

not risen, but that part of the milky way which extends from the feet of the Centaur towards the constellation of Sagittarius, seemed to pour a silvery light over the surface of the ocean. The white rock, crowned by the castle of San Antonio, appeared from time to time between the high tops of the cocoa-trees which border the shore; and we soon recognized the coasts only by the scattered lights of the Guaiqueria fishermen.

We sailed at first to N. N. W., approaching the peninsula of Araya; we then ran thirty miles to W. and W.S.W. As we advanced towards the shoal that surrounds Cape Arenas and stretches as far as the petroleum springs of Maniquarez, we enjoyed one of those varied sights which the great phosphorescence of the sea so often displays in those climates. Bands of porpoises followed our bark. Fifteen or sixteen of these animals swam at equal distances from each other. When turning on their backs, they struck the surface of the water with their broad tails; they diffused a brilliant light, which seemed like flames issuing from the depth of the ocean.* Each band of porpoises, ploughing the surface of the waters, left behind it a track of light, the more striking as the rest of the sea was not phosphorescent. As the motion of an oar, and the track of the bark, produced on that night but feeble sparks, it is natural to suppose that the vivid phosphorescence caused by the porpoises was owing not only to the stroke of their tails, but also to the gelatinous matter that envelopes their bodies, and is detached by the shock of the waves.

We found ourselves at midnight between some barren and rocky islands, which uprise like bastions in the middle of the sea, and form the group of the Caracas and Chimanas.† The moon was above the horizon, and lighted up these cleft rocks which are bare of vegetation and of fantastic aspect. The sea here forms a sort of bay, a slight inward curve of the land between Cumana and Cape Codera. The islets of Picua, Picuita, Caracas, and Boracha, appear like fragments of the ancient coast, which stretches from Bordones in the same direction east and west. The gulfs of Mochima and Santa Fé, which will no doubt one day become frequented

* See Views of Nature, (Bohn's edition,) p. 246.

† There are three of the Caracas islands and eight of the Chimanas.