

'every white man is noble' (*todo blanco es caballero*), must singularly wound the pretensions of many ancient and illustrious European families. But it may be further observed, that the truth of this axiom has long since been acknowledged in Spain, among a people justly celebrated for probity, industry, and national spirit. Every Biscayan calls himself noble; and there being a greater number of Biscayans in America and the Philippine Islands, than in the Peninsula, the whites of that race have contributed, in no small degree, to propagate in the colonies the system of equality among all men whose blood has not been mixed with that of the African race.

Moreover, the countries of which the inhabitants, even without a representative government, or any institution of peerage, annex so much importance to genealogy and the advantages of birth, are not always those in which family aristocracy is most offensive. We do not find among the natives of Spanish origin, that cold and assuming air which the character of modern civilization seems to have rendered less common in Spain than in the rest of Europe. Conviviality, candour, and great simplicity of manner, unite the different classes of society in the colonies, as well as in the mother-country. It may even be said, that the expression of vanity and self-love becomes less offensive, when it retains something of simplicity and frankness.

I found in several families at Caracas a love of information, an acquaintance with the masterpieces of French and Italian literature, and a marked predilection for music, which is greatly cultivated, and which (as always results from a taste for the fine arts) brings the different classes of society nearer to each other. The mathematical sciences, drawing, and painting, cannot here boast of any of those establishments with which royal munificence and the patriotic zeal of the inhabitants have enriched Mexico. In the midst of the marvels of nature, so rich in interesting productions, it is strange that we found no person on this coast devoted to the study of plants and minerals. In a Franciscan convent I met, it is true, with an old monk who drew up the almanac for all the provinces of Venezuela, and who possessed some accurate knowledge of astronomy. Our instruments interested him deeply, and one day our house