

CHAP. of which M. Barnave was president, failed not to apprize the
 V. national assembly of the fatal consequences of this measure, and
 immediately suspended the exercise of its functions. At the
 same time, the deputies from the colonies signified their purpose
 to decline any further attendance. The only effect produced by
 these measures however, on the national assembly, was an order
 that the three civil commissioners, who had been appointed in
 February preceding for regulating the affairs of the colonies on
 the spot, should immediately repair thither, and see the national
 decrees duly enforced. The consequences in St. Domingo will
 be related in the following chapter (*d*).

(*d*) It has been confidently asserted, that *La Fayette*, in order to secure a majority on this question, introduced into the national assembly no less than eighty persons who were not members, but who sat and voted as such. This man had formerly been possessed of a plantation at Cayenne, with seventy negro slaves thereon, which he had sold, without any scruple or stipulation concerning the situation of the negroes, the latter end of 1789, and from that time enrolled himself among the friends of the blacks. The mere English reader, who may be personally unacquainted with the West Indies, will probably consider the clamour which was raised on this occasion by the French planters as equally illiberal and unjust. The planters in the British West Indies will perhaps bring the case home to themselves; and I have no hesitation in saying, that, supposing the English parliament should pass a law declaring, for instance, the free mulattoes of Jamaica to be eligible into the assembly of that island, such a measure would prove there, as it proved in St. Domingo, the declaration of civil war. On mere abstract reasoning this may appear strange and unjustifiable; but we must take mankind as we find them, and few instances occur in which the prejudices of habit, education, and opinion have been corrected by force.

CHAP.