

springs, that the spring of Quetepe acquires its great coolness at more than 350 toises of absolute elevation. With respect to the springs which gush out in the plains of the torrid zone, or at a small elevation, it may be observed, in general, that it is only in regions where the mean temperature of summer essentially differs from that of the whole year, that the inhabitants have extremely cold spring water during the season of great heat. The Laplanders, near Umea and Sørsele, in the 65th degree of latitude, drink spring-water, the temperature of which, in the month of August, is scarcely two or three degrees above freezing point; while during the day the heat of the air rises in the shade, in the same northern regions, to 26 or 27 degrees. In the temperate climates of France and Germany, the difference between the air and the springs never exceeds 16 or 17 degrees; between the tropics it seldom rises to 5 or 6 degrees. It is easy to account for these phenomena, when we recollect that the interior of the globe, and the subterraneous waters, have a temperature almost identical with the annual mean temperature of the air; and that the latter differs from the mean heat of summer, in proportion to the distance from the equator.

From the top of a hill of sandstone, which overlooks the spring of Quetepe, we had a magnificent view of the sea, of cape Macanao, and the peninsula of Maniquarez. At our feet an immense forest extended to the edge of the ocean. The tops of the trees, intertwined with lianas, and crowned with long wreaths of flowers, formed a vast carpet of verdure, the dark tint of which augmented the splendour of the aerial light. This picture struck us the more forcibly, as we then first beheld those great masses of tropical vegetation. On the hill of Quetepe, at the foot of the *Malpighia coccolobæfolia*, the leaves of which are extremely coriaceous, we gathered, among tufts of the *Polygala montana*, the first melastomas, especially that beautiful species described under the name of the *Melastoma rufescens*.

As we advanced toward the south-west, the soil became dry and sandy. We climbed a group of mountains, which separate the coast from the vast plains, or savannahs, bordered by the Orinoco. That part of the group, over which passes the road to Cumanacoa, is destitute of vegetation, and has steep declivities both on the north and the south.