only circumstance of importance, was the interference of Las Casas, a man of romantic disposition, and benevolent mind; whose exertions, though unsuccessful, were neither wanting in genius or perseverance; whose character cannot be omitted even in the compression of abridgment. It may be previously observed, that the appeal was terminated on the side of the Franciscans, a few regulations of their labour only being for decency promulgated; Albuquerque pursuing his violence and rapacity with impunity.

Bartholomew de las Casas, (a Clergyman,) who came hither on the second voyage of Columbus, and who had early exerted himself in the cause of the Indians, was not to be diverted from his purpose; finding the rapacious governor deaf to all expostulation that militated against his immediate interest, he embarked for Spain, to make a personal appeal to the Emperor, and to exert that eloquence, of which he was so eminently possessed, in their behalf. Aided by fortuitous circumstances, he was particularly successful with the Emperor, then on the point of death, and with Cardinal Ximenes, who became Regent. The effect of this success was the appointment of three Superintendants of the colonies, to whom were added a lawyer of probity named Zuazo, with judicial power, and Las Casas, with the title of Protector of the Indians. These soon arrived in St. Domingo, and began their career by the auspicious act of liberating all the natives who had been granted to the Spanish courtiers, or to any person not residing in America. To avoid the influence of party spirit, neither of those orders, who had contended the subject were suffered to have a member among these Superintendants; they were composed of three Monks of the order of St. Jerome, who appear to have exercised not only ability, but a knowledge of the world, which is seldom to be obtained in a cloister. The result of this mission was, as might be expected, only negatively advantageous to the Indians, without whose labour, reduced as it was, the colony could not be hoped to exist; the best regulations that could be formed were adopted for the prevention of excessive rigour and of cruelty towards them, while, without coercion, they ceased to work, and were obstinate in proportion to their power.
Las Casas still dissatisfied with any thing less than, the entire freedom of the Aborigines, and finding no countenance in the island, with undiminished perseverance, again returned to Spain and found Ximenes, as he had before found Ferdinand, on the point of death. With the Emperor, (Charles V) who immediately arrived from the Low Countries, and with his Flemish minister, he prevailed so far, as to induce the recall of the superintendent and his colleague Zuazo; and Roderigo de Figuerra was appointed Chief Justice of the Island, with directions to moderate the sufferings of the Indians, and to prevent their threatened extinction. Finding that this, was all that could be accomplished, in the hurry of imagination which always marks such characters, (not more eminently successful on some occasions, than dangerous on others,) Las Casas now proposed, in support of his favourite scheme, to substitute, in the place of those he wished to liberate from slavery in their own country, the inhabitants of a distant one, whom he appeared to consider more capable of labour, and more patient under sorrow.

The earliest advantage of the Portuguese in Africa had arisen from a trade in slaves,* but it had been abolished, and was considered ineffectual. About fourteen years before, the importation of a few slaves had been permitted by Ferdinand, but not as a public concern, and in 1511 the number was increased, without producing any effect on the population. This plan, which had been peremptorily refused by Ximenes, was adopted by Charles, who granted a patent to one of his Flemish favorites for an importation of the limited number of four thousand; this privilege being sold to some Genoese merchants, proved the first formation of a regular trade for supplying the island, which has continued to increase through the whole Archipelago.

Even the farther introduction of other Slaves produced so small a change in the Colony, that the invention of Las Casas was directed to other substitutes; and with a more plausible view, it occurred to him, that if Labourers could be induced to emigrate from the Mother Country, their habits of life would enable them to bear the effects of the climate under agricultural operations; and that they might, by soon becoming opulent citizens, introduce habits of industry, and a promotion of virtue:—but, though countenanced by the ministry, his laudable plan was defeated by an ecclesiastic, who had long opposed him, the Bishop of Burgos. Thus deprived, of all his hopes with regard to his favourite Island, this extraordinary man turned his attention to the Continent, and his schemes to the prevention of similar abuses in that part of the new world, which was yet but little explored. After many unsuccessful applications in behalf of this colony of labourers, he at length obtained permission

*For the origin of this traffic the reader is referred to a future chapter, to which it is more closely connected.
to form one in Cumana; but with such opposition, that the number of colo-
nists whom he could persuade to accompany him did not exceed two hun-
dred. It is not within our plan to follow this unfortunate party through their
various distresses, occasioned by the bewildered cruelty of their country-
men:—prevented from arriving at their destined country by the detestation
which was every where excited against the Spanish name, and unpopular
with Spaniards as the followers of Las Casas, they became the innocent vic-
tims of both parties; while their leader, driven from every asylum, shut out
from all resource, abandoned, and houseless, took refuge in the Dominican
convent in the city of St. Domingo; where he soon after assumed the habit of
the order, and, as it may be readily supposed, did not long survive the death
of all his happiness.

The occasion of that violence which had every way met the party of Las
Casas, originated more particularly in the predacious excursions of the Span-
iards, who would seem in these piracies to have left no means of cruelty or
depredation unattempted. When, by the extinction of the Natives, every ex-
ertion of industry began to stagnate in St. Domingo, and even Slaves, were
sold at a price beyond the reach of many, they fitted out a sort of Privateers,70
which, cruizing along the coast of the continent, under the pretence of trad-
ing with the unsuspecting natives; whenever they found an opportunity,
seized upon and sold them as slaves on their return: this conduct, however,
combined all the Indians to revenge it, and in consequence, among others,
two Dominican Missionaries were killed. This was the signal for more exten-
sive hostilities, and Diego Ocampo, with five ships, and three hundred men,
were dispatched to lay waste the country of Cumana, and to transport all the
inhabitants that could be procured as slaves to St. Domingo.

About this time, to add to the embarrassments of the colony, it suffered
considerably from those extraordinary swarms of ants which sometimes used
to infest the Archipelago, and injure the vegetation. After ineffectual many
endeavours to destroy them, the Spaniards (according to Herrera) deter-
mined on appealing to the saints; but some time elapsed before they could
fix upon one for so singular a business; at last, however, being relieved from
the disastrous effects of the insects, and happening to invoke St. Saturninus71
at the same time, that saint acquired the merit of a miracle.

The return of Diego Columbus to Spain appears to have been attended with
some circumstances which are yet unknown, for he shewed no inclination
to return to the new world, till we find him in 1523 called to Jamaica to sup-
press a revolt of the Indians, in the absence of Francis de Garay,72 its governor,
who had embarked in an expedition against Panuco,73 which had, without his
knowledge, already submitted to the government. Among the political ar-
rangements of Ferdinand, was that which separated from the power of Diego the island of Jamaica, attaching it to that division of the continent, not sub-
ject to his dominion: he, however, acted with a spirit no less creditable to his character than on former occasions, and regained the island; which after-
wards descended to his heirs, and, yielded the title of Marquis, among other honors, which descended to his family. Diego Columbus died in 1525.

To return to the domestic situation of Hispaniola, that quick decline, which we have already described, continued to be accelerated, by the cruelty and impolicy of those, to whom no means were exceptionable in the search of wealth. In external appearances, however, this decline was not perceptible, and the capital of St. Domingo, as is the case with all falling states, still pre-
sented an august reverse to the internal poverty of its inhabitants. In 1528, the city is described by some Spanish historians, and particularly Oviedo, who was there at that time, as “not inferior to any in Spain, the houses mostly built of stone like those of Barcelona, but the streets much better, being large and plain, crossing each other at right angles. With the sea on the right, and the river Ozamo on the left, health and beauty were united more than in any other part of the world. Ships heavy laden discharged their cargoes in a manner under the house windows. The citadel, which stood exactly in the centre, also gave security to an extensive command. The houses were fit to receive any nobleman of Spain with his suite, and the grandeur of Don Diego’s palace as viceroy was beyond conception, and every way fitting to receive the king his master. The cathedral was of exquisite workmanship, and well endowed; the dignity of its bishop and canons well supported. There were three monas-
teries, dedicated to St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Mary de Mercedes, and an hospital founded by Michael Passamont, the treasurer-general.”

How much were it to have been wished, that such public splendour had argued equal prosperity; that it did not, however, is certain, from every ac-
count; and Benzoni asserts, that towards the middle of the sixteenth century, scarce one hundred and fifty of the native Indians remained alive.

The dealers in slaves, however, beginning to lessen their demands, as time and competition affected their trade, the colony might have once more re-
covered itself by an attention to agriculture; but that cruelty which appeared to be inherent in the breasts of these early colonists, (increased by disappointment and pecuniary difficulties,) excited in their new servants a spirit of insurrection that soon broke into open revolt, and which, though unsuccess-
ful, compelled their masters to a relaxation of their severity and inordinate avarice.

The consequences produced by the smallest degree of moderation, became soon perceivable in the increased cultivation, and sugar, tobacco, cocoa, ginger, cotton, peltry,75 &c. were shipped for Spain in such quantities, as induced the best hopes of their increase continuing; but these flattering hopes were not to be realized, the Spaniards remaining inactive, weak, unprotected, and useless.

In 1586, Sir Francis Drake76 came before the island, and pillaged the capital with a degree of barbarity, surprizing in the present refinement of European warfare. The invaders held possession of St. Domingo for a month, during the latter part of which they employed every means from day-break, till the heat became intense in the forenoon, to destroy the beautiful edifices that surrounded the town, but on which, from being composed of stone, fire made no great progress, and ordinary means became too laborious; after two hundred sailors, with as many soldiers to protect them, had been employed for several days only to destroy one third part of the town, and were completely wearied with the task, they condescended to accept of about 7,000 l. sterling as a ransom for the rest.

