

thick forest. Looking downward, the eye rested on the tops of the trees, which, at eight hundred feet below the road, formed a carpet of verdure of a dark and uniform tint. The openings in the forest appeared like vast funnels, in which we could distinguish by their elegant forms and pinnated leaves, the Praga and Irasse palms. But what renders this spot eminently picturesque, is the aspect of the Sierra del Guacharo. Its northern slope, in the direction of the gulf of Cariaco, is abrupt. It presents a wall of rock, an almost vertical profile, exceeding 3000 feet in height. The vegetation which covers this wall is so scanty, that the eye can follow the lines of the calcareous strata. The summit of the Sierra is flat, and it is only at its eastern extremity, that the majestic peak of the Guacharo rises like an inclined pyramid. Its form resembles that of the *needles* and *horns** of the Alps.

The savannah we crossed to the Indian village of Santa Cruz is composed of several smooth plateaux, lying above each other like terraces. This geological phenomenon, which is repeated in every climate, seems to indicate a long abode of the waters in basins that have poured them from one to the other. The calcareous rock is no longer visible, but is covered with a thick layer of mould. The last time we saw it in the forest of Santa Maria it was slightly porous, and looked more like the limestone of Cumanacoa than that of Caripe. We there found brown iron-ore disseminated in patches, and if we were not deceived in our observation, a Cornu-ammonis, which we could not succeed in our attempt to detach. It was seven inches indiameter. This fact is the more important, as in this part of America we have never seen ammonites. The Mission of Santa Cruz is situated in the midst of the plain. We reached it towards the evening, suffering much from thirst, having travelled nearly eight hours without finding water. The thermometer kept at 26°; accordingly we were not more than 190 toises above the level of the sea.

We passed the night in one of those ajupas called King's houses, which, as I have already said, serve as *tambos* or caravanserais to travellers. The rains prevented any observations of the stars; and the next day, the 23rd of Sep-

* The Shreckhörner, the Finsteraarhorn, &c.