

colony, too, pleads in favor of Columbus. Unaccustomed to labour, and strangers to the deadly climate of the West-Indies, great numbers of the colonists fell victims to disease, hardship and exposure. The rest were rapidly declining, and such had been the injuries inflicted by them on the natives, that no kindness on their part could have re-established confidence and friendship. It may be said, too, that Columbus treated the unhappy savages with less inhumanity than his successors in the career of discovery and conquest. Still, these matters are but extenuation, not justification of his conduct, which ought ever to be viewed with abhorrence. It is painful to detract from the character of acknowledged and surpassing merit, yet it is the duty of the annalist to make truth the guiding star of his course, no matter who suffers. If Columbus had not formed a specific design to wage an offensive war against the natives previous to his second departure from Spain, and consequently before he was aware of the destruction of his people whom he had left in Hispaniola, it is yet certain that the idea of being involved in hostilities with the simple Indians had entered his mind. The fact, that he carried a large number of fierce and powerful blood-hounds with him proves it.

He had found the natives peaceable and friendly, and had, therefore no reason to apprehend that they would commence hostilities. The cavalry he took with him, as they were feared and revered by the Indians, were quite sufficient for the security of the colony, supposing that friendship with them had been an object. But it was inconsistent with the views of the Spaniards to treat them as a free people. Lust of gold was the grand incentive of the settlers, and as some of the natives were decorated with golden ornaments, and it was supposed that the mountains of the island abounded with the precious metals, great expectations had been formed by the patrons of Columbus and the nation at large. His interest and his ambition urged him to fulfil those expectations as far as possible. Gold could not be obtained without the aid of the Indians, who were so indolent from constitution, habit and climate that nothing but