

It has received the name of the *Imposible*, because it is believed that, in the case of hostile invasion, this ridge of mountains would be inaccessible to the enemy, and would offer an asylum to the inhabitants of Cumana. We reached the top a little before sunset, and I had scarcely time to take a few horary angles, to determine the longitude of the place by means of the chronometer.

The view from the *Imposible* is finer and more extensive than that from the table-land of Quetepe. We distinguished clearly by the naked eye the flattened top of the Brigantine (the position of which it would be important to fix accurately), the *embarcadero* or landing-place, and the roadstead of Cumana. The rocky coast of the peninsula of Araya was discernible in its whole length. We were particularly struck with the extraordinary configuration of a port, known by the name of Laguna Grande, or Laguna del Obispo. A vast basin, surrounded by high mountains, communicates with the gulf of Cariaco by a narrow channel which admits only of the passage of one ship at a time. This port is capable of containing several squadrons at once. It is an uninhabited place, but annually frequented by vessels, which carry mules to the West India Islands. There are some pasture grounds at the farther end of the bay. We traced the sinuosities of this arm of the sea, which, like a river, has dug a bed between perpendicular rocks destitute of vegetation. This singular prospect reminded us of the fanciful landscape which Leonardo da Vinci has made the back-ground of his famous portrait of Mona Lisa, the wife of Francisco del Giacondo.

We could observe by the chronometer the moment when the disk of the sun touched the horizon of the sea. The first contact was at 6^h 8' 13"; the second, at 6^h 10' 26", mean time. This observation, which is not unimportant for the theory of terrestrial refractions, was made on the summit of the mountain, at the absolute height of 296 toises. The setting of the sun was attended by a very rapid cooling of the air. Three minutes after the last apparent contact of the disk with the horizon of the sea, the thermometer suddenly fell from 25.2° to 21.3°. Was this extraordinary refrigeration owing to some descending current? The air was however calm, and no horizontal wind was felt.

We passed the night in a house where there was a military