Among the severities which were practised, the following will afford an example, which, notwithstanding its cruelty, some will think from the circumstances of the times, not badly imagined: a negro boy having been sent on a message to the Spanish governor with a flag of truce, was run through the body by some straggling Spanish officers, and only lived to complain to the English general; he immediately ordered two friars, who were his prisoners, to be taken to the same spot, and hanged, commissioning another at the same time to acquaint the Spaniards, that until the party, who had thus murdered the general’s messenger, should be delivered into his hands, there should no day pass without the execution of two prisoners; on the following day the offender was produced, and his countrymen compelled to be his executioners.*

The decline of the mother country could not fail to weaken the situation of her colonists, who had suffered neglect, even from the importance of her acquisitions at home. Those who remained, rather from a want of power to quit the island, than any other cause, sunk into a kind of debility and sloth that resigned them to every evil. Gradually degenerating from the spirit and manners of their ancestors, they became little anxious about anything beyond an indulgence, as degrading as fatal. Associating in common with their female slaves, they propagated a people of almost every grade of colour, and

*See the account of this expedition in Hackluit’s Voyages.—Sir Anthony Shirley pursued a similar conduct in Jamaica in 1596. [Richard Hakluyt (c. 1552–1616), British writer and advocate of American colonization, author of Diverse Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America (1582).]
became entirely a mixed colony, of which, Spaniards formed in fact a very small part. Their mines were deserted, agriculture was neglected, and their cattle ran wild in the plains. They employed themselves, as may be expected from such an irregular establishment, not only in an illicit foreign trade, but in piracies against the property of their own country, of which the practice of fitting out ships clandestinely, for the purpose of procuring slaves, (as has been already observed,) afforded them the best opportunities, and a secret understanding with the ships of war, guaranteed their safety and success. Instead of an attempt to remedy this evil, of which there were many means, the short-sighted policy of the Spanish court chose rather to complete the dejection of the islanders, by demolishing the sea-ports which had been illicitly employed, and compelling the inhabitants to retire to the interior of the country. History is silent, during a considerable period of the existence of this miserable people, whose actions could indeed admit but of little variety; who are described as “demi-savages, plunged in the extremes of sloth, living upon fruits and roots, in cottages without furniture, and most of them, without clothes.”†—“Their slaves had little more to do,” says Raynal, “than to swing them in their hammocks;” nor can a more striking proof be given of the wretched situation of that country which had supplied empires with gold, than the necessity to which it was reduced, of adopting pieces of leather as a circulating medium among its inhabitants.‡

While the government of Spain, however, was so remiss in regard to the colony, which might be considered as the centre of their possessions in the new world, they were as much the reverse, with respect to the admission of any other power into a participation of its produce, or its territory:—their caution extended even to absurdity; and all ships were stopped who were met beyond the tropics. Notwithstanding this care, during a war with Spain, the English and French, had become acquainted with the Windward Islands, (whose warlike and sullen inhabitants, the Charibs, generally repelled the Spaniards,) equipped a small fleet to interrupt the Spanish vessels in those seas, whose piracies were not interrupted by peace; in consequence of the jealous policy already described. A part of these under an enterprising Englishman named Warner, and the captain of a French privateer called Desnambuc, took possession of the island of St. Christopher on the same

*Among others, even the Flemish were refused the permission they requested to clear the lands of this fertile country, and revive its splendour by the more solid pursuits of agriculture.
‡Edwards’s History of the British West Indies, b. ii.
day,* and divided it into two equal shares; the fierce inhabitants, who had been more favorable to the enemies of the Spaniards than to themselves, retiring from the parts on which they were fixed, telling them nevertheless, with usual Indian acuteness, that “land must be very bad, or very scarce with them, since they had traversed such a distance with so much difficulty, to seek for it among savages.”

The court of Madrid immediately alarmed, at the vicinity of these members of two active and industrious nations, ordered Frederic of Toledo,81 on his way against the Dutch in Brazil, to attack these newly established powers while they were yet weak in their new establishment; they were soon defeated, and those who were not either killed or taken prisoners, fled for refuge to the neighbouring islands. The greater part, however, returned to their possessions as soon as the danger was over, except a small number who remained on the little barren isle of Tortuga82 lying off the north-west coast of Hispaniola, and within a few leagues of Port Paix.83 These, inconsiderable as they were in their outset, were the founders of a race which giving rise to the French colony that is soon to become an important part of this history, and being hitherto but imperfectly described, demands particular attention.

Previously, however, it is but justice to the Spanish colony to say, that after the first surprize at seeing a large English fleet commanded by Admiral Penn,84 with nine thousand land forces under Colonel Venables,85 (the same which afterwards conquered Jamaica,) who had been dispatched by Oliver Cromwell86 to obtain for England a portion of the new world, they compelled the enemy to re-embark with disgrace. A want of unanimity was the apology made on the part of the English, who ill brooking such a reception, determined on no alternative between victory and death on their next and more successful attempt.

By the middle of the seventeenth century these incursers had received some accessions from the French colonies, which had by that time been established, and assumed an appearance as formidable as it was singular. They had gradually obtained notice under the appellation of Buccaneers from their mode of curing animal food, which was derived from the savages, being slowly dried, or rather smoked, over fires of green wood, in places from thence called by the Spanish term, Buccaneers,87 a custom yet retained by the Spaniards.88 As they were for a time destitute of wives and children, they associated pairs, (as recorded by former historians); property was common, and survivor inherited the residence; theft was unknown amongst them, though

*Some writers state that Mr. Warner had obtained possession two years before, and had suffered the loss of his plantations by an hurricane. [This hurricane occurred in September 1624.]
no precaution was used against it, a virtue they borrowed from the savages. They seldom disputed, but if any were obstinate, they decided with arms; and if any foul appearance occurred in the combat, as a back or side wound, the assassin was put to death. Every member of the fraternity assumed a war-like name on admission into the body, which descended to their several successors. Their dress consisted of a shirt died with the blood of the animals they killed in hunting; an apron, or trowsers, yet dirtier; a leathern girdle, containing a short sabre, and other knives; a sort of military cap, and shoes, without stockings. A Buccaneer was satisfied if he could supply himself with a small gun, and a pack of dogs, to the number of twenty or thirty. Their employment consisted chiefly in hunting the bulls, with which the Spaniards had furnished the neighbouring island; which they killed chiefly for the skins, regaling, perhaps, on a small part of the flesh, preparing it sometimes with a seasoning of pimento, and the juice of orange.

The remainder of the indolent colonists could not, however, bear with the idea of more active neighbours; which gave rise to several unavailing conflicts, that ended in a determination to destroy all the bulls by a general chase, a scheme which had the effect of turning the attention of the Buccaneers to the more permanent pursuits of agriculture.—Tobacco soon became a profitable culture, which, with the produce of several excursions made by the most intrepid in their cruisers, amply repaid their difficulties. However, another Spanish armament was commissioned for their extirpation, which inspired them to deeds that will live to future ages—pregnant with bravery and horror.

Possessed of an island eight leagues long and two broad, in a fine air, and with capability of improvement, unshackled by the prescriptions of ancient society, with a vast territory open to their predatory incursions, and numerous channels accessible to their maritime courage, the success of the Buccaneers may be easily supposed to have spread. To this lawless, yet far from unsalutary dominion, those who sought a refuge from the tyranny of creditors, or of want, as well as enterprising spirits without opportunity for action, in their mother-country, (particularly from Normandy,) had a resource, which formed a considerable acquisition to its power. Envious of the establishment, the court of Spain made an attempt to dislodge them, which is worthy of notice, only from its wonted cruelty; the general of the galloons exerted his commission while the greater part were at sea, or hunting on the large island; he put all he found to death, leaving Tortuga as desolate as possible.

The effects of these cruelties, and the sentiments of revenge they inspired, produced a closer combination of the Buccaneers; for which purpose they agreed to sacrifice personal independence, to social safety, and accordingly
appointed a leader, much in the same way, as the origin of all monarchies; as they were yet composed of English and French united, an Englishman, distinguished for his prudence and valour, named Willes, was the first appointed, who appears to have excited jealousy, by an invitation of his countrymen to the settlement, and the use too frequently made of power, when its origin becomes forgotten in its advantages. A governor-general had, therefore, no sooner been appointed over the French windward islands, * than finding the opportunities probably agreeable, and being, perhaps, privately solicited, he sent a small force from St. Vincent, who, joined by the Frenchmen on the island, suddenly ordered all the English to withdraw from it; when supposing an order of such audacity supported by a much greater force, they immediately agreed to evacuate the island, and never returned. They still pursued the bold career in which they had embarked, and afterwards obtained regular commissions from the English government to act against the common enemy, though the settlements and navigations of the Spaniards continued the prominent objects of their hostility. One of them afterwards arrived at situations of honour and emolument, having received the dignity of knighthood, and being advanced to the high office of lieutenant-governor of Jamaica! His character, however, will be given more regularly among those of the other Buccaneers, to whom, as original founders of the French colony in St. Domingo, this history is more particularly directed.

Alternately losing and gaining the little island of Tortuga from the Spaniards, the French, under a captain of their own choice and nation, at length retained it, and obtained a firm footing on St. Domingo, which rendered it, at the same time, of less importance. Of the consequence to which they arrived (a consequence which, to this day, furnishes the West Indies with legendary tales of their valour and honour), an idea will be best obtained by a description of their mode of life and warfare, and of those characters to whom they were indebted, for many of the exploits which have rendered them conspicuous to the admiration, if not the approbation, of the present and of future ages.

