

Marquis del Toro, and pass three days more on the borders of the lake.

It was the carniva. season, and all was gaiety. The sports in which the people indulge, and which are called *carnes tollendas*,\* assume occasionally somewhat of a savage character. Some led an ass loaded with water, and, wherever they found a window open, inundated the apartment within by means of a pump. Others carried bags filled with hairs of *picapica*;† and blew the hair, which causes a great irritation of the skin, into the faces of those who passed by.

From Guacara we returned to Nueva Valencia. We found there a few French emigrants, the only ones we saw during five years passed in the Spanish colonies. Notwithstanding the ties of blood which unite the royal families of France and Spain, even French priests were not permitted to take refuge in that part of the New World, where man with such facility finds food and shelter. Beyond the Atlantic, the United States of America afford the only asylum to misfortune. A government, strong because it is free, confiding because it is just, has nothing to fear in giving refuge to the proscribed.

We have endeavoured above to give some notions of the state of the cultivation of indigo, cotton, and sugar, in the province of Caracas. Before we quit the valley of Aragua and its neighbouring coast, it remains for us to speak of the cacao-plantations, which have at all times been considered as the principal source of the prosperity of those countries. The province of Caracas,‡ at the end of the eighteenth century, produced annually a hundred and fifty thousand fanegas, of which a hundred thousand were consumed in Spain, and thirty thousand in the province. Estimating a fanega of cacao at only twenty-five piastres for the price given at Cadiz, we find that the total value of the exportation of cacao, by the six ports of the Capitanía General of

\* Or "farewell to flesh." The word carnival has the same meaning, these sports being always held just before the commencement of Lent.

† *Dolichos pruriens* (cowage).

‡ The province, not the capitanía-general, consequently not including the cacao plantations of Cumana, the province of Barcelona, of Maracaybo, of Varinas, and of Spanish Guiana.