

CHAPTER XXXI.

CUBA AND THE SLAVE TRADE.

I MIGHT enumerate among the causes of the lowering of the temperature at Cuba during the winter months, the great number of shoals with which the island is surrounded, and on which the heat is diminished several degrees of centesimal temperature. This diminished heat may be assigned to the molecules of water locally cooled, which go to the bottom; to the polar currents, which are borne toward the abyss of the tropical ocean, or to the mixture of the deep waters with those of the surface at the declivities of the banks. But the lowering of the temperature is partly compensated by the flood of hot water, the Gulf Stream, which runs along the north-west coast, and the swiftness of which is often diminished by the north and northeast winds. The chain of shoals which encircles the island, and which appears on our maps like a penumbra, is fortunately broken on several points, and those interruptions afford free access to the shore. In the south-east part, the proximity of the lofty primitive mountains renders the coast more precipitous. In that direction are situated the ports of Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, Baitiqueri, and (in turning the Punta Maysi) Baracoa. The latter is the place most early peopled by Europeans. The entrance to the Old Channel, from Punta de Mulás, W.N.W. of Baracoa, as far as the new settlement which has taken the name of Puerto de las Nuevitas del Principe, is alike free from shoals and breakers. Navigators find excellent anchorage a little to the east of Punta de Mulás, in the three rocks of Tanamo, Cabonico, and Nipe; and on the west of