

scarcely rising above the grass, seem as it were, to lie upon a smooth bed of verdure. Within the tropics, the strength and luxury of vegetation give such a development to plants, that the smallest of the dicotyledonous family become shrubs. It would seem as if the liliaceous plants, mingling with the gramina, assumed the place of the flowers of our meadows. Their form is indeed striking; they dazzle by the variety and splendour of their colours; but being too high above the soil, they disturb that harmonious proportion which characterizes the plants of our European meadows. Nature has in every zone stamped on the landscape the peculiar type of beauty proper to the locality.

We must not be surprised that fertile islands, so near Terra Firma, are not now inhabited. It was only at the early period of the discovery, and whilst the Caribbees, Chaymas, and Cumanagotos were still masters of the coast, that the Spaniards formed settlements at Cubagua and Margareta. When the natives were subdued, or driven southward in the direction of the savannahs, the preference was given to settlements on the continent, where there was a choice of land, and where there were Indians, who might be treated like beasts of burden. Had the little islands of Tortuga, Blanquilla, and Orchilla been situated in the group of the Antilles, they would not have remained without traces of cultivation.

Vessels of heavy burthen pass between the main land and the most southern of the Piritu Islands. Being very low, their northern point is dreaded by pilots who near the coast in those latitudes. When we found ourselves to westward of the Morro of Barcelona, and the mouth of the river Unare, the sea, till then calm, became agitated and rough in proportion as we approached Cape Codera. The influence of that vast promontory is felt from afar, in that part of the Caribbean Sea. The length of the passage from Cumana to La Guayra depends on the degree of ease or difficulty with which Cape Codera can be doubled. Beyond this cape the sea constantly runs so high, that we can scarcely believe we are near a coast where (from the point of Paria as far as Cape San Roman) a gale of wind is never known. On the 20th of November at sunrise we were so far advanced, that we might expect