

way of sale, but because the soldiers played for them at dice.

The first excursion we made was to the peninsula of Araya, and those countries formerly celebrated for the slave-trade and the pearl-fishery. We embarked on the Rio Manzanares, near the Indian suburb, on the 19th of August, about two in the morning. The principal objects of this excursion were, to see the ruins of the castle of Araya, to examine the salt-works, and to make a few geological observations on the mountains forming the narrow peninsula of Maniquarez. The night was delightfully cool; swarms of phosphorescent insects\* glistened in the air, and over a soil covered with sesuvium, and groves of mimosa which bordered the river. We know how common the glow-worm† is in Italy and in all the south of Europe, but the picturesque effect it produces cannot be compared to those innumerable, scattered, and moving lights, which embellish the nights of the torrid zone, and seem to repeat on the earth, along the vast extent of the savannahs, the brilliancy of the starry vault of heaven.

When, on descending the river, we drew near plantations, or *charas*, we saw bonfires kindled by the negroes. A light and undulating smoke rose to the tops of the palm-trees, and imparted a reddish hue to the disk of the moon. It was on a Sunday night, and the slaves were dancing to the music of the guitar. The people of Africa, of negro race, are endowed with an inexhaustible store of activity and gaiety. After having ended the labours of the week, the slaves, on festival days, prefer to listless sleep the recreations of music and dancing.

The bark in which we passed the gulf of Cariaco was very spacious. Large skins of the jaguar, or American tiger, were spread for our repose during the night. Though we had yet scarcely been two months in the torrid zone, we had already become so sensible to the smallest variation of temperature that the cold prevented us from sleeping; while, to our surprise, we saw that the centigrade thermometer was as high as 21·8°. This fact is familiar to those who have lived long in the Indies, and is worthy the

\* *Elater noctilucus*.

† *Lampyrus italica*, *L. noctiluca*.