

short, and often broke one upon another. The sea ran the higher, owing to the wind being contrary to the current, till after midnight. The general motion of the waters within the tropics towards the west is felt strongly on the coast during two-thirds of the year. In the months of September, October, and November, the current often flows eastward for fifteen or twenty days in succession; and vessels on their way from Guayra to Porto Cabello have sometimes been unable to stem the current which runs from west to east, although they have had the wind astern. The cause of these anomalies is not yet discovered. The pilots think they are the effect of gales of wind from the north-west in the gulf of Mexico.

On the 21st of November, at sunrise, we were to the west of Cape Codera, opposite Curuaó. The coast is rocky and very elevated, the scenery at once wild and picturesque. We were sufficiently near land to distinguish scattered huts surrounded by cocoa-trees, and masses of vegetation, which stood out from the dark ground of the rocks. The mountains are everywhere perpendicular, and three or four thousand feet high; their sides cast broad and deep shadows upon the humid land, which stretches out to the sea, glowing with the freshest verdure. This shore produces most of those fruits of the hot regions, which are seen in such great abundance in the markets of the Caracas. The fields cultivated with sugar-cane and maize, between Camburi and Niguatar, stretch through narrow valleys, looking like crevices or clefts in the rocks: and penetrated by the rays of the sun, then above the horizon, they presented the most singular contrasts of light and shade.

The mountain of Niguatar and the Silla of Caracas are the loftiest summits of this littoral chain. The first almost reaches the height of Canigou; it seems as if the Pyrenees or the Alps, stripped of their snows, had risen from the bosom of the ocean; so much more stupendous do mountains appear when viewed for the first time from the sea. Near Caravalleda, the cultivated lands enlarge; we find hills with gentle declivities, and the vegetation rises to a great height. The sugar-cane is here cultivated, and the monks of La Merced have a plantation with two hundred slaves. This spot was formerly extremely subject to fever; and it is