

like horns,* a little inclined. Notwithstanding the great lowering of the temperature during the season of the *Nortes*, or north winds, snow never falls; and only a hoar-frost (*escarcha*) is seen on these mountains, as on those of Santiago. This absence of snow is difficult to be explained. In emerging from the forest, we perceived a curtain of hills, of which the southern slope is covered with houses; this is the town of Trinidad, founded in 1514, by the governor Diego Velasquez, on account of "the rich mines of gold" which were said to have been discovered in the little valley of Rio Arimao.† The streets of Trinidad have all a rapid descent: there, as in most parts of Spanish America, it is complained that the Conquistadores chose very injudiciously the sites for new towns.‡ At the northern extremity is the church of Nuestra Señora de la Popa, a celebrated place of pilgrimage. This point I found to be 700 feet above the level of the sea; it commands a magnificent view of the ocean, the two ports (Puerto Casilda and Boca Guaurabo), a forest of palm-trees, and the group of the lofty mountains of San Juan. We were received at the town of Trinidad with the kindest hospitality, by Señor Munoz, the Superintendent of the *Real Hacienda*. I made observations during a great part of the night, and found the latitude near the cathedral, by the *Spica Virginis*, α of the Centaur, and β of the Southern Cross, under circumstances not equally favourable, to be $21^{\circ} 48' 20''$. My chronometric longitude was $82^{\circ} 21' 7''$. I was informed, at my second visit to the Havannah, in returning from Mexico, that this longitude was nearly identical with that obtained by the captain of

* Wherever the rock is visible I perceived compact limestone, whitish-grey, partly porous, and partly with a smooth fracture, as in the Jura formation.

† This river flows towards the east into the Bahia de Xagua.

‡ It is questionable whether the town founded by Velasquez was not situated in the plain and nearer the ports of Casilda and Guaurabo. It has been suggested that the fear of the French, Portuguese, and English freebooters, led to the selection, even in inland places, of sites on the declivity of mountains, whence, as from a watch-tower, the approach of the enemy could be discerned; but it seems to me that these fears could have had no existence prior to the government of Hernando de Soto. The Havannah was sacked for the first time, by French corsairs, in 1539.