

ment being continued, the spine, by the full action of the muscles, was bent like a spring; and the insect at this moment rested on the extremity of its head and wing-cases. The effort being suddenly relaxed, the head and thorax flew up, and in consequence the base of the wing-cases struck the supporting surface with such force that the insect by the reaction was jerked upward to the height of one or two inches. The projecting points of the thorax, and the sheath of the spine, served to steady the whole body during the spring. In the descriptions which I have read, sufficient stress does not appear to have been laid on the elasticity of the spine: so sudden a spring could not be the result of simple muscular contraction, without the aid of some mechanical contrivance.

On several occasions I enjoyed some short but most pleasant excursions in the neighboring country. One day I went to the Botanic Garden, where many plants, well known for their great utility, might be seen growing. The leaves of the camphor, pepper, cinnamon, and clove trees were delightfully aromatic; and the bread-fruit, the jaca, and the mango, vied with each other in the magnificence of their foliage. The landscape in the neighborhood of Bahia almost takes its character from the two latter trees. Before seeing them, I had no idea that any trees could cast so black a shade on the ground. Both of them bear to the evergreen vegetation of these climates the same kind of relation which laurels and hollies in England do to the lighter green of the deciduous trees. It may be observed that the houses within the tropics are surrounded by the most beautiful forms of vegetation, because many of them are at the same time most useful to man. Who can doubt that these qualities are united in the banana, the cocoanut, the many kinds of palm, the orange, and the bread-fruit tree?

During this day I was particularly struck with a remark of Humboldt's, who often alludes to "the thin vapor which, without changing the transparency of the air, renders its tints more harmonious, and softens its effects." This is an ap-