

## CHAPTER III.

Passage from Teneriffe to South America.—The Island of Tobago.—  
Arrival at Cumana.

WE left the road of Santa Cruz on the 25th of June, and directed our course towards South America. We soon lost sight of the Canary Islands, the lofty mountains of which were covered with a reddish vapour. The Peak alone appeared from time to time, as at intervals the wind dispersed the clouds that enveloped the Piton. We felt, for the first time, how strong are the impressions left on the mind from the aspect of those countries situated on the limits of the torrid zone, where nature appears at once so rich, so various, and so majestic. Our stay at Teneriffe had been very short, and yet we withdrew from the island as if it had long been our home.

Our passage from Santa Cruz to Cumana, the most eastern part of the New Continent, was very fine. We cut the tropic of Cancer on the 27th; and though the Pizarro was not a very fast sailer, we made, in twenty days, the nine hundred leagues, which separate the coast of Africa from that of the New Continent. We passed fifty leagues west of Cape Bojador, Cape Blanco, and the Cape Verd islands. A few land birds, which had been driven to sea by the impetuosity of the wind followed us for several days.

The latitude diminished rapidly, from the parallel of Madeira to the tropic. When we reached the zone where the trade-winds are constant, we crossed the ocean from east to west, on a calm sea, which the Spanish sailors call the Ladies' Gulf, *el Golfo de las Damas*. In proportion as we advanced towards the west, we found the trade-winds fix to eastward.

These winds, the most generally adopted theory of which is explained in a celebrated treatise of Halley,\* are a phe-

\* The existence of an upper current of air, which blows constantly from the equator to the poles, and of a lower current, which blows from the poles to the equator, had already been admitted, as M. Arago has shown, by Hooke. The ideas of the celebrated English naturalist are developed in a Discourse on Earthquakes, published in 1686. "I think