

CHAP.

VII.

1791.

character. At length, a motion was made to annul the obnoxious decree, and (strange to tell!) on the 24th of September its repeal was actually voted by a large majority!—At this remarkable change of sentiment in the supreme legislature, it is necessary to pause, and remind the reader of what was doing at the same time in St. Domingo; where, as we have seen, on the 11th of that very month, the *concordat*, or truce, took place between the people of colour and the white inhabitants of Port au Prince; and on the 20th, the colonial assembly of Cape François published the proclamation mentioned in the latter part of the preceding Chapter. Thus, almost in the very moment when the justice and necessity of the decree were acknowledged, and its faithful observance promised by the colonial assembly, its repeal was pronounced by the national legislature in the mother country!

To such repugnancy and absurdity must every government be driven that attempts to regulate and direct the local concerns of a country three thousand miles distant. Of the two measures that have been mentioned, it is difficult to say which produced the greatest calamities; the decree of the 15th of May in the first instance; or its unexpected repeal, at the time and in the manner related! Doubts had already arisen in the minds of the mulattoes of the sincerity and good faith of the white people, with respect to the *concordat*. Their suspicions and apprehensions had indeed grown to such a height, as to induce them to insist on a renewal and confirmation of its provisions; which were accordingly granted them, by a new instrument or treaty of the 11th of October, and a supplementary agreement of the 20th of the same month:
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