

astrigent juice of this plant is employed to strengthen the gums. The Indians recognize the species by the smell, and more particularly by chewing the woody fibres. Two natives, to whom the same wood was given to chew, pronounced without hesitation the same name. We could avail ourselves but little of the sagacity of our guides, for how could we procure leaves, flowers, and fruits growing on trunks, the branches of which commence at fifty or sixty feet high? We were struck at finding in this hollow the bark of trees, and even the soil, covered with moss* and lichens. The cryptogamous plants are here as common as in northern countries. Their growth is favoured by the moisture of the air, and the absence of the direct rays of the sun. Nevertheless the temperature is generally at 25° in the day, and 19° at night.

The rocks which bound the crevice of Cuchivano are perpendicular like walls, and are of the same calcareous formation which we observed the whole way from Punta Delgada. It is here a blackish grey, of compact fracture, tending sometimes towards the sandy fracture, and crossed by small veins of white carbonated lime. In these characteristic marks we thought we discovered the alpine limestone of Switzerland and the Tyrol, of which the colour is always deep, though in a less degree than that of the transition limestone.† The first of these formations constitutes the Cuchivano, the nucleus of the Imposible, and in general the whole group of the mountains of New Andalusia. I saw no petrifications in it; but the inhabitants assert that considerable masses of shells are found at great heights. The same phenomenon occurs in the country about Salzburg.‡ At the Cuchivano the alpine limestone contains beds of marly clay,§ three or resins found in the forests of Cumana, makes a just distinction between the *Draco de la Sierra de Unare*, which has pinnate leaves (*Pterocarpus Draco*), and the *Draco de la Sierra de Paria*, with entire and hairy leaves. The latter is the *Croton sanguifluum* of Cumanacoa, Caripe, and Cariaco.

* *Real musci frondosi*. We also found, besides a small *Boletus stipitatus*, of a snow-white colour, the *Boletus igniarius*, and the *Lycoperdon stellatum* of Europe. I had found this last only in very dry places in Germany and Poland.

† Escher, in the "Alpina," vol. iv., p. 340.

‡ In Switzerland, the solitary beds of shells, at the height of from 1,300 to 2,000 toises, (in the Jungfrauhorn, the Dent de Morcle, and the Dent du Midi,) belong to transition limestone.

§ Mergelschiefer.