

town is in all parts disgusting, the streets being narrow, ill-paved, and filthy; the houses, tall and gloomy. The season of heavy rains had hardly come to an end, and hence the surrounding country, which is scarcely raised above the level of the sea, was flooded with water; and I failed in all my attempts to take long walks.

The flat swampy land on which Pernambuco stands is surrounded, at the distance of a few miles, by a semicircle of low hills, or rather by the edge of a country elevated perhaps two hundred feet above the sea. The old city of Olinda stands on one extremity of this range. One day I took a canoe, and proceeded up one of the channels to visit it; I found the old town, from its situation, both sweeter and cleaner than that of Pernambuco. I must here commemorate what happened for the first time during our nearly five years' wandering, namely, having met with a want of politeness: I was refused in a sullen manner at two different houses, and obtained with difficulty from a third, permission to pass through their gardens to an uncultivated hill, for the purpose of viewing the country. I feel glad that this happened in the land of the Brazilians, for I bear them no goodwill—a land also of slavery, and therefore of moral debasement. A Spaniard would have felt ashamed at the very thought of refusing such a request, or of behaving to a stranger with rudeness. The channel by which we went to and returned from Olinda was bordered on each side by mangroves, which sprang like a miniature forest out of the greasy mudbanks. The bright green color of these bushes always reminded me of the rank grass in a churchyard: both are nourished by putrid exhalations; the one speaks of death past, and the other too often of death to come.

The most curious object which I saw in this neighborhood was the reef that forms the harbor. I doubt whether in the whole world any other natural structure has so artificial an appearance.¹ It runs for a length of several miles in

¹ I have described this Bar in detail, in the Lond. and Edin. Phil. Mag., vol. xix. (1841), p. 257.