

The consumption of salt amounted, in 1799 and 1800, in the two provinces of Cumana* and Barcelona, to nine or ten thousand *fanegas*, each sixteen *arrobas*, or four hundred-weight. This consumption is very considerable, and gives, if we deduct from the total population fifty thousand Indians, who eat very little salt, sixty pounds for each person. Salt beef, called *tasajo*, is the most important article of export from Barcelona. Of nine or ten thousand *fanegas* furnished by the two provinces conjointly, three thousand only are produced by the salt-works of Araya; the rest is extracted from the sea-water at the Morro of Barcelona, at Pozuelos, at Piritu, and in the Golfo Triste. In Mexico, the salt lake of Peñon Blanco alone furnishes yearly more than two hundred and fifty thousand *fanegas* of unpurified salt.

The province of Caracas possesses fine salt-works at Los Roques; those which formerly existed at the small island of Tortuga, where the soil is strongly impregnated with muriate of soda, were destroyed by order of the Spanish government. A canal was made by which the sea has free access to the salt-marshes. Foreign nations who have colonies in the West Indies frequented this uninhabited island; and the court of Madrid, from views of suspicious policy, was apprehensive that the salt-works of Tortuga would give rise to settlements, by means of which an illicit trade would be carried on with Terra-Firma.

The royal administration of the salt-works of Araya dates only from the year 1792. Before that period they were in the hands of Indian fishermen, who manufactured salt at

* At the period of my visit to that country the government of Cumana comprehended the two provinces of New Andalusia and New Barcelona. The words province and gobierno, or government of Cumana, are consequently not synonymous. A Catalonian, Juan de Urpin, who had been by turns a canon, a doctor of laws, a counsellor in St. Domingo, and a private soldier in the castle of Araya, founded in 1636, the city of New Barcelona, and attempted to give the name of New Catalonia (Nueva Cathaluña) to the province of which this newly constructed city became the capital. This attempt was fruitless; and it is from the capital that the whole province took its name. Since my departure from America, it has been raised to the rank of a Gobierno. In New Andalusia, the Indian name of Cumana has superseded the names Nueva Toledo and Nueva Cordoba, which we find on the maps of the seventeenth century.