*This Governor, who was named De Poincy, appears to have held his appointment on the same tenor as Willes, receiving it when the increased followers of Warner and Desnambuc had, in 1660, joined in a treaty independent of their respective governments, which had regarded them with indifference. By this treaty it is pleasing to see the native Chiribs considered, Dominica and St. Vincent’s being appropriated to their reception. According to their respective rights of conquest, France obtained Guadaloupe, Martinico, Grenada, and some less considerable acquisitions; and England was confirmed in the possession of Barbadoes, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, and several other islands of little value. St. Christopher’s still belonged to both nations.—See Raynal’s History, Vol. III. p. 284. &c. [Phillipe de Longvilliers de Poincy (1583–1660) enlisted the buccaneers to remove the English from Tortuga in 1640.]
They formed themselves into small companies, from fifty to three times that number, of whom, some appear to have preferred agricultural pursuits. As the authority they had conferred on their captain did not extend to their domestic economy, they were at perfect liberty as to their manners, or a preference of rest or pleasure in their intervals of peace. Their armaments were formed of boats, without any difference, but in size, in which, they were exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather; as through their careless dispositions, on shore they were subject to the severest extremities of hunger and thirst. After the various cruelties exercised by the Spaniards in the attempt to extirpate them, the sight of a ship is said to have transported them to frenzy;—no superiority of power affected them, they boarded as soon as possible, and the skill they had in the management of their small vessels, screened them from the fire of their enemies, while their fusileers, who presented themselves at the fore-part of their vessels by an excellent aim at the port-holes opposed to them, confounded the most experienced gunners. They seemed to have a religious notion of humility and gratitude, for they implored the aid of heaven to their success in any onset, and returned thanks to the deity for every victory obtained; such was their uninterrupted bravery, that the Spaniards, at length, trembled at their very approach, and surrendered immediately to those whom they designated as devils, as much as if they had been in reality preternatural beings. Among those whose names have come down to us, as having particularly distinguished themselves, were Montbar, a Frenchman; a Welshman (already mentioned) named Morgan; and a Dutchman, called Van Horn. In the conduct of these men, may be seen the general character of the Buccaniers, the proportion of this sketch not admitting of a more enlarged insertion, which might otherwise be easily selected.

Montbar was born a gentleman of Languedoc, and his connection with the freebooters appears to have arisen neither from necessity nor chance, but an early spirit of romance—such as has determined the most heroic characters. Indeed, to those who have seen unqualified descriptions of the Spaniards in the New World, without an acquaintance with human life sufficient to discriminate, such a Quixotic idea will not excite surprize. It is said, that while at college having seen these accounts, their enormities had so strongly impressed him, that, acting in a private play the part of a Frenchman, who quarrelled with a Spaniard, it was with difficulty the performer of the latter character escaped from him with life. His imagination continuing to be heated by day-dreams, in which he beheld the expiring victims of a rage, more cruel than that of religious fanaticism, he viewed them, as calling on him for vengeance; although but imperfectly acquainted with the history of the Buccaniers, he determined to join them, and accordingly procured a
ship for the expedition. On the passage they met with a Spanish vessel, which they immediately boarded, when Montbar was the first, sabre in hand, to fall upon the enemy; he broke through them, and hurrying twice from one end of the ship to the other, levelled every thing that opposed him. When the enemy surrendered, leaving to his companions the care of the booty, he desired only to contemplate, with horrid pleasure, the dead bodies of the Spaniards, which lay in heaps upon the decks, and seemed strengthened in the cause, in which he had so romantically embarked. Arriving on the coast of St. Domingo, the Buccaneers, who applied to barter provisions for brandy, pleaded, as an apology for their quality, that the Spaniards had recently taken advantage of their absence to destroy them: “And do you not seek revenge?” exclaimed Montbar. He soon found they were no more tardy in destruction than himself, and offered his services as a leader: was accepted, and astonished the boldest by his bravery. He continued with them during his life; and their sufferings (from his courage and success) procured for him, among the Spaniards, the appellation of The Exterminator.

Van Horn was a native of Ostend, whose intrepidity in the discipline of his crew, is the only peculiar trait handed down to us. He commanded a frigate, which was his own property. In the heat of an engagement, he was constantly seen in every part of the ship; and where he observed any one shrink at the sudden report of the cannon, he instantly killed him. He became the idol of the brave, and liberally shared with his successful companions, the riches so dreadfully acquired.

It is pleasing to turn from characters terminating with the same violence with which they set out, to one who, after having blazed in the full strength of a meridian-sun of power, is seen retiring to the mild evening of domestic life.

Morgan, the Welshman, only remains to be mentioned, descended from respectable parents in Glamorganshire, whom he early quitted (as it was then termed) in search of his fortune. His adventurous spirit leading him accidentally to Bristol, he found an opportunity of embarking for the West Indies, in the way of many others, by indenting himself for four years to serve

*I wish to be acquitted of any local preference in the description of these men, or partiality of delineations in their characters. But notwithstanding the representation given of Morgan (in extension of the calumnious old history of the Buccaneers) by the Abbé Raynal, he is constrained to confess, that in the midst of hostility he fell in love with a beautiful Spaniard; and that he did not sacrifice her to his wishes, though she attempted his life. A breast capable of admitting a passion of this nature, under such circumstances, could not surely be considered as the most barbarous; and of the respectability of his subsequent character, we have certainly the best account.
a planter. When released from a service executed with fidelity, he joined the Buccaneers, and adding ability to courage, soon shared their success and their riches. One of the exploits which first rendered him famous was the capture of Porto Bello96 (which Admiral Vernon97 afterwards destroyed with difficulty); for which, the plan of operations was so well contrived, that he took it without opposition. In attacking the fort, to spare the effusion of blood, he compelled the women and the priests, whom he had made prisoners, to set the scaling-ladders to the walls, from an idea, that the Spaniards would not fire at the objects of their love and reverence. Their omnipotent power, however, was wealth, in preference to religion or beauty; and the humane expedient miscarried, to the great injury of the besieged. The conquest of Panama98 seems to have been attended with prodigious difficulty, both by sea and land; but even here, he did not forget a merciful expedient—buying the fortified island of St. Catharine,99 which was necessary to his progress. At Panama they found immense treasures: among the dreadful sacrifices that were made, some circumstances less severe are recorded: vanity received a singular punishment; and it was here that Morgan became captivated by a captive. The first of these circumstances occurred in a beggar, who, entering a castle deserted by its owners, found some rich apparel, which, in preference to every thing else, he adopted; the besiegers entered, and pressed the grotesque noble for his wealth, when, pointing to the rags he had just quitted, he received the effects of his folly and pride in a death scarcely unmerited.

Morgan, appears to have addressed the lady by whom he was smitten, with respect and forbearance, sentiments not always to be found, in more refined invaders, and they met with a contrary return. "My fortune and my liberty, which depended on others," said the indignant fair, "you have already, but my honour is my own care;" upon which, she drew a poignard from beneath her dress, and attempted to plunge it into his breast; fortunately he avoided the blow. — Agonized with passion, yet incapable of violation, with more philosophy than is often called forth under such circumstances, it is probable that he wisely and nobly tore himself from the scene of his attraction, as he suddenly quitted the spot; even before his companions could accompany him. On the peace, which a few years after took place, between England and Spain, he retired to Jamaica, and having purchased a plantation, betook himself with much industry to its cultivation. He succeeded in these tranquil pursuits, and, in time, grew into equal repute in a pacific life to that which he had experienced in war; he was called to bear a part in the government of the island in which he had become a proprietor; and, finally, to the command of Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica, and to the dignity of knighthood.100 He executed the duties of every situation in which he was placed with probity and
honour; and a writer of the present day,* who saw some of his letters in the possession of a friend on the island, describes them as manifesting a spirit of humanity, justice, liberality, and piety.

It is painful to relate, that Sir Henry Morgan, three years before the close of his chequered and useful life, was committed to the Tower101 by King James II. at the instance of the Spanish Emperor, where he remained till his death without trial, and of course without conviction of any crime.102 Though a sacrifice to the same monarch, with his great predecessor Raleigh, his life was not, however, included, and he died in peace.

To return to the community of Buccaneers, although separated from each other, the English and French still continued to act in concert; the latter retiring, after the conflict, to St. Domingo, to share the spoil, and the former to Jamaica. When any were maimed, the first steps, were those taken for their provision in the most honourable way; no one secreted any share of the booty under pain of expulsion; nor had favour any influence in its division, which was with much judgment. Dissipation of every kind succeeded their advantages, and he who was rich one day, resigned himself to poverty the next. They continued to increase in force, and to proportionally depress the Spaniards, who, at length, retired into a sullen inactivity, which passively continued, till all other communication with their mother-country ceased, than that which could be maintained by a single ship of no great burthen.

Nor did the Buccaneers themselves continue to prevail as they had been accustomed. After the settlements of the French and English in the New World became established, many were killed and lost, and some adopted agriculture; till, at length, France, who had not been altogether ignorant of its progress, became attracted by the infant colony then formed in St. Domingo, if it could yet be so called.

The number of planters to whom only could be really accorded the character of colonists did not exceed four hundred; the first care of the government then was to multiply this number, and to form them into a more regular society; for this purpose it commissioned a gentleman named Bertrand D’Ogeron,103 who had emigrated from Anjou104 about nine years before, but who had evinced too much virtue and sensibility to hope for commercial success, without a better fortune. With the best contrived plans he had failed; but the ability and fortitude, he had shewn in adversity, had won him the general esteem and attachment so much, that he was considered as the most proper person to direct, or rather to settle the colony.

