

our journey we could not escape conversations, in which the missionary pertinaciously insisted on the necessity of the slave-trade, on the innate wickedness of the blacks, and the benefit they derived from their state of slavery among the Christians! The mildness of Spanish legislation, compared with the Black Code of most other nations that have possessions in either of the Indies, cannot be denied. But such is the state of the negroes, that justice, far from efficaciously protecting them during their lives, cannot even punish acts of barbarity which cause their death.

The road we took across the forest of Catuaro resembled the descent of the mountain Santa Maria; here also, the most difficult and dangerous places have fanciful names. We walked as in a narrow furrow, scooped out by torrents, and filled with fine tenacious clay. The mules lowered their cruppers and slid down the steepest slopes. This descent is called *Saca Manteca*.\* There is no danger in the descent, owing to the great address of the mules of this country. The clay, which renders the soil so slippery, is produced by the numerous layers of sandstone and schistose clay crossing the bluish grey alpine limestone. This last disappears as we draw nearer to Cariaco. When we reached the mountain of Meapira, we found it formed in great part of a white limestone, filled with fossil remains, and from the grains of quartz agglutinated in the mass, it appeared to belong to the great formation of the sea-coast breccias. We descended this mountain on the strata of the rock, the section of which forms steps of unequal height. Farther on, going out of the forest, we reached the hill of Buenavista,† well deserving the name it bears; since it commands a view of the town of Cariaco, situated in the midst of a vast plain filled with plantations, huts, and scattered groups of cocoa-palms. To the west of Cariaco extends the wide gulf, which a wall of rock separates from the ocean: and towards the east are seen, like bluish clouds, the high mountains of Paria and Areo. This is one of the most extensive and magnificent prospects that can be enjoyed on the coast of New Andalusia. In the town of Cariaco we found a great

\* Or the Butter-Slope. *Manteca* in Spanish signifies butter.

† Mountain of the Fine Prospect.