

around the planet Venus; the purple, orange, and violet, were distinctly perceived: but I never saw any colours around Sirius, Canopus, or Achernar.

While the halo was visible at Cumana, the hygrometer denoted great humidity; nevertheless the vapours appeared so perfectly in solution, or rather so elastic and uniformly disseminated, that they did not alter the transparency of the atmosphere. The moon arose after a storm of rain, behind the castle of San Antonio. As soon as she appeared on the horizon, we distinguished two circles: one large and whitish, forty-four degrees in diameter; the other a small circle of $1^{\circ} 43'$, displaying all the colours of the rainbow. The space between the two circles was of the deepest azure. At four degrees height, they disappeared, while the meteorological instruments indicated not the slightest change in the lower regions of the air. This phenomenon had nothing extraordinary, except the great brilliancy of the colours, added to the circumstance, that, according to the measures taken with Ramsden's sextant, the lunar disk was not exactly in the centre of the haloes. Without this actual measurement we might have thought that the excentricity was the effect of the projection of the circles on the apparent concavity of the sky.

If the situation of our house at Cumana was highly favourable for the observation of the stars and meteorological phenomena, it obliged us to be sometimes the witnesses of painful scenes during the day. A part of the great square is surrounded with arcades, above which is one of those long wooden galleries, common in warm countries. This was the place where slaves, brought from the coast of Africa, were sold. Of all the European governments Denmark was the first, and for a long time the only power, which abolished the traffic; yet notwithstanding that fact, the first negroes we saw exposed for sale had been landed from a Danish slave-ship. What are the duties of humanity, national honour, or the laws of their country, to men stimulated by the speculations of sordid interest?

The slaves exposed to sale were young men from fifteen to twenty years of age. Every morning cocoa-nut oil was distributed among them, with which they rubbed their