*Bryan Edwards, Esq. M.P. F.R.S. &c. [History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies (1793).]
Of the difficulty of such an enterprise, none could doubt but himself, depending much on his own powers, who knew no other wish, than the good of human kind; he began by reconciling the idle to labour, and those who had traded with all the world, to the monopoly of a privileged company, which had the year before, been established for all the French settlements. He held out allurements for new inhabitants in a country which had suffered every species of calumny: when the maritime determined to go in search of greater advantages, he seduced them to stay, even by relinquishing the revenues of his post, and procuring them commissions from Portugal to attack the Spaniards, when they had made peace with France; to the huntsmen he advanced money without interest to erect habitations: and to the planters he united every encouragement. Nor did he long suffer them to remain in a cheerless celibacy, which denied an increase of population by the best and most natural of all means, and left them without the most powerful attraction to a fixed residence—that of mild, unassuming beings, who create comforts unknown by any other means; conferring interest and felicity, while they are as ministering angels to alleviate the sorrows, and soften the asperities of man. D’Ogeron sent for women, and obtained an hundred from France—such as should be the female inhabitants of an infant colony, young, healthy, amiable, and enterprising. To prevent the effect of the most impetuous of passions, he contrived, that while choice was not entirely suppressed, those should first become husbands whose industry had rendered them equal to the payment of an adequate sum; and the others (who respected social justice) waited anxiously to be so blessed in their turn: but they were disappointed, and the colony injured, as is too often the case, by expedients of which their insufficiency is the most favorable objection. The females, who afterwards made their appearance from the mother country, as if all regard for the constitutions of society, had been lost, were those for whom delicacy would wish to find a better name than the refuse of cities; selected without discrimination, they were bound as to masters for three years; of such a connexion, we need not attempt the description. The only circumstance worthy of record respecting it, is the declaration of the Buccaneers, who chiefly adopted them, on their simple marriage. “I ask you no questions,” said he, “respecting your former life, but you are now mine; and if you prove false, this,” putting his hand to the muzzle of his gun, “will revenge me.” The effects of the profligacy introduced at this time were long, very long felt. In the course of four years, however, D’Ogeron found means to increase the number of planters in proportion to the population, so that, in 1699, they amounted to more than 1,500.

In the following year the benign exertions of this good man, received a check from the elation of the India Company, which is the too frequent con-
sequence of successful monopolies. Conceiving themselves secure in a new and extensive trade, and not satisfied with a moderate profit, they ventured to raise the prices of their goods in a proportion of two thirds; the colonists, who had not yet changed their natural inclinations to violence, had immediate recourse to arms, and the price of tranquillity was a free trade to France, except an allowance of five per cent, to the company, to be paid by all ships on their arrival and departure. Even this disaster afforded D’Ogeron an opportunity for exertions of beneficence, of which only himself was capable. He procured two ships seemingly intended for his own produce, but, in fact, for the use of the colony. Every one shipped his commodities on board these vessels at a moderate freight, and, on their return, the cargo brought from the mother country was exposed to public sale at prime cost. A general credit was given without interest, and even without security, this generous governor hoping to inspire them with probity and noble sentiments by such a confidence: thus, under a jurisdiction so exquisite, every public disaster served but to consolidate the colony; and could not fail also to excite a regret the most poignant, on an occasion which happened much too early; for the patriotic and benevolent D’Ogeron was cut off in the midst of his parental offices in 1673, an example of every humane and social virtue.

It was three years before the much lamented death of D’Ogeron, that the town of Cape François had been founded. It is to be regretted as a consequence of religious intolerance to drive from their country its most useful members. Gobin, a calvinist, flew from persecution to the mild state of St. Domingo, and built the first habitation on the cape, to which he invited others, who immediately flocked thither as the ground became cleared.

The place held by D’Ogeron was supplied with tolerable success by his nephew, M. Ponancey, who, although described as of a less amiable disposition than his uncle, seems to have followed him in his laudable plan of government. He had the honor of completing what his great predecessor had so ably begun, the establishment of a colony upon a regular and firm basis, without the promulgation of laws, or the coercion of military force. More virtue than could be expected, from a variety of governors, was, however, required to sustain such a government; as licentiousness, naturally increased with population, aided by the unfortunate introduction of females, of the character already mentioned, it became of course necessary to submit to ordinary forms. Two administrators were therefore commissioned from Martinico, who established courts of judicature for the several districts, accountable to a superior council at Petit Goäve. These innovations were gained by a little finesse without much disagreement, and, but for the interference of private interest, which will ever obtrude upon infant establishments, the colony might have immediately opened a mine of wealth upon its shores.
It may not be improper to remark here, as a glaring instance of the want of power, or capacity in the Spanish colony, that in 1685 it suffered the Duke of Albemarle, then governor of Jamaica, and Sir William Phipps, to obtain considerable wealth, by raising the wreck of a Spanish plate ship which had been stranded off the north-east coast of their own territory twenty-four years before, on a shoal between the north and south riff, almost in sight of Old Cape François.

Skins and tobacco, were hitherto, the principal articles of commerce from the French colony; for the latter, in consequence of the restrictions, they substituted indigo and cocoa; for similar reasons the profitable culture of cotton, which had been added, was soon abandoned. Hitherto the labours of the colony had been prosecuted chiefly by the poorest of the inhabitants, and a few negroes, which had been obtained by successful expeditions against the Spaniards; but in the war of 1688, several slaves being taken from the English, they began to contemplate the culture of the sugar-cane, as an additional source of wealth, and one of the greatest importance. With this view they continued to increase their stock of negroes, by every means in their power, though but slowly, till the year 1694, when, taking advantage of a combination of misfortunes which had reduced Jamaica, the governor (a spirited man, who had before desired permission to chase the Spaniards from his own colony,) landed in that island with a force, which shewed the anterior progress of St. Domingo to power, and increased it more than any other event, that had hitherto occurred. Whatever were the other motives that induced this expedition, Du Casse seems to have had an eye to the principal necessities of his colony, by including in his booty a considerable number of negroes, perhaps not less than two thousand. The other captured property, added to the private wealth of some of the remaining Buccaneers, (if those embarked in privateering, could be still so called,) enabled them to employ these slaves, and furnish buildings and articles for the production of sugar. The year following, however, the English returned the compliment of M. Du Casse, by attacking the now flourishing settlement of Cape François, in conjunction with the forces of Spain, which they took, plundered, and reduced to ashes. It was soon, however, rebuilt on the same site; and from this period no difficulty or misfortune to the colony, was sufficient to impede its gradual progress to that eminence, which obtained for it, in another century the appellation of the Garden of the West Indies.

The peace of Ryswick afforded the first regular cession of the western part of the island to the French; for the preceding treaties of Aix la Chapelle and Nimeguen in 1668 and 1678 did not, by any means, conciliate the national antipathies in St. Domingo; and even by it there were no other boundaries established to the possessions thus ceded, than a custom, constantly sub-
mitted to change from a variety of circumstances. By this cession the French
appear to have obtained all the territory excluded, without an oblique line
reaching from the then Cape François on the north-east coast, to Cape Rosa
on the west, intercepting the towns of Isabella and Jago at the one point, and
those of Petit Goâve and Port Louis at the other.* Still, therefore, the scene
of constant feuds between the more ancient colonists and their neighbour, a
large part of the colony towards the south, continued unoccupied, except by
a few straggling inhabitants in miserable huts, and it remained a desirable ob-
ject with the government to procure its settlement, in some way, at once both
permanent and effectual. To accomplish this end, another company was privi-
leged in France, which adopted the title of St. Louis,120 to whom this fine and
extensive country was granted as a property for thirty years; on condition—
that it should open a contraband trade with the Spanish continent, and clear
the ground. The company immediately granted lands to all who chose, with
certain allowances, providing them also with slaves and other necessaries,
and every thing began to wear a promising aspect. The colony continued to
increase with so much vigour, that, at the beginning of the next century a
superior jurisdiction became necessary in Cape François, and it was accord-
ingly established in 1702. The town of the Cape was, in every other respect,
the capital of the colony, though, except in time of war, when it was removed
hither, Port-au-Prince was the seat of the government.

In proportion as the French colony rose in splendor, the Spanish inhabi-
tants decreased in comfort, apparently shrinking from the effects of an in-
dustry they could not reach; yet, the former was not without difficulties to
counterbalance its advantages: for in the year 1715, the death of nearly all the
cocoa trees on the colony, deprived it of a very lucrative revenue; and shortly
after, it experienced, in common with more important states, a shock that
threatened its total subversion. This flourishing colony had arrived at a pitch
of prosperity and refinement, sufficient to enable many of its proprietors to
return with ample fortunes to France, or retire under easy circumstances
when age required it; but when Law’s fatal scheme of finance exploded,
those whose property had been paid for in the notes, or securities of the Mis-
sissippi company,121 or others, allied to them, were left destitute, without any
hopes of retribution; many returned poor to the island, from which they had
departed rich, and were compelled to serve those, who had formerly been
their servants, for bread. The presence of these unfortunate victims, seemed
to prolong a sensation with respect to that delusive stroke of policy, which

*From the demarcation on the map of Herman Moll executed in less than twenty years
after.
nothing else could have occasioned; it, however, recovered the shock; and, in its worst moments, surrounded by the pleasing effects of successful industry, might look with pity upon the opposite situation of its neighbours; if such sentiments could be expected to prevail under a disparity of circumstances.

In 1717, the Spanish colony, (which had in the time of Herrera, according to his history, included 14,000 pure Castilians among its inhabitants, with a proportional population in every class,) had only 18,410 souls of every description; and, but for the ecclesiastical and juridical importance of its dilapidating capital, perhaps scarcely even a vestige would have remained. Without affecting, in allusion to these times, either the bigotry, which must be occasionally allowed in Edwards, or the inveteracy of Raynal, in favor of peculiar opinions, we may clearly view, in this decline, the fatal consequences of intolerance and cruelty, while we can happily contemplate with redoubled pleasure the agreeable contrast, which a mild regimen affords through every class of created beings.

In 1720, the produce of the French colony amounted, according to Raynal, to 1,200,000 pounds weight of indigo, 1,400,000 pounds of white sugar, and 21,000,000 pounds of raw sugar, and its increase was as rapid, as it was successful: never satisfied, however, with ordinary advantages, it is the very nature of monopoly to grasp at every opportunity of increasing its exclusive rights, without any regard to those which are the objects of its privileges. In consequence of a degree of insolence, with which, the introduction of a measure intended to confine the trade of slaves to themselves was conducted, a violent commotion took place in 1722, which was not quelled entirely for two years, during which period the buildings and ships of the company were destroyed, and their commissioners disgraced. It will naturally be supposed that a commotion which extended with the most inconceivable firmness through every part of the island, affected the progress of cultivation and commerce for some time after the re-establishment of peace; yet, in 1734, we find a considerable increase of plantations, in which the growth of cotton, and coffee, had been added to a great extent. This increase of opulence, occasioned, naturally, an augmentation of the respectability of the government, for in 1750 we find a new establishment at Port-au-Prince, the capital, which now became the residence of a commander in chief, a superior council, and an intendant.

