

A part of these so-styled gardens is indeed beautiful; the voyager sees the scene change every moment, and the verdure of some of the islands appears the more lovely from its contrast with chains of rocks, displaying only white and barren sands. The surface of these sands, heated by the rays of the sun, seems to be undulating like the surface of a liquid. The contact of layers of air of unequal temperature, produces the most varied phenomena of suspension and mirage, from ten in the morning till four in the afternoon. Even in those desert places the sun animates the landscape, and gives mobility to the sandy plain, to the trunks of trees, and to the rocks that project into the sea like promontories. When the sun appears, these inert masses seem suspended in air; and on the neighbouring beach, the sands present the appearance of a sheet of water gently agitated by the winds. A train of clouds suffices to seat the trunks of trees and the suspended rocks again on the soil; to render the undulating surface of the plains motionless; and to dissipate the charm which the Arabian, Persian, and Hindoo poets have celebrated as "the sweet illusions of the solitary desert."

We doubled Cape Matahambre very slowly. The chronometer of Louis Berthoud having kept time accurately at the Havannah, I availed myself of this occasion to determine, on this and the following days, the positions of Cayo de Don Cristoval, Cayo Flamenco, Cayo de Diego Perez, and Cayo de Piedras. I also employed myself in examining the influence which the changes at the bottom of the sea produce on its temperature at the surface. Sheltered by so many islands, the surface is calm as a lake of fresh water, and the layers of different depths being distinct and separate, the smallest change indicated by the lead, acts on the thermometer. I was surprised to see that on the east of the little Cayo de Don Cristoval, the high banks are only distinguished by the milky colour of the water, like the bank of Vibora, south of Jamaica, and many other banks, the existence of which I ascertained by means of the thermometer. The bottom of the rock of Batabano is a sand composed of coral detritus; it nourishes sea-weeds which scarcely ever appear on the surface: the water, as I have already observed, is greenish; and the absence of the milky