

shared with me, of having successively visited Caracas, the Havannah, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Quito, Lima, and Mexico, and of having been connected in these six capitals of Spanish America with men of all ranks, I will not venture to decide on the various degrees of civilization, which society has attained in the several colonies. It is easier to indicate the different shades of national improvement, and the point towards which intellectual development tends, than to compare and class things which cannot all be considered under one point of view. It appeared to me, that a strong tendency to the study of science prevailed at Mexico and Santa Fé de Bogotá; more taste for literature, and whatever can charm an ardent and lively imagination, at Quito and Lima; more accurate notions of the political relations of countries, and more enlarged views on the state of colonies and their mother-countries, at the Havannah and Caracas. The numerous communications with commercial Europe, with the Caribbean Sea (which we have described as a Mediterranean with many outlets), have exercised a powerful influence on the progress of society in the five provinces of Venezuela and in the island of Cuba. In no other part of Spanish America has civilization assumed a more European character. The great number of Indian cultivators who inhabit Mexico and the interior of New Grenada, impart a peculiar, I may almost say, an exotic aspect, on those vast countries. Notwithstanding the increase of the black population, we seem to be nearer to Cadiz and the United States, at Caracas and the Havannah, than in any other part of the New World.

When, in the reign of Charles V, social distinctions and their consequent rivalries were introduced from the mother-country to the colonies, there arose in Cumana and in other commercial towns of Terra Firma, exaggerated pretensions to nobility on the part of some of the most illustrious families of Caracas, distinguished by the designation of *los Mantuanos*. The progress of knowledge, and the consequent change in manners, have, however, gradually and pretty generally neutralized whatever is offensive in those distinctions among the whites. In all the Spanish colonies there exist two kinds of nobility. One is composed of creoles, whose ancestors only from a very recent period filled great stations