In the year 1754, the amount of the various commodities of the colony was equal to 1,261,469 l., but such was its increasing prosperity, that the inhabitants received from the mother country, imports to the amount of 1,777,509 l.

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The population of pure whites amounted to upwards of 14,000; free mulattoes nearly 4,000; and upwards of 172,000 negroes of different descriptions. There were 599 sugar plantations, and 3,379 of indigo. The cocoa trees amounted to 98,946; the cotton plants to 6,300,367; and there were near 22,000,000 of cassia trees. The provisions consisted of near 6,000,000 of banana trees; upwards of 1,000,000 plots of potatoes; 226,000 plots of yams; and near 3,000,000 trenches of manioc. The cattle did not exceed 63,000 horses and mules, and 93,000 head of horned cattle.*

In short, the remaining events of St. Domingo, up to the period of the French revolution, consists of a series of successes the most brilliant, and a display of industry and opulence the most creditable to the French character. Even the government of Madrid seems to have been excited, to some degree of emulation about the year 1757, as a company was formed at Barcelona, with exclusive privileges, to attempt a re-establishment in the eastern part of the island. The most, however, that appears to have been accomplished, was the equipment of two small vessels annually, by which they received in return, a few thousand hides, and some other trifling articles; but in 1765, when Charles III. opened a free trade to all the Windward Islands, they suddenly assumed quite an altered appearance; and Hispaniola, so long depressed by the false policy of the mother country, seem determined to attempt a renewal of her former activity. During the five years preceding 1774, the custom-house duties were more than doubled. It extended, however, comparatively to little more than a dying struggle. The French still continued to increase rapidly; in 1764, they had a force of 8,786 white men, capable of bearing arms, with whom 1,414 mulattoes were enrolled, and their slaves had increased to 206,000. In 1767, they laded 347 ships for France, besides a considerable overplus, not less than one fifth of that number, distributed in various ways.

As if it were to temper the success of this splendid colony, a dreadful earthquake happened on the third day of June, 1770, which levelled the capital, Port-au-Prince, with the ground. It has been, however, rebuilt with additional convenience, and enlarged with much labour, several streets having been raised upon the shore by means of causeways, though it does not possess, by any means, the elegance of Cape François; many of the buildings being composed of wood.

In 1776, a determinate cessation took place of the dreadful feuds which had constantly occurred between the Spanish and French inhabitants of the colony, by the formation of a new line of demarcation, to separate the dif-

ferent partitions of the island. This settlement, though from a strange avarice in the Spaniards of territory, which they knew not how to occupy, appears to encroach considerably on the former possessions of France, was a most desirable concession to the latter. Nor were the consequences of this agreement less favorable to the Spaniards in other respects: for they afterwards opened a more liberal commerce with their neighbouring colonists; whom they supplied with every description of cattle, receiving in return through their means all the productions of Europe, and expending with them the monies received from Spain for the purposes of the government.

After the conflict between Great Britain and her American colonies, the Spanish government began to pay more regard to its territories in that quarter, and it accordingly became furnished with a more respectable garrison. Since that time, the number of Europeans added to it, tended also to improve its respectability as a colony.

From this period, to the commencement of revolutionary activity in 1789, when those principles which had long been concealed in a smouldering flame, were about to have vent through the world, the French establishment in St. Domingo reached a height superior, not only to all other colonial possessions, but to the conception of the philosopher and politician; its private luxury, and its public grandeur, astonished the traveller; its accumulation of wealth surprized the mother country; and it was beheld with rapture by the neighbouring inhabitants of the islands of the Antilles. Like a rich beauty, surrounded with every delight, the politicians of Europe, sighed for her possession; but they sighed in vain; she was reserved for the foundation of a republic as extraordinary as it is terrible, whether it ultimately tend only, to the ascertainment of abstract opinions, or unfold a new and august empire to the world, where it has heretofore been deemed impossible to exist.

It remains only to the present division of the work, to add a brief account of the general appearance of the island, as it existed at this date of its history; which, will then subdivide itself into the different heads, under which it is proposed to consider the causes, progress, and consequences of its revolution, and present establishment.

Notwithstanding, the reduced state of that part of the island which still continued in the possession of Spain, what has been collected of its topography, or, natural history, shall, in justice to the ancient proprietors, commence the brief detail which concludes the present chapter.

The Spanish division of St. Domingo is understood to have comprehended, at that period, the whole territory within the diversified line of demarcation, fixed upon a few years before, which confined the French to apparently an insignificant part of the island. Commencing with the river Du Massacre on
the north, it stretched in an irregular curve towards the west, crossing all the
great roads from Fort Dauphin and the Cape, passing the hills at about thirty
miles distant from the coast, and intersecting the conflux of the streams of
La Trouble and Plaisance; when, turning shortly round the hills at Atalaye, it
assumes its southern direction, and crossing the stream of La Petite Rivière at
its mouth, stretches through a delightful plain watered by the great river Arti-
bonite: crossing this, and the river Du Fer, and winding round a single hill, it
then proceeds through the little lake of Cul de Sac; returning to its eastward
direction, it falls in with the river à Pitres at a point nearly opposite to that of
its departure, having formed an ellipsis of not less than 170 miles, the nearest
point approaching within a very short distance of the town of Gonaives, situ-
atated in the bay of that name, upon the western coast.*

It will be perceived, what a large proportion of this delightful territory, re-
mained in the possession of Spain; which, whatever the degraded character
we have been obliged to attribute to its possessors, must have produced a
very ample return for the cultivation they bestowed upon it. With an extent of
coast of between five and six hundred miles, in which are not less than seven
capacious bays, (with innumerable inlets,) into which twenty large rivers, be-
sides many nameless streams, discharge themselves; while the interior, con-
sisting of large fertile plains, well watered, and protected, rather than inter-
rupted, by the different chains of mountains with which they are variegated;
producing the most delightful and salubrious vallies: nothing was wanting
but the moderate labour of the cultivator, and a liberal policy, to render it
the most desirable country in the world. In wanting these, however, it sunk
into a beautiful wilderness, and its sullen shores repelled the eye which had
been attracted by distant fertility. On sites that would have received and en-
couraged the population of cities, were placed the solitary huts of fisher-
men; whose miserable toils, perhaps, a melancholy monk was embittering by
a thousand painful restrictions of his poverty-stricken career on earth, and
dreadful views of eternity; the result of morbid intellects, nursed by the wild
scene around him.

The principal towns, after the ancient city of St. Domingo, were, Monte
Christi, La Vega, St. Jago, formerly that of the Conception, Zeibo, St. Thomé,
Azua, and Isabella, if the latter could deserve the appellation. The other places
were merely villages of the most wretched appearance, which, instead of al-
luring society from the distant provinces, seemed rather to mark with desola-
tion those natural meadows with which they abounded. The most important

*This line is believed to be accurately delineated in the corrected map of the island pre-
fixed to the present work.
of these were St. Laurent, a few miles north of the capital, in which were a few villas, very inviting, from the beauty of the plain in which it was situated; Higuey, whose advantageous situation on the river of that name, might have procured for it much more importance; Baya, Bayaguana, and Monte Plata, surrounded by the finest land in the known world, and in the vicinity of forests, whose riches and utility were unappreciated; Cotuy, near the union of the rivers Yuna and Cotuy, about eight leagues from the centre of the bay of Samana; St. Juan de Maguana, delightfully placed on the banks of the Neybe, and separated by a small mountainous district from the lake of Riquille; St. Jean de Goava and Banica, served often as points of the commerce between the two colonies, as well as Atalaye, which stretched towards the extremity of the angle reaching into the French division opposite the bay of Gonaives; St. Miguel, Dejabon, Venta de Cana, Sala, Jarbon, Espani, and Amina, distributed in the course of a few leagues from the northern coasts, though inhabited by a kind of wealthy graziers, form a powerful contrast to the wild beauty of the surrounding country.

St. Domingo, the capital, and seat of the ecclesiastical government of the colonies, and at one time of the whole of the Spanish dominion in the new world, still continued an archiepiscopal see, to which the bishops of the other islands were suffragans. It is situated, as hath been before described, near the mouth of the river Ozama, on the southern coast of the island, and on the border of a fertile and delightful level of near ninety miles in length, and thirty in breadth, significantly called Los Llanos. The cathedral, and other public buildings, yet retained no mean degree of importance; and, notwithstanding their dilapidating antiquity, wore an elegance of appearance that was not to have been expected. The remains of many other superb buildings of antiquity were yet to be seen, and those of a modern date of brick, stone, and wood, were not unworthy the capital of such a territory. It yet contained several religious establishments, and what is of more importance, the extent and safety of its harbour, containing an ample depth of water, and, protected by a bar, over which the largest vessels rode with safety, could not fail to render it of great commercial interest. The streets were principally broad, and towards the middle of the town retained their original rectangular neatness; they were also clean, and enlightened by three handsome squares. It yet contained an appearance of great strength towards the sea, and even on the side of the land it was guarded by a sufficient wall. Some remains yet exist of the ancient citadel, and also of the palace of the First Viceroy.

The town of Monte Christi still retained a busy appearance, and some degree of importance, from its continued traffic with the neighbouring continent of North America, and the vicinity of some of the most flourishing plan-
tations of the French colony. During the wars between England and France, while Spain was disengaged from the troubles, the Spaniards traded much to this part, as did also the English smugglers.

