

a publick fountain. The chief publick buildings were the church; the Jesuits' college (converted after the revolution into a government-house, and place of meeting for the colonial and provincial assemblies); a superb barrack for troops; a royal arsenal; a prison; a play-house; and two hospitals. The number of free inhabitants of all colours, was estimated at eight thousand, exclusive of the king's troops and sea-faring people. The domestick slaves were said to be about twelve thousand. The situation of the town, however, was not to be commended. It was built at the foot of a very high mountain, called *Le Haut du Cap*, which abounds indeed with springs of excellent water, and furnished a great supply of garden vegetables, but it served as a screen from the land wind, and reverberated the rays of the sun. The town arose to opulence chiefly from the commodiousness of its harbour, and the extreme fertility of the plain adjoining it to the east, a district fifty miles in length, and twelve in breadth, appropriated solely to the cultivation of sugar (the plantations of which were divided from each other only by hedges of citrons and limes) and yielding greater returns than perhaps any other spot of the same extent in the habitable globe.

CHAP.
IX.

THE town of Cape St. Nicholas consists of about 250 houses, which are chiefly built of American wood. It is situated at the foot of a high bluff, called the *Mole*; but having been a free port, it was a place of considerable trade, and particularly resorted to by the ships of America. It is chiefly known, however, for the safety and extent of its harbour, which is justly called the key of the Windward passage; and the fortifications