

tude of the eastern cape of *Cayman-brack*. The latitude reduced by the reckoning on the rhumbs of wind at the meridian observation, appeared to me to be $19^{\circ} 40' 50''$.

As long as we were within sight of the rock of *Cayman-brack*, sea-turtles of extraordinary dimensions swam round our vessel. The abundance of these animals led Columbus to give the whole group of the Caymans the name of *Peñascales de las Tortugas*, (rocks of the turtles.) Our sailors would have thrown themselves into the water to catch some of these animals; but the numerous sharks that accompany them, rendered the attempt too perilous. The sharks fixed their jaws on great iron hooks which were flung to them; these hooks were very sharp and (for want of *anzuelos encadenados**) they were tied to cords: the sharks were in this manner drawn up half the length of their bodies; and we were surprised to see that those which had their mouths wounded and bleeding continued to seize the bait over and over again during several hours.† At the sight of these voracious fish, the sailors in a Spanish vessel always recollect the local fable of the coast of Venezuela, which describes the benediction of a bishop as having softened the habits of the sharks, which are everywhere else the dread of mariners. Do these wild sharks of the port of La Guayra specifically differ from those which are so formidable in the port of the Havana? And do the former belong to the group of *Emissoles* with small sharp teeth, which Cuvier distinguishes from the *Melandres*, by the name of *Musteli*?

The wind freshened more and more from the south-east, as we advanced in the direction of Cape Negril and the

* Fish-hooks with chains.

† "Vidimus quoque squalis, quotiescunque, hamo icti, dimidia parte corporis e fluctibus extrahebantur, cito albo stercus emittere haud absimile excrementis caninis. Commovebat intestina (ut arbitramur) subitus pavor." Although the form and number of teeth change with age, and the teeth appear successively in the shark genus, I doubt whether Don Antonio Ulloa be correct in stating that "the young sharks have two, and the old ones four rows of grinders." These, like many other sea-fish, are easily accustomed to live in fresh water, or in water slightly briny. It is observed that sharks (tiburones) abound of late in the Laguna of Maracaybo, whither they have been attracted by the dead bodies thrown into the water after the frequent battles between the Spanish royalists and the Columbian republicans.