La Vega, neither pleasing nor convenient, situated in the extensive plain of the Vega Real, which is, in length, nearly that of half the island, though seldom exceeding thirty miles in breadth, derived its chief consequence from the surrounding pasturage, and some excellent sugar-walks in its vicinity.

St. Jago retained a considerable air of antiquity, but no other recommendation; for all the former grandeur which it would appear to have possessed is now in ruins, and it affords but an additional monument of desolation; yet it contained a miserable monastery of Franciscans, to whom were attached some of the finest lands in the neighbourhood; but whose chief power seemed to be employed in the rule of the slaves in the adjacent plantations, in the care of whose religious duties they frequently forgot their temporal avocations.

Zeibo was a place of some business, from being the only town towards the eastern coast, as St. Thomas is, again, from being situated in the very centre of the island, among the mountains of Cibao. Agua was also of little other importance than from being placed in the middle of a very fine bay on the southern coast. The first and the last of these towns, besides their desolatory state, bordering on extensive swamps, were therefore unhealthy; while St. Thomé, receiving the invigorating winds, as they sweep from the mountains on one side, and the salubrious breeze from the plains on the other, was a situation desirable for the farmer, or the valetudinarian, and capable of much improvement. On the site of the first city erected in the new world, in honour of Isabella, remain a few houses and ruins, while here and there a solitary cross peeping from amidst the luxuriant grass, served just to tell us—"such things were." One little stream watered its vicinity, and a rugged road marked its few occasions to direct an inquisitive traveller to its haunts.

Of the ecclesiastical government of the island, little shall here suffice. Notwithstanding that conduct on the part of the clergy which had compelled certain regulations of their conduct, and the liberality of sentiment which began to gain ground in Spain, the American church still retained an inordinate power over every class of the community, and an undue interference with every object of the colony. Independent of the papal jurisdiction, * and originally endowed with immense revenues from the wealth, and afterwards the devotion of the people, they still continued in extraordinary numbers,

*The Emperor Ferdinand having obtained from the Popes Alexander VI. and Julius II. such an exemption on the first discovery of the New World, to favour its extension. [Ferdinand VI (1713–59) was the king of Spain from 1746 until his death in 1759. His reign was characterized by numerous reforms aimed at modernizing Spain.]
fattening on the very desolation of the country, to whose benefit their order had not, in the least, contributed.* Many of the benefices were, however, now filled by the secular clergy, according to the effort of Ferdinand VI. to remedy the vicious and abominable abuses of the regulars. It has been already stated to have been honoured with the seat of the archiepiscopal see; it had also all the minor dignities, while the Curas, or parish-priests, were to be found in all the sacerdotal dignity throughout the country. The inquisition was also established in this as well as all the other American islands.

The constitution of Hispaniola is not easily defined. The different towns were under the immediate direction of a sort of local municipality; but their power was very weak, and much infringed by the privileges of different bodies of the clergy. They confined themselves chiefly, therefore, to the minor commercial regulations of their own district, and even these were under the control of a governor of the colony. The more important ends of general justice were administered by six more respectable judges, severally appointed, for civil and criminal jurisdiction, who formed one of the eleven Courts of Audience distributed among the colonies, and which are a model of the Spanish Chancery. The decisions of these courts were subject to appeal to the Council of the Indies in Spain, except in civil cases, where the object of litigation did not amount, in value, to a sum near fifteen hundred pounds. The vice-roy of New Spain represents the head of the government. The council over-ruled every department, civil and ecclesiastical, military and commercial, and has always preserved its dignity; with it originates every ordinance relative to the government of the colonies, which must be passed by the majority of a third of its members. At the head of this council the king is always understood to preside. There is also a commercial assembly for the purposes of an immediate attention to all its objects which could not be affected by any other means. The local officers immediately below the whole of these, consist of the different commandants, and a variety of inferior officers of almost every description; many of whose situations were sinecures, as valuable as the proprietors of the island were depreciated.

Of the military force of the colony little can be said; for, except the garrison of St. Domingo, and a few posts established towards the line of demarcation, the regular soldiery distributed throughout the island were inconsiderable;

*“Though, by the ample provision which has been made for the American church, many of its members enjoy the ease and independence which are favourable to the cultivation of science, the body of secular clergy has hardly, during two centuries and a half, produced one author whose works contain such useful information, or possess such a degree of merit as to be ranked among those which attract the attention of enlightened nations.” — Robertson’s Hist. Vol. IV. p. 50.
nor could the militia, in which all capable of bearing arms were included, be said to produce an addition very effective. The principal ports along the line were those of Verettes, St. Michael, and St. Raphael.

The different inhabitants of the Spanish colony were designated as follows:—The pure Spaniards, who visited America for the purpose of employment, and who always enjoyed every situation of power, were called Chapetones. They looked down with disdain upon every other order of men.

The second class of subjects were the Creoles, or descendants of Europeans settled in America. Though frequently deriving their pedigree from the noblest families in Spain, and possessing ample fortunes, yet the abjectness of political debasement—the enervation of indulgence in a warm climate, had subdued their minds, and subjected them to the vilest sloth. While the Chapetone amassed immense wealth, the Creole remained satisfied with his unimpaired patrimony; a determined hatred reigning between them.

The third was the offspring of an European with an Indian, or a negro: the former, called Mulattoes, the latter Mestizos. Of these, there was a considerable number in this, as in all the other Spanish settlements. In proportion as the number exceeded the colonies of other nations, from the early policy of encouraging an intermixture of the Spaniards with the natives, and from a greater indulgence of licentious intercourse. Among these there were a variety of different shades of colour, from the jet black of Africa, and the copper, or brown hue of America, to that of the European complexion. Those of the first and second generations, were considered not sufficiently removed, for distinction, from their parent race; in the third, the colour sensibly declined; and, in the fifth they embraced the characteristics and privileges of Europeans. The mechanic arts and active offices of society were left, by the proud and indolent Spaniards, to this robust and hardy race; who were lively, well-tempered, and frequently accomplished.

The Negroes compose the fourth rank; of this singular, and important part of the human species, more will be found in another department of this work. In Hispaniola, as well as several other of the Spanish colonies, the Negroes were much used in domestic service, and for purposes of luxury. They were splendidly dressed, and, in many respects, rendered so subservient to vanity, that they became themselves, more silly, vain, and imperious, than their masters.

However, the distinctions between Europeans and the people of colour were, by no means, kept up in the Spanish colonies as in those of other nations, except with regard to ecclesiastical establishments, to which they were not generally admitted.

*The Indians in those of the Spanish colonies where they yet remain, form a fifth, and the most depressed class of inhabitants.
The Spanish coast is, in many parts, of a bold and rocky appearance, presenting high cliffs and extended promontories, and, in others, for many leagues, beautiful in the extreme, delighting the eye with an agreeable variety of hills, valleys, woods, and rivers. The generally luxurious face of the country continues the same throughout, with very little appearance of sterility even on the deserted north-east coast. The richest glades, with a most delightful foliage appear in the very bosoms of the mountains; and nothing can exceed the fertility of the cultivated lands, in every direction. The vast plain of Los Llanos, stretching along the south-east part of the island, is adapted to the growth of every tropical production, and, (abounding with rivers,) always capable of irrigation, as well as the Vega Real, which lies more towards the north, and through which flows the Yuna and the Cotuy, over a space of from fifty to an hundred miles; till meeting at a short distance from the coast, they discharge their united streams into the bay of Samana. On the northern coast, (by which Columbus first approached the island,) is also a large tract of land which, though consigned to vast herds of wild cattle of various descriptions, exhibited its fertility, in the support of this object of commerce, as well as in several grass-farms, which lay to the northward line of demarcation. The present produce is sugar, ginger, cocoa, tobacco, cotton, indigo, maize, and the Cassava root, of which, what they could spare (with wood for dying,) was received by the mother-country. But their principal article of exportation was the hides of the horned-cattle, which ran wild in the plains, with no other guards than the names, or the marks of their owners: at length, they regarded the carcasses also, which being gladly received by their neighbours, they were found to be a valuable resource. Not confining themselves to horned-cattle, they furnished also great numbers of horses and mules, which required less trouble in their rearing, and were very acceptable to the French colony.

The population, though an exact account may be deemed impossible, may, probably, approach to the statement of M. de Charmilly, at 60,000; the number of whites was certainly greater than 2,000, and that of the negroes less than half the total number; the free race of mixed blood of different grades, composing the remainder.

The Spanish division of Hispaniola, affords every species of tropical herb, and beast; as, in this respect, it is similar to the western part of the island, they will be considered together.

The French colony of St. Domingo, comprehended the whole of the territory westward of the line of demarcation, before described: with fewer natural advantages, it presented such a contrast to the inactivity of the neighbouring country, as procured for it a character almost equal to that which has been so generally given to the whole of the island at its discovery. This colony, of which we are able to give a more regular account, was divided, as indeed
nature appears to have directed, into the northern, western, and southern provinces. The first of these extended about forty leagues along the northern coast, from the river Massacre to Cape St. Nicholas, and contained (including the island of Tortuga) twenty-six parishes. The principal towns and harbours were, Cape François, Fort Dauphin, Port Paix, and Cape St. Nicholas.

The western province commenced at Cape St. Nicholas, and occupying the whole line of roadstead forming the Bight, or vast and general bay of Leogane, terminated at Cape Tiburon. It contained fourteen parishes, in which the chief towns were, Port-au-Prince, St. Marc, Leogane, Petit Goäve, and Jeremie; with the considerable villages of Gonaives, and Arcahaye. The best harbours are those of Port-au-Prince and Gonaives, the others are open and dangerous.

The southern province occupied the remaining coast from Cape Tiburon to L’Anse à Pitre, (or rather the river of that name): of the ten parishes, there were but two chief towns, those of the Cayes and Jacmel. Its roads and harbours are dangerous; and the shipping off Aux Cayes are frequently obliged to take refuge in the bay des Flamands.

