

the boats have an enormous triangular sail, somewhat dangerous in those gusts which issue from the mountain-passes, no instance has occurred during thirty years, of one of these boats being lost in the passage from Cumana to the coast of Caracas. The skill of the Guaiqueria pilots is so great, that accidents are very rare, even in the frequent trips they make from Cumana to Guadaloupe, or the Danish islands, which are surrounded with breakers. These voyages of 120 or 150 leagues, in an open sea, out of sight of land, are performed in boats without decks, like those of the ancients, without observations of the meridian altitude of the sun, without charts, and generally without a compass. The Indian pilot directs his course at night by the pole-star, and in the daytime by the sun and the wind. I have seen Guaiqueries and pilots of the Zambo caste, who could find the pole-star by the direction of the pointers α and β of the Great Bear, and they seemed to me to steer less from the view of the pole-star itself, than from the line drawn through these stars. It is surprising, that at the first sight of land, they can find the island of Guadaloupe, Santa Cruz, or Porto Rico; but the compensation of the errors of their course is not always equally fortunate. The boats, if they fall to leeward in making land, beat up with great difficulty to the eastward, against the wind and the current.

We descended rapidly the little river Manzanares, the windings of which are marked by cocoa-trees, as the rivers of Europe are sometimes bordered by poplars and old willows. On the adjacent arid land, the thorny bushes, on which by day nothing is visible but dust, glitter during the night with thousands of luminous sparks. The number of phosphorescent insects augments in the stormy season. The traveller in the equinoctial regions is never weary of admiring the effect of those reddish and moveable fires, which, being reflected by limpid water, blend their radiance with that of the starry vault of heaven.

We quitted the shore of Cumana as if it had long been our home. This was the first land we had trodden in a zone, towards which my thoughts had been directed from earliest youth. There is a powerful charm in the impression produced by the scenery and climate of these regions; and after an abode of a few months we seemed to have lived there