

each canoe there were eighteen Guayqueria Indians, naked to the waist, and of very tall stature. They had the appearance of great muscular strength, and the colour of their skin was something between brown and copper-colour. Seen at a distance, standing, motionless, and projected on the horizon, they might have been taken for statues of bronze. We were the more struck with their appearance, as it did not correspond with the accounts given by some travellers respecting the characteristic features and extreme feebleness of the natives. We afterwards learned, without passing the limits of the province of Cumana, the great contrast existing between the physiognomy of the Guayquerias and that of the Chaymas and the Caribs.

When we were near enough to hail them in Spanish, the Indians threw aside their mistrust, and came straight on board. They informed us that the low islet near which we were at anchor was Coche, which had never been inhabited; and that Spanish vessels coming from Europe were accustomed to sail farther north, between this island and that of Margareta, to take a coasting pilot at the port of Pampatar. Our inexperience had led us into the channel to the south of Coche; and as at that period the English cruisers frequented this passage, the Indians had at first taken us for an enemy's ship. The southern passage is, in fact, highly advantageous for vessels going to Cumana and Barcelona. The water is less deep than in the northern passage, which is much narrower; but there is no risk of touching the ground, if vessels keep very close to the island of Lobos and the Moros del Tunal. The channel between Coche and Margareta is narrowed by the shoals off the north-west cape of Coche, and by the bank that surrounds La Punta de los Mangles.

The Guayquerias belong to that tribe of civilized Indians who inhabit the coasts of Margareta and the suburbs of the city of Cumana. Next to the Caribs of Spanish Guiana they are the finest race of men in Terra Firma. They enjoy several privileges, because from the earliest times of the conquest they remained faithful friends to the Castilians. The king of Spain styles them in his public acts, "his dear, noble, and loyal Guayquerias." The Indians of the two canoes we had met had left the port of Cumana during the night. They were going in search of timber to the forests of cedar (*Cedrela odorata*, *Linn.*), which extend from Cape