

are very useful, and they begin to be imitated in other Missions. The soil of Guanaguana is not less fertile than that of Aricagua, a small neighbouring village, which has also preserved its ancient Indian name. An almuda of land, 1850 square toises, produces in abundant years from 25 to 30 fanegas of maize, each fanega weighing 100 pounds. But here, as in other places, where the bounty of nature retards industry, a very small number of acres are cleared, and the culture of alimentary plants is neglected. Scarcity of subsistence is felt, whenever the harvest is lost by a protracted drought. The Indians of Guanaguana related to us as a fact not uncommon, that in the preceding year they, their wives, and their children, had been for three months *al monte*; by which they meant, wandering in the neighbouring forests, to live on succulent plants, palm-cabbages, fern roots, and fruits of wild trees. They did not speak of this nomade life as of a state of privation.

The beautiful valley of Guanaguana stretches towards the east, opening into the plains of Punzera and Terecen. We wished to visit those plains, and examine the springs of petroleum, lying between the river Guarapiche and the Rio Areo; but the rainy season had already arrived, and we were in daily perplexity how to dry and preserve the plants we had collected. The road from Guanaguana to the village of Punzera runs either by San Felix or by Caycara and Guayuta, which is a farm for cattle (*hato*) of the missionaries. In this last place, according to the report of the Indians, great masses of sulphur are found, not in a gypseous or calcareous rock, but at a small depth below the soil, in a bed of clay. This singular phenomenon appears to me peculiar to America; we found it also in the kingdom of Quito, and in New Spain. On approaching Punzera, we saw in the savannahs small bags, formed of a silky tissue suspended from the branches of the lowest trees. It is the *seda silvestre*, or wild silk of the country, which has a beautiful lustre, but is very rough to the touch. The phalæna which produces it is probably analagous with that of the provinces of Guanaxuato and Antioquia, which also furnish wild silk. We found in the beautiful forest of Punzera two trees known by the names of curucay and canela; the former, of which