

of the equinoctial region on the ocean. While the trade wind blew strongly, the thermometer kept at 23 or 24 degrees in the day, and at 22 or 22.5 degrees during the night. The charm of the lovely climates bordering on the equator, can be fully enjoyed only by those who have undertaken the voyage from Acapulco or the coasts of Chile to Europe in a very rough season. What a contrast between the tempestuous seas of the northern latitudes and the regions where the tranquillity of nature is never disturbed! If the return from Mexico or South America to the coasts of Spain were as expeditious and as agreeable as the passage from the old to the new continent, the number of Europeans settled in the colonies would be much less considerable than it is at present. To the sea which surrounds the Azores and the Bermuda Islands, and which is traversed in returning to Europe by the high latitudes, the Spaniards have given the singular name of *Golfo de las Yeguas* (the Mares' Gulf). Colonists who are not accustomed to the sea, and who have led solitary lives in the forests of Guiana, the savannahs of the Caracas, or the Cordilleras of Peru, dread the vicinity of the Bermudas more than the inhabitants of Lima fear at present the passage round Cape Horn.

To the north of the Cape Verd Islands we met with great masses of floating seaweeds. They were the tropic grape, (*Fucus natans*), which grows on submarine rocks, only from the equator to the fortieth degree of north and south latitude. These weeds seem to indicate the existence of currents in this place, as well as to south-west of the banks of Newfoundland. We must not confound the latitudes abounding in scattered weeds with those banks of marine plants, which Columbus compares to extensive meadows, the sight of which dismayed the crew of the Santa Maria in the forty-second degree of longitude. I am convinced, from the comparison of a great number of journals, that in the basin of the Northern Atlantic there exist two banks of weeds very different from each other. The most extensive is a little west of the meridian of Fayal, one of the Azores, between the twenty-fifth and thirty-sixth degrees of latitude.* The temperature of the Atlantic in those

* It would appear that Phœnician vessels came "in thirty days' sail, with an easterly wind," to the *weedy sea*, which the Portuguese and