

the crocodile, and to escape from the conflict of the elements.

The town of Angostura, in the early years of its foundation, had no direct communication with the mother-country. The inhabitants were contented with carrying on a trifling contraband trade in dried meat and tobacco with the West India Islands, and with the Dutch colony of Essequibo, by the Rio Carony. Neither wine, oil, nor flour, three articles of importation the most sought after, was received directly from Spain. Some merchants, in 1771, sent the first schooner to Cadiz; and since that period a direct exchange of commodities with the ports of Andalusia and Catalonia has become extremely active. The population of Angostura,* after having been a long time languishing, has much increased since 1785. At the time of my abode in Guiana, however, it was far from being equal to that of Stabroek, the nearest English town. The mouths of the Orinoco have an advantage over every other part in Terra Firma. They afford the most prompt communications with the Peninsula. The voyage from Cadiz to Punta Barima is performed sometimes in eighteen or twenty days. The return to Europe takes from thirty to thirty-five days. These mouths being placed to windward of all the islands, the vessels of Angostura can maintain a more advantageous commerce with the West Indies than La Guayra and Porto Cabello. The merchants of Caracas, therefore, have been always jealous of the progress of industry in Spanish Guiana; and Caracas having been hitherto the seat of the supreme government, the port of Angostura has been treated with still less favour than the ports of Cumana and Nueva Barcelona. With respect to the inland trade, the most active is that of the province of Varinas, which sends mules, cacao, indigo, cotton, and sugar to Angostura; and in return receives *generos*, that is, the

* Angostura, or Santo Thomé de la Nueva Guayana, in 1768, had only 500 inhabitants. (*Caulin*, p. 63.) They were numbered in 1780, and the result was 1,513 (455 Whites, 449 Blacks, 363 Mulattoes and Zamboes, and 246 Indians). The population in the year 1789, rose to 4,590; and in 1800, to 6,600 souls. (*Official Lists*, MS.) The capital of the English colony of Demerara, the town of Stabroek, the name of which is scarcely known in Europe, is only fifty leagues distant, south-east of the mouths of the Orinoco. It contains, according to Bolingbroke, nearly 10,000 inhabitants.