

When the temperature of the air diminished at night to 23° and the wind blew from the land, it brought that delicious odour of flowers and honey which characterizes the shores of the island of Cuba.* We sailed along the coast keeping two or three miles distant from land. On the 13th March, a little before sunset, we were opposite the mouth of the Rio San Juan, so much dreaded by navigators on account of the innumerable quantity of mosquitos and zancudos which fill the atmosphere. It is like the opening of a ravine, in which vessels of heavy burden might enter, but that a shoal (placer) obstructs the passage. Some horary angles gave me the longitude $82^{\circ} 40' 50''$, for this port, which is frequented by the smugglers of Jamaica and the corsairs of Providence Island. The mountains that command the port scarcely rise to 230 toises. I passed a great part of the night on deck. The coast was dreary and desolate. Not a light announced a fisherman's hut. There is no village between Batabano and Trinidad, a distance of fifty leagues; scarcely are there more than two or three corrales or farm yards, containing hogs or cows. Yet, in the time of Columbus, this territory was inhabited along the shore. When the ground is dug to make wells, or when torrents furrow the surface of the earth in floods, stone hatchets and copper utensils† are often discovered; these are remains of the ancient inhabitants of America.

At sunrise I requested the captain to heave the lead. There was no bottom to be found at sixty fathoms; and the ocean was warmer at its surface than anywhere else; it was

* Cuban wax, which is a very important object of trade, is produced by the bees of Europe (the species *Apis*, Latr.). Columbus says expressly, that in his time the inhabitants of Cuba did not collect wax. The great loaf of that substance which he found in the island in his first voyage, and presented to King Ferdinand in the celebrated audience of Barcelona, was afterwards ascertained to have been brought thither by Mexican barques from Yucatan. It is curious that the wax of melipones was the first production of Mexico that fell into the hands of the Spaniards, in the month of November, 1492.

† Doubtless the copper of Cuba. The abundance of this metal in its native state, would naturally induce the Indians of Cuba and Hayti to melt it. Columbus says that there were masses of native copper at Hayti, of the weight of six arrobas; and that the boats of Yucatan, which he met with on the eastern coast of Cuba, carried, among other Mexican merchandize, "crucibles to melt copper."