

tions. It is related that the Dominican monk, Fray Luys Bertram, who was persecuted* by the *encomenderos*, as the Methodists now are by some English planters, predicted that "the 200,000 Indians which Cuba contained, would perish the victims of the cruelty of Europeans." If this be true, we may at least conclude, that the native race was far from being extinct between the years 1555 and 1569; but according to Gomara (such is the confusion among the historians of those times) there were no longer any Indians on the island of Cuba in 1553. To form an idea of the vagueness of the estimates made by the first Spanish travelers, at a period when the population of no province of the peninsula was ascertained, we have but to recollect that the number of inhabitants which Captain Cook and other navigators assigned to Otaheite and the Sandwich Islands, at a time when statistics furnished the most exact comparisons, varied from one to five. We may conceive that the island of Cuba, surrounded with coasts adapted for fishing, might, from the great fertility of its soil, afford sustenance for several millions of those Indians who have no desire for animal food, and who cultivate maize, manioc, and other nourishing roots; but had there been that amount of population, would it not have been manifest by a more advanced degree of civilization than the narrative of Columbus describes? Would the people of Cuba have remained more backward in civilization than the inhabitants of the Lucayes Islands? Whatever activity may be attributed to causes of destruction, such as the tyranny of the *conquistadores*, the faults of governors, the too severe labours of the gold-washings, the small-pox, and the frequency of suicides,†

* See the curious revelations in *Juan de Marieta, Hist. de todos los Santos de España, libro vii, p. 174.*

† The rage of hanging themselves by whole families, in huts and caverns, as related by Garcilasso, was no doubt the effect of despair; yet instead of lamenting the barbarism of the sixteenth century, it was attempted to exculpate the *conquistadores*, by attributing the disappearance of the natives to *their taste for suicide*. See *Patriota*, tom. ii, p. 50. Numerous sophisms of this kind are found in a work published by M. Nuix, on the humanity of the Spaniards in the conquest of America. This work is entitled, "Reflexiones imparciales sobre la humanidad de los Españoles contra los pretendidos filosofos y politicos, para ilustrar las historias de Raynal y Robertson; escrito en Italiano por el Abate Don