

cate the influence of the volcanos of the West India Islands* on the commotions felt on the coasts of Terra Firma, it may be desirable, before we close this chapter, to take a cursory view of this Mediterranean archipelago. The volcanic islands form one-fifth of that great arc extending from the coast of Paria to the peninsula of Florida. Running from south to north, they close the Caribbean Sea on the eastern side, while the greater West India Islands appear like the remains of a group of primitive mountains, the summit of which seems to have been between Cape Abacou, Point Morant, and the Copper Mountains, in that part where the islands of St. Domingo, Cuba, and Jamaica, are nearest to each other. Considering the basin of the Atlantic as an immense valley † which separates the two continents, and where, from 20° south to 30° north, the salient angles (Brazil and Senegambia) correspond to the receding angles (the gulf of Guinea and the Caribbean Sea), we are led to think that the latter sea owes its formation to the action of currents, which, like the *current of rotation* now existing, have flowed from east to west; and have given

* The following is the series of the phenomena:—

27th of September, 1796. Eruption in the West India Islands. (Volcano of Guadaloupe).

November, 1796. The volcano of Pasto began to emit smoke.

14th of December, 1796. Destruction of Cumana.

4th of February, 1797. Destruction of Riobamba.

30th of January, 1811. Appearance of Sabrina Island, in the Azores. The island enlarged very considerably on the 15th of June, 1811.

May, 1811. Commencement of the earthquakes in the island of St. Vincent, which lasted till May 1812.

16th of December, 1811. Commencement of the commotions in the valley of the Mississippi and the Ohio, which lasted till 1813.

December, 1811. Earthquake at Caracas.

26th of March, 1811. Destruction of Caracas. Earthquakes, which continued till 1813.

30th of April, 1811. Eruption of the volcano in St. Vincent; and the same day subterranean noises at Caracas, and on the banks of the Apure.

† The valley is narrowest (300 leagues) between Cape St. Roque and Sierra Leone. Proceeding toward the north along the coasts of the New Continent, from its pyramidal extremity, or the Straits of Magellan, we imagine we recognise the effects of a repulsion directed first toward the north-east, then toward the north-west, and finally again to the north-east.