

tracing this chain* from Porto Cabello as far as Maniquarez and Macanao, in the island of Margareta, to find, from west to east, first granite, then gneiss, mica-slate, and primitive schist; and finally, compact limestone, gypsum, and conglomerates containing sea-shells.

It is to be regretted that the town of Caracas was not built farther to the east, below the entrance of the Anauco into the Guayra; on that spot near Chacao, where the valley widens into an extensive plain, which seems to have been levelled by the waters. Diego de Losada, when he founded† the town, followed no doubt the traces of the first establishment made by Faxardo. At that time, the Spaniards, attracted by the high repute of the two gold mines of Los Teques and Baruta, were not yet masters of the whole valley, and preferred remaining near the road leading to the coast. The town of Quito is also built in the narrowest and most uneven part of a valley, between two fine plains, Turupamba and Rumipamba.

The descent is uninterrupted from the custom-house of the Pastora, by the square of Trinidad and the Plaza Mayor, to Santa Rosalia, and the Rio Guayra. This declivity of the ground does not prevent carriages from going about the town; but the inhabitants make little use of them. Three small rivers, descending from the mountains, the Anauco, the Catuche, and the Caraguata, intersect the town, running from north to south. Their banks are very high; and, with the dried-up ravines which join them, furrowing the ground, they remind the traveller of the famous Guaicos of Quito, only on a smaller scale. The water used for drinking at Caracas is that of the Rio Catuche; but the richer class of the inhabitants have their water brought from La Valle, a village a league distant on the south. This water and that of Gamboa are considered very salubrious, because they flow over the roots of sarsaparilla.‡ I could not discover in

* I have spoken, in the preceding chapter, p. 374, of the interruption in the chain of the coast to the east of Cape Codera.

† The foundation of Santiago de Leon de Caracas dates from 1567, and is posterior to that of Cumana, Coro, Nueva Barcelona, and Caravalleda, or El Collado.

‡ Throughout America water is supposed to share the properties of those plants under the shade of which it flows. Thus, at the Straits