

the two formations lying upon each other, the beds of the limestone of Cumanacoa, which I consider as an Alpine limestone, are always largely mixed with clay and marl. Lying, like the mica-slate of Araya, north-east and south-west, they are inclined, near Punta Delgada, under an angle of 60 degrees to south-east.

We traversed the forest by a narrow path, along a rivulet, which rolls foaming over a bed of rocks. We observed, that the vegetation was more brilliant, wherever the Alpine limestone was covered by a quartzose sandstone without petrifications, and very different from the breccia of the sea-coast. The cause of this phenomenon depends probably not so much on the nature of the ground, as on the greater humidity of the soil. The quartzose sandstone contains thin strata of a blackish clay-slate,* which might easily be confounded with the secondary *thonschiefer*; and these strata hinder the water from filtering into the crevices, of which the Alpine limestone is full. This last offers to view here, as in Salzburg, and on the chain of the Apennines, broken and steep beds. The sandstone, on the contrary, wherever it is seated on the calcareous rock, renders the aspect of the scene less wild. The hills which it forms appear more rounded, and the gentler slopes are covered with a thicker mould.

In humid places, where the sandstone envelopes the Alpine limestone, some trace of cultivation is constantly found. We met with huts inhabited by mestizoes in the ravine of Los Frailes, as well as between the Cuesta de Caneyes, and the Rio Guriental. Each of these huts stands in the centre of an enclosure, containing plantains, papaw-trees, sugar-canes, and maize. We might be surprised at the small extent of these cultivated spots, if we did not recollect that an acre planted with plantains† produces nearly twenty times as much food as the same space sown with corn. In Europe, our wheat, barley, and rye cover vast spaces of ground; and in general the arable lands touch each other, wherever the inhabitants live upon corn. It is different under the torrid zone, where man obtains food from plants which yield more abundant and earlier harvests. In those favoured climes, the fertility of the soil is proportioned to the heat and humidity of the atmosphere. An immense population finds

* Schieferthon.

† *Musa paradisiaca.*