

CHAP. perience has since taught them—that the worst of all govern-  
 II. ments is preferable to the miseries of anarchy!

PERHAPS a diligent observer might have discovered, even in the first proceedings of this celebrated assembly, the latent seeds of that violence, injustice, and confusion which have since produced such a harvest of crimes and calamities. Many of the doctrines contained in the declaration of rights seem to have been introduced for no other purpose than to awaken a mischievous spirit of contention and cavil, and to destroy all subordination in the lower ranks of the people. Such, for instance, was the position, that “all men are born, and continue, free and equal as to their rights;” according to which, there ought to be no distinctions in society, nor (if the possession of property is *a right*) can any man have a right to possess or acquire any thing to the exclusion of others; a position not only false, but pernicious, and unfit for every condition of civilized life. To promulgate such lessons in the colonies, as the declared sense of the supreme government, was to subvert the whole system of their establishments. Accordingly, a general ferment prevailed among the French inhabitants of St. Domingo, from one end of the colony to the other. All that had passed in the mother country concerning the colonists,—the prejudices of the metropolis towards them,—the efforts of the society of *Amis des Noirs* to emancipate the negroes,—and the conduct of the mulattoes,—had been represented to them through the medium of party, and perhaps with a thousand circumstances of exaggeration and insult, long before the declaration of rights was received in the colony; and this measure crowned the whole.