

when the high price of the produce gave a hope of extraordinary profit. It would, however, be unjust not to acknowledge in this struggle between private interests and the views of wise policy, the desires and the principles manifested by some inhabitants of the island of Cuba, either in their own name or in the name of some rich and powerful corporations. "The humanity of our legislation," says M. d'Arango nobly,* in a memoir written in 1796, "grants the slave four rights (*cuatro consuelos*), which somewhat assuage his sufferings, and which have always been refused him by a foreign policy. These rights are, the choice of a master less severe; † the privilege of marrying according to his own inclination; the possibility of purchasing his liberty ‡ by his labour, and of paying, with an acquired property, for the liberty of his wife and children. § Notwithstanding the wisdom and mildness of Spanish legislation, to how many

* *Informe sobre negros fugitivos (de 9 de Junio de 1769), por Don Francisco de Arango y Pareño, Oidor honorario y syndico del Consulado.*

† The right of *buscar amo*. When a slave has found a new master who will purchase him, he may quit the master of whom he has to complain; such is the sense and spirit of a law, beneficent, though often eluded, as are all the laws that protect the slaves. In the hope of enjoying the privilege of *buscar amo*, the blacks often address to the travellers they meet, a question, which in civilized Europe, where a vote or an opinion is sometimes sold, is more equivocally expressed; *Quiere Vm. comprarme?* [Will you buy me, Sir?]

‡ A slave in the Spanish colonies ought, according to law, to be estimated at the lowest price; this estimate, at the time of my journey, was, according to the locality, from 200 to 380 piastres. In 1825, the price of an adult negro, at the island of Cuba, was 450 piastres. In 1788, the French trade furnished a negro for 280 to 300 piastres. A slave, among the Greeks, cost 300 to 600 drachmes (54 to 103 piastres), when the day-labourer was paid one-tenth of a piastre. While the Spanish laws and institutions favour manumission in every way, the master, in the other islands, pays the fiscal, for every freed slave, five to seven hundred piastres!

§ What a contrast is observable between the humanity of the most ancient Spanish laws concerning slavery, and the traces of barbarism found in every page of the Black Code, and in some of the provincial laws of the English islands! The laws of Barbadoes, made in 1686, and those of Bermuda, in 1730, decreed that the master who killed his negro in chastising him, could not even be sued, while the master who killed his slave wilfully, should pay ten pounds sterling to the royal treasury. A law of Saint Christopher's, of March 11th, 1784, begins with these words: