

the country, of the extreme dryness of the season, of the abundant rains in the neighbouring districts, and particularly of the extravagancies of which the ladies of Cumana accuse those of the Caracas and the Havannah. The company were under no apprehensions from the bavas, or small crocodiles, which are now extremely scarce, and which approach men without attacking them. These animals are three or four feet long. We never met with them in the Manzanares, but with a great number of dolphins (toninas), which sometimes ascend the river in the night, and frighten the bathers by spouting water.

The port of Cumana is a roadstead capable of receiving the fleets of Europe. The whole of the Gulf of Cariaco, which is about 35 miles long and 48 broad, affords excellent anchorage. The Pacific is not more calm on the shores of Peru, than the Caribbean Sea from Porto-cabello, and especially from Cape Codera to the point of Paria. The hurricanes of the West Indies are never felt in these regions. The only danger in the port of Cumana is a shoal, called Morro Roxo. There are from one to three fathoms water on this shoal, while just beyond its edges there are eighteen, thirty, and even thirty-eight. The remains of an old battery, situated north-north-east of the castle of San Antonio, and very near it, serve as a mark to avoid the bank of Morro Roxo.

The city lies at the foot of a hill destitute of verdure, and is commanded by a castle. No steeple or dome attracts from afar the eye of the traveller, but only a few trunks of tamarind, cocoa, and date trees, which rise above the houses, the roofs of which are flat. The surrounding plains, especially those on the coasts, wear a melancholy, dusty, and arid appearance, while a fresh and luxuriant vegetation marks from afar the windings of the river, which separates the city from the suburbs; the population of European and mixed race from the copper-coloured natives. The hill of fort San Antonio, solitary, white, and bare, reflects a great mass of light, and of radiant heat: it is composed of breccia, the strata of which contain numerous fossils. In the distance, towards the south, stretches a vast and gloomy curtain of mountains. These are the high calcareous Alps of New Andalusia, surmounted by sandstone, and other more