

will attach to the colour by which that condition is generally recognized, and follow it, in some degree, through all its varieties and affinities. We may trace a similar prejudice among the most liberal and enlightened nations of Europe. Although nothing surely ought to reflect greater lustre on any man than the circumstance of his having risen by industry and virtue above the disadvantages of mean birth and indigent parentage, there are, nevertheless, but few persons in the world who delight to be reminded of this species of merit. There is a consciousness of something disgraceful in the recollection; and it seems therefore reasonable to conclude, that if nature had made the same distinction in this case as in the other, and stamped, by an indelible mark, the condition and parentage on the forehead, the same, or nearly the same, effect would have resulted from it, as results from the difference of colour in the West Indies. I mean however only to account for in some degree, not to defend, the conduct of the whites of St. Domingo towards the coloured people; whose condition was in truth much worse than that of the same class in the British colonies, and not to be justified on any principle of example or reason.

In many respects their situation was even more degrading and wretched than that of the enslaved negroes in any part of the West Indies; all of whom have masters that are interested in their preservation, and many of whom find in those masters powerful friends and vigilant protectors. Although released from the dominion of individuals, yet the free men of colour in all the French islands were still considered as the property of the publick, and as publick property they were obnoxious to the

Free Mulattoes.