

conceive what so strange a denomination meant. The bark belonged to a Franciscan missionary, a rich priest of an Indian village in the savannahs (Llanos) of Barcelona, who had for several years carried on a very lucrative contraband trade with the Danish islands. M. Bonpland, and several passengers, saw in the night at the distance of a quarter of a mile, with the wind, a small flame on the surface of the ocean; it ran in the direction of S.W. and lighted up the atmosphere. No shock of earthquake was felt, and there was no change in the direction of the waves. Was it a phosphoric gleam produced by a great accumulation of mollusca in a state of putrefaction; or did this flame issue from the depth of the sea, as is said to have been sometimes observable in latitudes agitated by volcanoes? The latter supposition appears to me devoid of all probability. The volcanic flame can only issue from the deep when the rocky bed of the ocean is already heaved up, so that the flames and incandescent scoriæ escape from the swelled and creviced part, without traversing the waters.

At half-past ten in the morning of the 4th of December we were in the meridian of Cape Bacco (Punta Abacou), which I found in  $76^{\circ} 7' 50''$ , or  $9^{\circ} 3' 2''$ , west of Nueva Barcelona. Having attained the parallel of  $17^{\circ}$ , the fear of pirates made us prefer the direct passage across the bank of Vibora, better known by the name of the Pedro Shoals. This bank occupies more than two hundred and eighty square sea leagues, and its configuration strikes the eye of the geologist, by its resemblance to that of Jamaica, which is in its neighbourhood. It forms an island almost as large as Porto Rico.

From the 5th of December, the pilots believed they took successively the measurement at a distance of the island of Ranas (Morant Keys), Cape Portland, and Pedro Keys. They may probably have been deceived in several of these distances, which were taken from the mast-head. I have elsewhere noted these measurements, not with the view of opposing them to those which have been made by able English navigators, in these frequented latitudes, but merely to connect, in the same system of observations, the points I determined in the forests of the Orinoco, and in the archipelago of the West Indies. The milky colour of the waters warned us