

to double the cape in a few hours. We hoped to reach La Guayra the same day; but our Indian pilot being afraid of the privateers who were near that port, thought it would be prudent to make for land, and anchor in the little harbour of Higuerote, which we had already passed, and await the shelter of night to proceed on our voyage.

On the 20th of November at nine in the morning we were at anchor in the bay just mentioned, situated westward of the mouth of the Rio Capaya. We found there neither village nor farm, but merely two or three huts, inhabited by Mestizo fishermen. Their livid hue, and the meagre condition of their children, sufficed to remind us that this spot is one of the most unhealthy of the whole coast. The sea has so little depth along these shores, that even with the smallest barks it is impossible to reach the shore without wading through the water. The forests come down nearly to the beach, which is covered with thickets of mangroves, *avicennias*, *manchineel*-trees, and that species of *suriana* which the natives call *romero de la mar*.* To these thickets, and particularly to the exhalations of the mangroves, the extreme insalubrity of the air is attributed here, as in other places in both Indies. On quitting the boats, and whilst we were yet fifteen or twenty toises distant from land, we perceived a faint and sickly smell, which reminded me of that diffused through the galleries of deserted mines, where the lights begin to be extinguished, and the timber is covered with flocculent byssus. The temperature of the air rose to 34°, heated by the reverberation from the white sands which form a line between the mangroves and the great trees of the forest. As the shore descends with a gentle slope, small tides are sufficient alternately to cover and uncover the roots and part of the trunks of the mangroves. It is doubtless whilst the sun heats the humid wood, and causes the fermentation, as it were, of the ground, of the remains of dead leaves and of the molluscs enveloped in the drift of floating seaweed, that those deleterious gases are formed, which escape our researches. We observed that the seawater, along the whole coast, acquired a yellowish brown tint, wherever it came into contact with the mangrove trees:

* *Suriana maritima*.