

satanas), and the stentor or alouate of the steppes of Caracas (*Simia ursina*), had been already received. The arrival of so great a number of French military officers, and the manifestation of political and religious opinions not altogether conformable with the interests of the governments of Europe, excited singular agitation in the population of Cumana. The governor treated the French authorities with the forms of civility consistent with the friendly relations subsisting at that period between France and Spain. In the streets the coloured people crowded round the agent of the French Directory, whose dress was rich and theatrical. White men, too, with indiscreet curiosity, whenever they could make themselves understood, made enquiries concerning the degree of influence granted by the republic to the colonists in the government of Guadaloupe. The king's officers doubled their zeal in furnishing provision for the little squadron. Strangers, who boasted that they were free, appeared to these people troublesome guests; and in a country, of which the growing prosperity depended on clandestine communication with the islands, and on a freedom of trade forced from the ministry, the European Spaniards extolled the wisdom of the old code of laws (*leyes de Indias*), which permitted the entrance of foreign vessels into their ports only in extreme cases of want or distress. These contrasts between the restless desires of the colonists, and the distrustful apathy of the government, throw some light on the great political events which, after long preparation, have separated Spain from her colonies.

We again passed a few agreeable days, from the third to the fifth of November, at the peninsula of Araya, situated beyond the gulf of Cariaco, opposite to Cumana.* We were informed, that the Indians carried to the town from time to time considerable quantities of native alum, found in the neighbouring mountains. The specimens shewn to us sufficiently indicated, that it was neither alunite, similar to the rock of Tolfa and Piombino, nor those capillary and silky salts of alkaline sulphate of alumina and magnesia, that line the clefts and cavities of rocks, but real

* I have already described the pearls of Araya; its sulphurous deposits, and submarine springs of liquid and colourless petroleum. See vol. i, p. 191.