

if, for instance, it contained as many inhabitants as were found there by the English in 1762. The first travellers were easily deceived by the crowds which the appearance of European vessels brought together on some points of the coast. Now, the island of Cuba, with the same *ciudades* and *villas* which it possesses at present, had not in 1762 more than 200,000 inhabitants; and yet, among a people treated like slaves, exposed to the violence and brutality of their masters, to excess of labour, want of nourishment, and the ravages of the small-pox,—forty-two years would not suffice to obliterate all but the remembrance of their misfortunes on the earth. In several of the Lesser Antilles, the population diminishes under English domination five and six per cent. annually; at Cuba, more than eight per cent.; but the annihilation of 200,000 in forty-two years, supposes an annual loss of twenty-six per cent., a loss scarcely credible, although we may suppose that the mortality of the natives of Cuba was much greater than that of negroes bought at a very high price.

In studying the history of the island, we observe that the

Balboa discovered this black tribe in the Isthmus of Darien. "That conquistador," says Gomara, "entered the province of Quareca: he found no gold, but some blacks, who were slaves of the lord of the place. He asked this lord whence he had received them; who replied, that men of that colour lived near the place, with whom they were constantly at war . . . . These negroes," adds Gomara, "exactly resemble those of Guinea; and no others have since been seen in America (en las Indias yo pienso que no se han visto negros despues.\*)" The passage is very remarkable. Hypotheses were formed in the sixteenth century, as now; and Petrus Martyr imagined that these men seen by Balboa, (the Quarecas), were Ethiopian blacks who, as pirates, infested the seas, and had been shipwrecked on the coast of America. But the negroes of Soudan are not pirates; and it is easier to conceive that Esquimaux, in their boats of skins, may have gone to Europe, than the Africans to Darien. Those learned speculators who believe in a mixture of the Polynesians with the Americans, rather consider the Quarecas as of the race of Papuans, similar to the *negritos* of the Philippines. Tropical migrations from west to east, from the most western part of Polynesia to the Isthmus of Darien, present great difficulties, although the winds blow during whole weeks from the west. Above all, it is essential to know whether the Quarecas were really like the negroes of Soudan, as Gomara asserts, or whether they were only a race of very dark Indians (with smooth and glossy hair), who from time to time, before 1492, infested the coasts of the island of Hayti, which has become in our days the domain of Ethiopians.