
PLAIN FACTS, &c.

THE year succeeding that, in which America was first discovered, Pope Alexander the Sixth, by his bulls, dated 2d and 3d of May, 1493, munificently gave the whole of that vast Continent,* of which but a small part was then known in Europe, to Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; following the example of one of his predecessors, who, in 1440, had granted Africa to king Alphonso the Fifth, of Portugal; not because that Continent was uninhabited, but because the nations subsisting there were *infidels*, and consequently *unjust possessors* of the country where their Creator had formed and placed them. †

The disposing power which had been in these instances assumed by Saint Peter's pretended successors, over the countries of unchristian nations, was, however, too glaringly absurd to be regarded by Popish princes themselves, even in that superstitious age; ‡ and several of them in defiance of these papal grants, soon after, undertook discoveries and settlements in Africa and America, and particularly Henry the Seventh of England, who was a zealous Roman Catholic, and who, within

* A former *infallible* Pope had declared that no such Continent as America did or could exist, and had denounced excommunication against all who should believe the contrary opinion.

† " Thus the *Romish* Pontiffs did not scruple to break the rules of common justice and equity, to serve the purposes of their own worldly interest and glory. They dethroned princes, dispossessed whole nations of their rightful inhabitants, transferred the properties of one people to another, turned out those, whom God and nature put in possession, for their own votaries." History of peopling several parts of the world, and particularly of America. By John Harris, A. M. F. R. S.

‡ We are told by *Herrera*, that Ferdinand and Isabella accepted the papal grant in question from some particular reasons, contrary to the advice