

violence. I nevertheless obtained some altitudes of the sun, at the moment when we believed ourselves, though twelve miles distant, in the meridian of the centre of the Great Cayman, which is covered with cocoa-trees.

The weather continued bad, and the sea extremely rough. The wind at length fell, as we neared Cape St. Antonio. I found the northern extremity of the cape $87^{\circ} 17' 22''$, or $2^{\circ} 34' 14''$, eastward of the Morro of the Havannah: this is the longitude now marked on the best charts. We were at the distance of three miles from land, but we were made aware of the proximity of the island of Cuba, by a delicious aromatic odour. The sailors affirm that this odour is not perceived when they approach from Cape Catoche, on the barren coast of Mexico. As the weather grew clearer, the thermometer rose gradually in the shade to 27° : we advanced rapidly northward, carried on by a current from south-south-east, the temperature of which rose at the surface of the water to 26.7° ; while out of the current it was 24.6° . We anchored in the port of the Havannah, on the 19th December, after a passage of twenty-five days in continuous bad weather.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Political Essay on the island of Cuba.—The Havannah.—Hills of Guanavacoa, considered in their geological relations.—Valley of Los Guines. Batabano, and Port of Trinidad.—The King and Queen's Gardens.

CUBA owes its political importance to a variety of circumstances, among which may be enumerated the extent of its surface, the fertility of its soil, its naval establishments, and the nature of its population, of which three-fifths are free men. All these advantages are heightened by the admirable position of the Havannah. The northern part of the Caribbean Sea, known by the name of the Gulf of Mexico, forms a circular basin more than two hundred and fifty leagues in diameter: it is a Mediterranean with two outlets. The island of Cuba, or rather its coast between Cape St. Antonio and the town of Matanzas, situated at