

the climate of the neighbouring land; but it is less easy to conceive that those slight changes of temperature (for instance, a centesimal degree on the bank of La Vibora), can impart a peculiar character to the atmosphere of the shoals. May not these submarine islands act upon the formation and accumulation of the vesicular vapours in some other way than by cooling the waters of the surface?

Quitting the bank of La Vibora, we passed between the Baxo Nuevo, and the light-house of Camboy; and on the 22nd March, we passed more than thirty leagues to westward of El Roncador (The Snorer), a name which this shoal has received from the pilots, who assert, on the authority of ancient traditions, that a sound like snoring is heard from afar. If such a sound be really heard, it arises, no doubt, from a periodical issuing of air compressed by the waters in a rocky cavern. I have observed the same phenomenon on several coasts, for instance, on the promontories of Teneriffe, in the limestones of the Havannah,* and in the granite of Lower Peru, between Truxillo and Lima. A project was formed at the Canary Islands, for placing a machine at the issue of the compressed air, and allowing the sea to act as an impelling force. While the autumnal equinox* is everywhere dreaded in the sea of the West Indies (except on the coast of Cumana and Caracas), the spring equinox produces no effect on the tranquillity of those tropical regions: a phenomenon almost the inverse of that observable in high latitudes. Since we had quitted La Vibora, the weather had been remarkably fine; the colour of the sea was indigo-blue, and sometimes violet, owing to the quantity of medusæ and eggs of fish (*purga de mar*) which covered it. Its surface was gently agitated. The thermometer kept up, in the shade, from 26° to 27° ; not a cloud arose on the horizon, although the wind was constantly north, or N.N.W. I know not whether to attribute to this wind, which cools the higher layers of the atmosphere, and there produces icy crystals, the halos which were formed round the moon two nights successively. The halos were of small dimensions, 45° diameter. I never had an opportunity of seeing and measuring any† of which the diameter had at-

* Called by the Spanish sailors "El Cordonazo de San Francisco."

† In Captain Parry's first voyage, halos were measured round the sun