

leagues in length, pretty uniformly following the direction of east and west. In this valley are situated the Missions of San Antonio and Guanaguana; the first is famous on account of a small church with two towers, built of brick, in pretty good style, and ornamented with columns of the Doric order. It is the wonder of the country. The prefect of the Capuchins completed the building of this church in less than two summers, though he employed only the Indians of his village. The mouldings of the capitals, the cornices, and a frieze decorated with suns and arabesques, are executed in clay mixed with pounded brick. If we are surprised to find churches in the purest Grecian style on the confines of Lapland,\* we are still more struck with these first essays of art, in a region where everything indicates the wild state of man, and where the basis of civilization has not been laid by Europeans more than forty years.

I stopped at the Mission of San Antonio only to open the barometer, and to take a few altitudes of the sun. The elevation of the great square above Cumana is 216 toises. After having crossed the village, we forded the rivers Colorado and Guarapiche, both of which rise in the mountains of the Cocollar, and blend their waters lower down towards the east. The Colorado has a very rapid current, and becomes at its mouth broader than the Rhine. The Guarapiche, at its junction with the Rio Areo, is more than twenty-five fathoms deep. Its banks are ornamented by a superb gramen, of which I made a drawing two years afterward on ascending the river Magdalena. The distich-leaved stalk of this gramen often reaches the height of fifteen or twenty feet.†

Towards evening we reached the Mission of Guanaguana, the site of which is almost on a level with the village of San Antonio. The missionary received us cordially; he was an old man, and he seemed to govern his Indians with great

\* At Skelefter, near Torneo.—Buch, Voyage en Norwège.

† *Lata*, or *caña brava*. It is a new genus, between *aira* and *arundo*. This colossal gramen looks like the *donax* of Italy. This, the *arundinaria* of the Mississippi, (*ludolfia*, Willd., *miegia* of Persoon,) and the bamboos, are the highest gramens of the New Continent. Its seed has been carried to St. Domingo, where its stalk is employed to thatch the negroes' huts.