

Indian villages which surround the great lake of Maracaibo. He had served on board a privateer belonging to the island of St. Domingo, and in consequence of a quarrel with the captain he had been left on the coast of Cumana, when the ship quitted the port. Having seen the signal which we had fixed up for the purpose of observing the height of the tides, he had watched the moment when he could attack us on the beach. But why, after having knocked one of us down, was he satisfied with simply stealing a hat? In an examination he underwent, his answers were so confused and stupid, that it was impossible to clear up our doubts. Sometimes he maintained that his intention was not to rob us; but that, irritated by the bad treatment he had suffered on board the privateer of St. Domingo, he could not resist the desire of attacking us, when he heard us speak French. Justice is so tardy in this country, that prisoners, of whom the jail is full, may remain seven or eight years without being brought to trial; we learnt, therefore, with some satisfaction, that a few days after our departure from Cumana, the Zambo had succeeded in breaking out of the castle of San Antonio.

On the day after this occurrence, the 28th of October, I was, at five in the morning, on the terrace of our house, making preparations for the observation of the eclipse. The weather was fine and serene. The crescent of Venus, and the constellation of the Ship, so splendid from the disposition of its immense nebulae, were lost in the rays of the rising sun. I had a complete observation of the progress and the close of the eclipse. I determined the distance of the horns, or the differences of altitude and azimuth, by the passage over the threads of the quadrant. The eclipse terminated at 2^h 14' 23.4" mean time, at Cumana.

During a few days which preceded and followed the eclipse of the sun, very remarkable atmospherical phenomena were observable. It was what is called in those countries the season of winter; that is, of clouds and small electrical showers. From the 10th of October to the 3rd of November, at nightfall, a reddish vapour arose in the horizon, and covered, in a few minutes, with a veil more or less thick, the azure vault of the sky. Saussure's hygrometer, far from indicating greater humidity, often went back from