

the opening of the old channel, closes the Gulf of Mexico on the south-east, leaving the ocean current, known by the name of the Gulf Stream, no other outlet on the south than a strait between Cape St. Antonio and Cape Catoche; and no other on the north than the channel of Bahama, between Bahia-Honda and the shoals of Florida. Near the northern outlet, where the highways of so many nations may be said to cross each other, lies the fine port of the Havannah, fortified at once by nature and by art. The fleets which sail from this port, and which are partly constructed of the cedrela and the mahogany of the island of Cuba, might, at the entrance of the Mexican Mediterranean, menace the opposite coast, as the fleets that sail from Cadiz command the Atlantic near the Pillars of Hercules. In the meridian of the Havannah, the Gulf of Mexico, the old channel, and the channel of Bahama unite. The opposite direction of the currents, and the violent agitations of the atmosphere at the setting-in of winter, impart a peculiar character to these latitudes, at the extreme limit of the equinoctial zone.

The island of Cuba is the largest of the Antilles.\* Its long and narrow form gives it a vast development of coast, and places it in proximity with Hayti and Jamaica, with the most southern province of the United States (Florida), and the most easterly province of the Mexican Confederation (Yucatan).† This circumstance claims serious attention, when it is considered that Jamaica, St. Domingo, Cuba, and the southern parts of the United States (from Louisiana to Virginia), contain nearly two millions eight hundred thousand Africans. Since the separation of St. Domingo, the Floridas, and New Spain from the mother-country, the island of Cuba is connected only by similarity of religion, language, and manners, with the neighbouring countries, which, during ages, were subject to the same laws.

Florida forms the last link in that long chain, the northern extremity of which reaches the basin of St. Lawrence, and extends from the region of palm-trees to that of

\* Its area is little less in extent than that of England, not including Wales.

† These places are brought into communication one with another by a voyage of ten or twelve days.