

Four years after, at his return to America, he found on this spot, finely cultivated in cotton, a little hamlet of thirty or forty houses, which is called Punta Zamuro, and which we visited with him. The inhabitants of this hamlet are almost all mulattos, Zamboes, or free blacks. This example of letting out land has been happily followed by several other great proprietors. The rent is ten piastres for a fanega of ground, and is paid in money or in cotton. As the small farmers are often in want, they sell their cotton at a very moderate price. They dispose of it even before the harvest; and the advances, made by rich neighbours, place the debtor in a situation of dependence, which frequently obliges him to offer his services as a labourer. The price of labour is cheaper here than in France. A freeman, working as a day-labourer (peon), is paid in the valleys of Aragua and in the llanos four or five piastres per month, not including food, which is very cheap on account of the abundance of meat and vegetables. I love to dwell on these details of colonial industry, because they serve to prove to the inhabitants of Europe, a fact which to the enlightened inhabitants of the colonies has long ceased to be doubtful, viz., that the continent of Spanish America can produce sugar, cotton, and indigo by free hands, and that the unhappy slaves are capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders.