

and religious sentiment, introduce into domestic slavery. "The negroes," says Benzoni, "multiply so much at St. Domingo, that in 1545, when I was in Terra Firma [on the coast of Caracas], I saw many Spaniards who had no doubt that the island would shortly be the property of the blacks."* It was reserved for our age to see this prediction accomplished; and a European colony of America transform itself into an African state.

The sixty thousand slaves which the seven united provinces of Venezuela are computed to contain, are so unequally divided, that in the province of Caracas alone there are nearly forty thousand, one-fifth of whom are mulattoes; in Maracaybo, there are ten or twelve thousand; but in Cumana and Barcelona, scarcely six thousand. To judge of the influence which the slaves and men of colour exercise on the public tranquillity, it is not enough to know their number, we must consider their accumulation at certain points, and their manner of life, as cultivators or inhabitants of towns. In the province of Venezuela, the slaves are assembled together on a space of no great extent, between the coast, and a line which passes (at twelve leagues from the coast) through Panaquire, Yare, Sabana de Ocumare, Villa de Cura, and Nirgua. The llanos or vast plains of Calaboso, San Carlos, Guanare, and Barquecimoto, contain only four or five thousand slaves, who are scattered among the farms, and employed in the care of cattle. The number of free men is very considerable; the Spanish laws and customs being favourable to enfranchisement. A master cannot refuse liberty to a slave who offers him the sum of three hundred piastres, even though the slave may have cost double that price, on account of his industry, or a particular aptitude for the trade he practises. Instances of persons who voluntarily bestow liberty on a certain number of their slaves, are more common in the

* "Vi sono molti Spagnuoli che tengono per cosa certa, che quest' isola (San Domingo) in breve tempo sara posseduta da questi Mori di Guinea." (Benzoni, *Istoria del Mondo Nuovo*, ediz. 2da, 1672, p. 65.) The author, who is not very scrupulous in the adoption of statistical facts, believes that in his time there were at St. Domingo seven thousand fugitive negroes (Mori cimaroni), with whom Don Luis Columbus made a treaty of peace and friendship.