

which commands a magnificent view of the highest summits of the Cordilleras. A procession was on the point of setting out from the convent of San Francisco, when it was perceived that the blaze on the horizon was caused by fiery meteors, which ran along the skies in all directions, at the altitude of twelve or thirteen degrees.

CHAPTER XI.

Passage from Cumana to La Guayra.—Morro of New Barcelona.—Cape Codera.—Road from La Guayra to Caracas.

ON the 16th of November, at eight in the evening, we were under sail to proceed along the coast from Cumana to the port of La Guayra, whence the inhabitants of the province of Venezuela export the greater part of their produce. The passage is only a distance of sixty leagues, and it usually occupies from thirty-six to forty hours. The little coasting vessels are favoured at once by the wind and by the currents, which run with more or less force from east to west, along the coasts of Terra Firma, particularly from cape Paria to the cape of Chichibacoa. The road by land from Cumana to New Barcelona, and thence to Caracas, is nearly in the same state as that in which it was before the discovery of America. The traveller has to contend with the obstacles presented by a miry soil, large scattered rocks, and strong vegetation. He must sleep in the open air, pass through the valleys of the Unare, the Tuy, and the Capaya, and cross torrents which swell rapidly on account of the proximity of the mountains. To these obstacles must be added the dangers arising from the extreme insalubrity of the country. The very low lands, between the sea-shore and the chain of hills nearest the coast, from the bay of Mochima as far as Coro, are extremely unhealthy. But the last-mentioned town, which is surrounded by an immense wood of thorny cactuses, owes its great salubrity, like Cumana, to its barren soil and the absence of rain.

In returning from Caracas to Cumana, the road by land is