The town of Cape François, in effect the capital of the colony, stands on a small plain, as it were, hollowed out of the Morne du Cap, a mountain which rises on both sides from the bay. The Morne, which allows only a narrow passage to the plain, is joined by the northern mountains, extending to Fort Picolet, which is placed on the edge of the rock, and defends the entrance to the roads; though built, in some respects, disadvantageously (except as regarded its commodious bay, and sometimes experiencing an inconvenient closeness from the situation,) it had risen to a degree of elegance concordant to the importance of the island, and which might cope with many European cities of the first order and opulence. It was composed of upwards of thirty well-formed streets, which crossed each other at right angles, and were many of them elegant. The houses built of stone and brick, were frequently handsome and commodious. It contained also two magnificent squares, those of Notre Dame and Clugny, ornamented with fountains; besides public shops, and long ranges of warehouses, suited to the commercial purposes to which this scene is dedicated. The principal public buildings after the church, which had not been erected many years, were the government-house, formerly a convent of Jesuits,* the barracks, arsenal, playhouse, and prison. There were

*His Royal Highness, the Duke of Clarence, was entertained in this building at the conclusion of peace in 1783. [The Duke of Clarence (1765–1837) became King William IV after the death of George IV in 1830. He served in New York during the American Revolutionary War. The Jesuits, or the Society of Jesus, are a religious order of the Catholic Church founded in 1534 by St. Ignatius of Loyola. They were very present in South America until
also, I believe, two hospitals of a similar nature to our own, and two of the establishments which Raynal calls houses of Providence. Whether the Hôpital de la Charité (an alms or work-house), in the road to L'Haut du Cap, at a small distance from the town, was of this kind, I am not certain, though I believe it; they were, however, as Raynal observed, “truly pious and divine institutions;” being for the benefit of such Europeans as might remain in the colony destitute of resources, or who, before they had acquired by industry, an opportunity to procure subsistence, became subject to disorders often fatal. Males and females were separately taken care of, and nourished till they were disposed of in some employment in which they could help themselves. The theatre was supplied by a respectable company of comedians, who performed, with short intervals, all the year round, besides other exhibitions and entertainments.

Fort Dauphin, about thirty miles from the cape, from whence there is an excellent road at a small distance from the shore, supplies the place of an ancient town called Bayaha, which was situated at a greater distance from the coast: it was the last town on the eastern frontier of the French, and stands in the farthest recess of a spacious harbour, which has only one narrow outlet. It has a small river flowing by the village of Trou to the west, and the shore of Manchenillo bay to the east. The fort stands on a little peninsula to the north, and it is bounded on the south by the same luxurious and extensive plain which enhanced the riches of the town that has been just described. It was well fortified, and could have held out against a considerable force for some time. It had also a theatre well supplied, assemblies, and concerts. Though the greater part of the produce of the plain was carried to Cape François, Fort Dauphin had more than its share of contraband trade, with several advantages, derived from proximity to the forlorn part of the Spanish dominion.

Port Paix stands on a worse situation than either of the preceding towns, from the former of which it is distant about forty miles. It was the first establishment of the Buccaneers on the island, when, quitting the habits of freebooters, they began to form themselves into a more peaceable society. Port Paix is healthy, though a considerable swamp is not far distant, to the northeast; and every exertion of Agrarian industry has been exercised to its advantage, even to the erection of several well-planned aqueducts. Its retirement well adapting it to the purposes of contraband trade, to the great emolument

they suffered a backlash for their political influence in all the principal Catholic countries of Europe. They were expelled from Portuguese, French, and Spanish colonies between 1758 and 1770.]
of the Americans, who frequented this port as well as the next, which forms the boundary of the northern province.

The town of Cape St. Nicholas is situated on the sterile spot from which it derives its name, and which is considered the key to the windward passage, being directly opposite to the port of Maisi in Cuba. Its chief excellence is its harbour, which is capacious, and rendered perfectly secure by the mole, or peninsula, on the north-west, which, with the mountains on the north-east, form a bay nearly six miles long, sheltered from every wind. Behind, rise the mountains of the cape, which, altogether, renders it a place of a formidable appearance. It was rendered a free port by the French in consequence of its unproductive quality, (as before mentioned,) and to allure residents, to whom the French ministry allied a colony of Acadians and Germans.

Port-au-Prince was the ostensible metropolis of the French colony, and the seat of its government; except in time of war, when it was removed to Cape François. It must have been one of the unaccountable caprices that sometimes direct the settlements of towns, that could have obtained for this place, indefensible at all points, the distinction it received. It was neither healthy nor inviting, though opulent, and well built, with every attention to convenience, but chiefly of wood. The water is of a brackish and otherwise disagreeable taste. It enjoyed, in common with the principal towns of the other provinces, the vicinity of a rich plain, the Cul de Sac, which contained no less than 150 sugar plantations, with every convenience for their advantage; while the mountains behind it, clothed with plantations of coffee, reached quite to the Spanish settlements at Riquille. The dreadful earthquake which happened in 1770, occasioned the town to be much enlarged and improved. There were many long and populous streets, but not handsome. A few public edifices ornamented situations, not the best calculated to receive them; among these, the residence of the intendant, and the theatre, were most conspicuous. There are two harbours formed by some islets, open to any attack. The town extending along the sea-shore, in the centre of the western coast, is damp, and cheerless, except from the hurry of business. It is accessible at every point, from the land. A road, about 40 miles in length, reaches from hence to the village of Sale Trou, situated between two small rivers, near L'Anse à Pitre, on the southern coast.

The town of St. Marc, stretching along the sea-shore at the bottom of the bay of that name, was rather handsomely built, of freestone from the hills, which form a crescent behind it; the only instance of that kind of building in the colony. It was not large, possessed a good trade, and received all the crops from the intervening country, to Cape St. Nicholas. It is within ten miles of the mouth of the great river Artibonite, which winds its serpentine
course through the plain to which it gives name, flowing behind it at the vil-
lage of Tapion, about four leagues in the interior. Being the only river on the
plain, an artificial use of water, by irrigation to a great extent, was necessary
for its cultivation, which was an impediment to its opulence in contrast to
those plains, which, (as was generally the case,) were watered by numerous
streams or rivulets.

Leogane stands about a mile and a half from the shore opposite the island,
or peninsula, of Gonave, between the channel of Gonave and the bay of St.
Marc; it is a spacious, handsome town, surrounded with fertility, and in the
neighbourhood of many streams of excellent water. It is a situation capable
of defence, and in many respects preferable to Port-au-Prince. It was here the
seat of government was transferred from Goäve, previous to its settlement at
the late capital.

Petit Goäve, the original seat of government of the whole French colony,
was long in a very decayed state, notwithstanding its importance in the first
settlement of the Buccaneers, and the excellence of its harbour, still extremely
good, and to which may be attributed any advantage it yet retains.

L’Anse de Jeremie, or, La Grand Anse, is a thriving town, well situated,
healthy, and neat. Its trade was forming in a manner that left no doubt of in-
creasing opulence, and to it, the privateers generally brought the prizes they
made, in its neighbourhood.

The village of Gonaives is situated on the south side of the bay of that name,
immediately opposite the projecting point of the line of demarcation, so that
the French colony in this part, (nearly the centre of their territory,) contained
in breadth little more than twenty miles. The soil is the most productive, and
the most grateful to man, of any spot in the whole of the Antilles. Its harbour
was excellent in point of safety, being formed by a little island, which crossing
the bay, left a narrow channel, but with sufficient depth of water.

Aux Cayes is completely sunk in marshy ground, without a harbour, or salu-
brity to recommend it; yet such is the fertility which every where surrounds
this town, as to have tempted the choice of every new settler to its swampy
shores, and stagnant ponds. Its population was, therefore, much greater than
could have been supposed. It has also in its vicinity a variety of bays and vil-
lages, which all tend to its prosperity. — Many ships have been lost here, from
the insecure and dangerous anchorage; yet, as the Abbé Raynal has observed,
“even the caprices of industry are to be indulged by the government;” and
“trade like a plant that only flourishes in a soil of its own choosing, disdains
every kind of restraint.”141 Vache Island, which lies off this coast, was a cele-
brated resort of the freebooters in their molestation of the Spaniards, and is
yet the successful haunt of the privateers of an enemy.
To this island, as to that of Tortuga on the opposite coast, the colony was indebted for the foundation of a town, which, though small, is of some importance. Jacmel, at the best of times, did not contain one hundred houses, and derives no support from its soil, which is not fruitful, and comparatively hid among the neighbouring hills. As Port-au-Prince is to L’Anse à Pitre, so is Jacmel to Le Petit Goâve, being situated on the opposite side of the south projection of the Bight, sometimes called the Bight of Leogane. It is therefore a kind of store-house, or magazine, to the colony, receiving safely during war, (which can be done at no other place,) assistance of every kind, which is easily communicated to the western side, by a road of only twenty miles, leading to Leogane, and from thence to Port-au-Prince.

Besides the towns, and the villages of Gonaives and Arcahaye already mentioned, there are numerous others to which either commerce, agriculture, beauty, or strength of situation, attached important advantages; among these may be ranked St. Louis, which, though poor, and containing a small number of houses, without even water to drink, till some Jews, in return for their safety, proposed to erect, at their own expence, an aqueduct; by being occupied in some of the purposes of government, receiving the men of war which appeared there, and thus protecting the trade and wealth of Aux Cayes, it assumed the characteristic of a defence of the island. Baynette, about fifteen miles from Jacmel, and Acul, at a less distance from Aux Cayes, derive a similar adventitious importance, as well as Nipes and Miragoane, on the opposite coast; while Cul de Sac, Petit Fond, and Plaisance, in the interior, are of a different character. To these many more might be added upon the northern coast, but enough hath been said to shew the different appearance of the French colony from that of Spain: suffice it to add, that every part teemed with population, and smiled with industry.

