

ing possessions of the French in North America; we next see an edict make its appearance, which confines the liberty necessary for carrying on commerce within the narrowest bounds, and forbids the French to have any connexion with their own nation; prohibitions and constraint prevail every where; the merchants of Louisiana every where meet with obstacles to surmount, difficulties to overcome, and (if it be allowable to make use of such an expression) enemies of their country to combat. In Europe there sometimes passes six months, before a person who fits out a vessel knows whether he shall obtain a passport; we have no better success at St. Domingo when expeditions to that river are in question: Prince Monbazon, general of the island, begins to refuse them. In Louisiana, in the very center of the colony, where a person of the meanest genius sees at the very first glance how much it stands in need of encouragement and patronage, we do not meet with more favour. The government almost a twelvemonth ago forbid the importation of negroes, upon pretext that the competition would have hurt a merchant belonging to the English colonies, who was to furnish them. How terrible and how destructive a bargain is this! It is depriving the colony of the food best adapted to its nourishment; it is cutting up by the roots a branch of commerce, which is of more consequence to Louisiana than all the rest put together: to promote systems of this sort is desiring to convert into a vast forest establishments which have cost infinite pains and trouble. The vigilance of the court will easily discover the cause of these contrarieties; the efforts of its zeal will destroy it; and its affection for the colony will save it from destruction. Constraint keeps the affairs of the province in a state of languor and weakness; liberty, on the contrary animates all things: nobody is at present ignorant that the granting of exclusive privileges may be justly considered as a sort of devouring fire, which imperceptibly undermines and consumes the people, drains the currency, and crushes agriculture and commerce; an oppressive method, which, for the honour of humanity, has been long since banished from the French colonies.