

have been describing, there was any mixture of these two species of light. The variations in intensity took place at considerable altitudes; the light was white, and not coloured; steady, and not undulating. Besides, the Aurora Borealis is so seldom visible within the tropics, that during five years, though almost constantly sleeping in the open air, and observing the heavens with unremitting attention, I never perceived the least traces of that phenomenon.

I am rather inclined to think that the variations of the zodiacal light are not all appearances dependent on certain modifications in the state of our atmosphere. Sometimes, during nights equally clear, I sought in vain for the zodiacal light, when, on the previous night, it had appeared with the greatest brilliancy. Must we admit that emanations which reflect white light, and seem to have some analogy with the tails of comets, are less abundant at certain periods? Researches on the zodiacal light have acquired a new degree of interest since geometricians have taught us that we are ignorant of the real causes of this phenomenon. The illustrious author of "*La Mécanique Céleste*" has shown that the solar atmosphere cannot reach even the planet Mercury; and that it could not in any case display the lenticular form which has been attributed to the zodiacal light. We may also entertain the same doubts respecting the nature of this light, as with regard to that of the tails of comets. Is it in fact a reflected or a direct light?

We left the plantation of Manterola on the 11th of February, at sunrise. The road runs along the smiling banks of the Tuy; the morning was cool and humid, and the air seemed embalmed by the delicious odour of the *Pancratium undulatum*, and other large liliaceous plants. In our way to La Victoria, we passed the pretty village of Mamon or of Consejo, celebrated in the country for a miraculous image of the Virgin. A little before we reached Mamon, we stopped at a farm belonging to the family of Monteras. A negress more than a hundred years old was seated before a small hut built of earth and reeds. Her age was known because she was a creole slave. She seemed still to enjoy very good health. "I keep her in the sun" (*la tengo al sol*), said her grandson; "the heat keeps her alive."