
 CHAP. V.

 CHARACTER, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE AMERICANS
 IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES.—AMERICAN WOMEN.

I COULD not leave this part of the continent, without mentioning the manners, customs, and character of the inhabitants. The maritime cities, which are the rendezvous of all nations, have adopted the English customs. Their wants are increased with their fortunes; luxury has been introduced, and the fine arts, although in their infancy, are much more cultivated than in the interior, where they are scarcely thought of. Employed entirely in mercantile speculations, they possess all the qualities and defects which characterise the merchant. They are laborious, active, industrious, and enterprising. When they deal with each other, they do it with suspicion and distrust. Each is conscious that the other will cheat him if he is able; and that no moral considerations will be suffered to stand in his way. If an honest and ingenuous foreigner has any intercourse with them, he is sure to be made a dupe, and the wily American only laughs at the integrity which he ought to reverence. In the late troubles in St. Domingo, many of the planters entrusted their money, their jewels, and valuables, to American merchants and captains, who fraudulently appropriated them to themselves; and at least nineteen twentieths of these unfortunate persons had reason to execrate their perfidy.

The same suspicion which characterises their dealings with each other, is seen in their domestic concerns. They will not trust even their children or their wives. The men go to market themselves, and purchase every thing that is wanted; and nothing is left to the wife but the interior order and neatness of the house. Economical even to meanness, they only make use of their fortunes to procure wine and spirits. A segar, a gazette, and a bottle of Madeira wine are their only comforts. The Americans spend great part of the day in reading the public papers, of which there are immense numbers. They believe themselves the greatest warriors in the world, solely because they have obliged some savage nations to sue for peace.

The Americans are litigious and quarrelsome. The cool manner in which they defend their causes cannot but amuse a