The cultivated land in the colony amounted to 2,289,480 English acres,* which was divided into 793 plantations of sugar, 3,117 of coffee, 789 of cotton, 3,160 of indigo, 54 of cocoa or chocolate, and 623 smaller settlements for raising grain, yams, and other vegetable food.†

Of the differences which agitated the two colonies, happily religion did not form an object; for, though exempt from the interference of Rome, on one part, by express concession, and, on the other, by a light administration of ecclesiastical government, they both acknowledged the forms of her church, and entertained all the appendages of her hierarchy. The order of Jesuits was

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*Or 763,923 carreaux of French measurement. [The carreau was a unit of surface measure specific to the West Indies in the ancien régime. It equals about 3.18 acres.]
†This last statement, which has every mark of authenticity, is taken from Mr. Edwards, Hist. Surv. p. 136.
obtained here; that able, though insidious body, which, separated from secular projects and political intrigues, might have become benefactors to the human race. More need not be said of the local establishments of religion in a colony, whose inhabitants counted really but little upon it, and whose writers have told us still less. The edifices of public worship did not, in elegance of building, detract any other, and that there were many excellent benefices, might be collected from the manner in which many of the ecclesiastics have been known to live.

The government of the French colony was composed of two principal officers, a governor-general, and an intendant, or general administrator, whose office lasted three years. They were appointed through the marine minister, and their power was unbounded; for they, in effect, enacted laws, filled all vacant offices, and presided ultimately over all councils, or courts of justice. The governor had the whole naval and military force under his command, and had the power of personal liberty throughout the colony. He had also the power, by certain impediments, to prevent arrest by any other authority, and in part to stop the course of justice. The intendant regulated and superintended every department relative to the public revenue: to this he had the occasional assistance of a court ridiculously enough called the Colonial Assembly, in which every superior public officer bore a part. A subordinate court of justice was placed at Port-au-Prince, for the provinces. The principal officers presided in it, with a president, twelve counsellors, and four assistant judges. In this court, which was formerly divided between that town and Cape François, were registered all the royal edicts, and those of the colonial government. Much, very much of the happiness of the colony, depended on the governor, who was generally a person of distinction, and most frequently selected from the army or navy. An appeal from every decision lay to the king, in which justice was insured; whatever impediments to its course might have been found in St. Domingo.

The chief force of the island, though certainly inadequate to its defence, consisted of the militia, of which each parish raised from one to three companies of whites, one of mulattoes, and one of free blacks, none of which received pay; and the king’s troops upon the colonial establishment generally comprised from two to three thousand men.

The inhabitants were composed, as usual, of pure whites; people of colour, and blacks of free condition; and negroes in a state of slavery. The whole of the intermediate grades were called generally mulattoes.

*Except the tales of some fanatics among the French missionaries, with whom many of the slaves are described as “spiritual,” though it is sufficiently known that these people, in a state of slavery, neither comprehend, nor retain, even the forms of Christian worship.
The character of the European planter in St. Domingo was imperious, and voluptuous to a higher degree than in the other islands: this character also shewed itself on every occasion; he was impatient of even the constraint of the laws, avaricious of wealth and honor, and a devotee to all the arts of indulgence. Hospitality was unbounded among them, and charity, at the same time, very extensively bestowed. "'Tis the inheritance," says Father le Pers, "which they have preserved the most entire from their ancestors; and it would seem that this excellent virtue was conferred with the very air of St. Domingo."

Many circumstances combined to render the situation of the mulattoes much more eligible than in any other island, though in some respects worse. They were also more numerous. The free man of colour had the command of his own property, without any restriction, both in life and death; he could bear testimony even against the whites; he could marry as he pleased, and transmit freedom to his children; and he might embrace a liberal profession; but prejudice frequently damped his efforts, and precipitated him below what an hostile law could have done. The meaness of birth was never forgotten in his own land. They were also compelled to serve in one of the brigades of horse, furnished in all the parishes, under the appellation of the Marshalsea. The numbers of this class were to be accounted for, by several circumstances, amongst which were the superior comforts of the lower order of whites, employed in the superintendence of the plantations, and the engaging manners of the women of colour, who are often elegant, if not sometimes really beautiful.

The next class, the enslaved negro, appears to have been comparatively happy, rather than otherwise; not condemned to an unreasonable duration of labor, they were sufficiently provided, without any anxiety for their future existence. They had gardens which produced the necessaries of life; pigs, poultry, and even horses; and were sufficiently clothed, agreeably to the climate; but they were considered and treated, as much beneath, the ordinary class of human beings: yet, M. de Charmilly, whose judgment in this particular need not to be doubted, says, "that this race of men is naturally good; that if nature has denied them attention, reflexion, observation, perseverance, and all the advantages which render the whites superior to them, she has done every thing for them necessary to the climate in which they exist, not only in physical advantages, but also in those of the heart; for she has given that sensibility for the sex which makes them forget so many sorrows, and the

*L’héritage qu’ils ont conservé le plus entier de leurs pères, c’est l’hospitalité; il semble qu’on respire cette belle vertu avec l’air de S. Domingue." Charlevoix Hist. de S. Domingue.
most lively affection for their children, which renders every thing support-
able to them.”

The appearance which we have already ascribed to the Spanish coast, may be naturally supposed to extend itself to that French division, with the difference which must be created by a continual range of cultivation, either glis-
tening in a tropical sun, or winding in an umbrageous alley towards dwell-
ings which might be easily conceived a second paradise. The Mole of Cape St. Nicholas, which is justly considered as a key to the windward passage, presents an appearance such as it should to the ocean, sterile and command-
ing. The south peninsula resounded with the language of trade, and the northern coast with arms and with agriculture.—Unlike their neighbours, the French colonists caused their land to be cultivated up to the very mountain tops, from which the cane-grounds appeared as so many thickets; while every invention that could be adopted to their purpose was readily encouraged. Their roads were in general excellent, being made and kept in repair, by the contributions of every planter, who sent a proportionate number of his slaves to work upon them, (a burthen entitled the Corvées.) Sometimes they over-
flowed in the morning, and were dusty again in the evening; although gener-
ally shaded on both sides by lime trees; and the different grounds were sepa-
rated by hedges of citron trees. The approach to the residence of a planter, was through an avenue of both these, and the pimento and palm graced its extended prospect.

Their principal rivers are the Artibonite, which flows from its source in the centre of the island, through the plain of that name, till it empties itself in the gulf of Gonaves; that called the Three Rivers, whose mouth is at Port Paix; and the Great River, or La Grande Rivière, which reaches the sea near Jeremie.

To describe the productions of the French colony of St. Domingo, would be enumerating those of the whole of the Antilles. Their principal were, how-
ever, as have been before described, sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo, and cocoa, or chocolate. To these may be added a little tobacco.

In return for the useful droves of cattle for slaughter and labour, smoked beef, bacon, skins, and the greatest part of the money received from Spain, they supplied their neighbours with wearing apparel, hardware, and guns.

*—"Que cette race d’hommes est naturellement bonne; que si la nature lui a refusé l’attention, la réflexion, l’observation, la persévérance, & tous les avantages qui rendent les blancs supérieurs à eux, elle a tout fait pour eux du côté du climat, des avantages phy-
siques & même du coeur; car elle leur a donné cette sensibilité pour les femmes qui fait oublier tant de malheurs! et le plus vif amour pour leurs enfants, qui leur rend tout sup-
portable!”—Venault de Charmilly, Lettre à M. Bryan Edwards, &c. p.41.
The population was considered at about 40,000 whites, 500,000 negro slaves, and 24,000 free people of colour; and the average exports, as stated by M. Marbois, the intendant of the colony, amounted to 4,765,129 l. sterling.

It is not intended in this place, to satisfy the scientific views of the naturalist in regard to St. Domingo, notwithstanding that, with an inclination to that study, the writer had some opportunities for its indulgence, which were not entirely lost, but reserved for some future opportunity. The amateur of this elegant research will, no doubt, have recourse to the valuable histories which have been long furnished of a neighbouring island, in these respects so similar, as to admit of very little variation in the subject to which I allude.

The food of the early inhabitants of St. Domingo, appears to have comprised a similar description of vegetables to that of the negroes at this day:—plantains, Indian wheat, millet, the cassavi root, potatoes, and Caribbee cabbage. Their quadrupeds included the smaller species of a lizard, yet, the delicacy of a West India table; the Agouti Rat, of which a description are yet found in some of the islands; and the Alco, a small short-tailed dog, which did not bark, with others whose names have not come down to us. Their fishery was more abundant, every bay and creek furnishing an ample supply, as many of them do to the present time. The European quadrupeds now supply the necessary food of European colonists, with only such local additions as are objects of delicacy, or introduced by custom; among these, may be named the land crab, the ortolan, and a variety of wild fowl of delicious taste and flavor. The indigenous vegetables yet remain, including plantains, yams, a species of spinach, potatoes, cassava, Indian wheat, and cabbage; to these are added the European roots, herbs, and pulse; and no want is found of cabbage, turnips, carrots, parsnips, peas, beans, artichokes, &c. A variety of fruits ornament the luxury of the table, among which, the melon and pineapple, peaches and strawberries, oranges and lemons, the cashew, apples, pears, plums, and nuts, are plenteously combined with a variety of productions introduced from different countries.

To describe the nature, properties, and mode of cultivation of those productions, which form the different objects of commerce, would uselessly extend the present chapter, and the accounts are to be found in different works peculiarly appropriated to these subjects. * Sugar, coffee, and cotton, are rendered familiar to almost every reader. I shall, however, briefly add here a slight description of the two other staple commodities of St. Domingo—cocoa and indigo.

The cocoa-tree presents less beauty than utility to its cultivator, for its branches form so many trunks separating from each other to a distance immediately above the parent one,