

of his companions who were concealed amidst the trees, inspired us with some mistrust. These blacks were no doubt maroon negroes: slaves escaped from prison. This unfortunate class are much to be feared: they have the courage of despair, and a desire of vengeance excited by the severity of the whites. We were without arms; the negroes appeared to be more numerous than we were, and, thinking that possibly they invited us to land with the desire of taking possession of our canoe, we thought it most prudent to return on board. The aspect of a naked man, wandering on an uninhabited beach, unable to free himself from the chains fastened round his neck and the upper part of his arm, was an object calculated to excite the most painful impressions. Our sailors wished to return to the shore for the purpose of seizing the fugitives, to sell them secretly at Carthagena. In countries where slavery exists, the mind is familiarized with suffering, and that instinct of pity which characterizes and enobles our nature, is blunted.

Whilst we lay at anchor near the island of Baru, in the meridian of Punta Gigantes, I observed the eclipse of the moon of the 29th of March, 1801. The total immersion took place at 11^h 30' 12.6° mean time. Some groups of vapours, scattered over the azure vault of the sky, rendered the observation of the immersion uncertain.

During the total eclipse, the lunar disc displayed, as almost always happens, a reddish tint, without disappearing; the edges, examined with a sextant, were strongly undulating, notwithstanding the considerable altitude of the orb. It appeared to me that the moon was more luminous than I had ever seen it in the temperate zone. The vividness of the light, it may be conceived, does not depend solely on the state of the atmosphere, which reflects, more or less feebly, the solar rays, by inflecting them in the cone of the shade. The light is also modified by the variable transparency of that part of the atmosphere across which we perceived the moon eclipsed. Within the tropics, great serenity of the sky, and a perfect dissolution of the vapours, diminish the extinction of the light sent back to us by the lunar disc. I was singularly struck, during the eclipse, by the want of uniformity in the distribution of the refracted light by the terrestrial atmosphere. In the central region of