

The Conquest, on the continent of Spanish America, and the slave-trade in the West Indies, in Brazil, and in the southern parts of the United States, have brought together the most heterogeneous elements of population. This strange mixture of Indians, whites, negroes, mestizos, mulattoes, and zambos, is accompanied by all the perils which violent and disorderly passion can engender, at those critical periods when society, shaken to its very foundations, begins a new era. At those junctures, the odious principle of the Colonial System, that of security, founded on the hostility of castes, and prepared during ages, has burst forth with violence. Fortunately the number of blacks has been so inconsiderable in the new states of the Spanish continent, that, with the exception of the cruelties exercised in Venezuela, where the royalist party armed their slaves, the struggle between the independents and the soldiers of the mother country was not stained by the vengeance of the captive population. The free men of colour (blacks, mulattoes, and mestizoes) have warmly espoused the national cause; and the copper-coloured race, in its timid distrust and passiveness, has taken no part in movements from which it must profit in spite of itself. The Indians, long before the revolution, were poor and free agriculturists; isolated by their language and manners, they lived apart from the whites. If, in contempt of Spanish laws, the cupidity of the corregidores and the tormenting system of the missionaries often restricted their liberty, that state of vexatious oppression was far different from personal slavery like that of the slavery of the blacks, or of the vassalage of the peasantry in the Slavonian part of Europe. It is the small number of blacks, it is the liberty of the aboriginal race, of which America has preserved more than eight millions and a half without mixture of foreign blood, that characterizes the ancient continental possessions of Spain, and renders their moral and political situation entirely different from that of the West Indies, where, by the disproportion between the free men and the slaves, the principles of the Colonial System have been developed with more energy. In the West Indian archipelago, as in Brazil (two portions of America which contain near 3,200,000 slaves), the fear of a reaction among the blacks, and the perils that surround