

it not to be presumed, that the polymorphous species, which are so abundant in the isle of Bourbon, are assignable to the nature of the soil and climate rather than to the newness of the vegetation?

Before we take leave of the old world to pass into the new, I must advert to a subject which is of general interest, because it belongs to the history of man, and to those fatal revolutions which have swept off whole tribes from the face of the earth. We inquire at the isle of Cuba, at St. Domingo, and in Jamaica, where is the abode of the primitive inhabitants of those countries? We ask at Teneriffe what is become of the Guanches, whose mummies alone, buried in caverns, have escaped destruction? In the fifteenth century almost all mercantile nations, especially the Spaniards and the Portuguese, sought for slaves at the Canary Islands, as in later times they have been sought on the coast of Guinea.* The Christian religion, which in its origin was so highly favourable to the liberty of mankind, served afterwards as a pretext to the cupidity of Europeans. Every individual, made prisoner before he received the rite of baptism, became a slave. At that period no attempt had yet been made to prove that the blacks were an intermediate race between man and animals. The swarthy Guanche and the African negro were simultaneously sold in the market of Seville, without a question whether slavery should be the doom only of men with black skins and woolly hair.

The archipelago of the Canaries was divided into several small states hostile to each other, and in many instances the same island was subject to two independent princes. The trading nations, influenced by the hideous policy still exercised on the coast of Africa, kept up intestine warfare. One Guanche then became the property of another, who sold him to the Europeans; several, who preferred death to slavery, killed themselves and their children. The population of the Canaries had considerably suffered by the slave trade, by the depredations of pirates, and especially by a long period of carnage, when Alonzo de Lugo completed the conquest of the Guanches. The surviving remnants of the

* The Spanish historians speak of expeditions made by the Huguenots of Rochelle to carry off Guanche slaves. I have some doubt respecting these expeditions, which are said to have taken place subsequently to the year 1530.