

former, though considered only as its suburb. The bottom of the basin or lake which forms the harbour of Porto Cabello, turns behind this suburb to the south-west. It is a marshy ground filled with noisome and stagnant water. The town, which has at present nearly nine thousand inhabitants, owes its origin to an illicit commerce, attracted to these shores by the proximity of the town of Burburata, which was founded in 1549. It is only since the administration of the Biscayans, and of the company of Guipuzcoa, that Porto Cabello, which was but a hamlet, has been converted into a well-fortified town. The vessels of La Guayra, which is less a port than a bad open roadstead, come to Porto Cabello to be caulked and repaired.

The real defence of the harbour consists in the low batteries on the neck of land at Punta Brava, and on the reef; but from ignorance of this principle, a new fort, the Mirador of Solano* has been constructed at a great expense, on the mountains commanding the suburb towards the south. More than ten thousand mules are annually exported from Porto Cabello. It is curious enough to see these animals embarked; they are thrown down with ropes, and then hoisted on board the vessels by means of a machine resembling a crane. Ranged in two files, the mules with difficulty keep their footing during the rolling and pitching of the ship; and in order to frighten and render them more docile, a drum is beaten during a great part of the day and night. We may guess what quiet a passenger enjoys, who has the courage to embark for Jamaica in a schooner laden with mules.

We left Porto Cabello on the first of March, at sunrise. We saw with surprise the great number of boats that were laden with fruit to be sold at the market. It reminded me of a fine morning at Venice. The town presents in general, on the side towards the sea, a cheerful and agreeable aspect. Mountains covered with vegetation, and crowned with peaks called Las Tetas de Ilaria, which, from their outline would be taken for rocks of a trap-formation, form the background of the landscape. Near the coast all is bare, white, and strongly illumined, while the screen of mountains

* The Mirador is situate eastward of the Vigia Alta, and south-east of the battery of the salt-works and the powder-mill.