

BOOK

IV.

By this conformation, they are guarded from those ill effects which an almost continual strong glare of sun-shine might otherwise produce; and it is a curious circumstance, that their skin feels considerably colder than that of a European; a proof, I think, that nature has contrived some peculiar means of protecting them from the heat, which she has denied to the nations of temperate regions, as unnecessary. Accordingly, though their mode of living differs in no respect from that of the European residents, they are rarely obnoxious to those inflammatory disorders which frequently prove fatal to the latter.

THE ladies of these Islands have indeed greater cause to boast of this fortunate exemption, than the men; a pre-eminence acquired undoubtedly by the calm and even tenour of their lives, and by an habitual temperance and self-denial. Except the exercise of dancing, in which they delight and excel, they have no amusement or avocation to impel them to much exertion of either body or mind. Those midnight assemblies and gambling conventions, wherein health, fortune, and beauty, are so frequently sacrificed in the cities of Europe; are here happily unknown. In their diet, the Creole women are, I think, abstemious even to a fault. Simple water, or lemonade, is the strongest beverage in which they indulge; and a vegetable mess at noon, seasoned