

months to the narrow circle of missionary life, we felt a high gratification at meeting for the first time with men who had sailed round the world, and whose ideas were enlarged by so extensive and varied a course. I quitted the English vessel with impressions which are not yet effaced from my remembrance, and which rendered me more than ever satisfied with the career on which I had entered.

We continued our passage on the following day; and were surprised at the depth of the channels between the Caracas Islands, where the sloop worked her way through them almost touching the rocks. How much do these calcareous islets, of which the form and direction call to mind the great catastrophe that separated from them the mainland, differ in aspect from the volcanic archipelago on the north of Lanzerote, where the hills of basalt seem to have been heaved up from the bottom of the sea! Numbers of pelicans and of flamingos, which fished in the nooks, or harassed the pelicans in order to seize their prey, indicated our approach to the coast of Cumana. It is curious to observe at sunrise how the sea-birds suddenly appear and animate the scene, reminding us, in the most solitary regions, of the activity of our cities at the dawn of day. At nine in the morning we reached the gulf of Cariaco, which serves as a roadstead to the town of Cumana. The hill, crowned by the castle of San Antonio, stood out, prominent from its whiteness, on the dark curtain of the inland mountains. We gazed with interest on the shore, where we first gathered plants in America, and where, some months later, M. Bonpland had been in such danger. Among the cactuses, that rise in columns twenty feet high, appear the Indian huts of the Guaykeries. Every part of the landscape was familiar to us; the forest of cactus, the scattered huts and that enormous ceiba, beneath which we loved to bathe at the approach of night. Our friends at Cumana came out to meet us: men of all castes, whom our frequent herborizations had brought into contact with us, expressed the greater joy at sight of us, as a report that we had perished on the banks of the Orinoco had been current for several months. These reports had their origin either in the severe illness of M. Bonpland, or in the fact of our boat having been nearly lost in a gale above the mission of Uruana.