

The natives of the island were no less objects of curiosity to the Spaniards, differing, as they did, from any race of men they had ever seen. They were painted with a variety of colours and devices, so as to have a wild and fantastic appearance. Their natural complexion was of a tawny or copper hue, and they were entirely destitute of beards. Their hair was not crisped, like the recently discovered tribes of Africa under the same latitude, but straight and coarse, partly cut above the ears, but some locks behind left long, and falling upon their shoulders. Their features, though disfigured by paint, were agreeable; they had lofty foreheads and remarkably fine eyes. They were of moderate stature and well shaped. They appeared to be a simple and artless people, and of gentle and friendly disposition. Their only arms were lances, hardened at the end by fire, or pointed with a flint or the bone of a fish. There was no iron to be seen among them, nor did they know its properties, for when a drawn sword was presented to them they unguardedly took it by the edge.

As Columbus supposed himself to have landed on an island at the extremity of India, he called the natives by the general appellation of Indians, which was universally adopted before the nature of his discovery was known, and has since been extended to all the aboriginals of the New World. The Spaniards remained all day on shore, refreshing themselves, after their anxious voyage, amidst the beautiful groves of the island, and they returned to their ships late in the evening, delighted with all they had seen.