

them any aromatic or extractive matter. The water of the valley does not contain lime, but a little more carbonic acid than the water of the Anauco. The new bridge over this river is a handsome structure. Caracas contains eight churches, five convents, and a theatre capable of holding fifteen or eighteen hundred persons. When I was there, the pit, in which the seats of the men are apart from those of the women, was uncovered. By this means the spectators could either look at the actors or gaze at the stars. As the misty weather made me lose a great many observations of Jupiter's satellites, I was able to ascertain, as I sat in a box in the theatre, whether the planet would be visible that night. The streets of Caracas are wide and straight, and they cross each other at right angles, as in all the towns built by the Spaniards in America. The houses are spacious, and higher than they ought to be in a country subject to earthquakes. In 1800, the two squares of Alta Gracia and San Francisco presented a very agreeable aspect; I say in the year 1800, because the terrible shocks of the 26th of March, 1812, almost destroyed the whole city, which is only now slowly rising from its ruins. The quarter of Trinidad, in which I resided, was destroyed as completely as if a mine had been sprung beneath it.

The small extent of the valley, and the proximity of the high mountains of Avila and the Silla, give a gloomy and stern character to the scenery of Caracas; particularly in that part of the year when the coolest temperature prevails, viz., in the months of November and December. The mornings are then very fine; and on a clear and serene sky we could perceive the two domes or rounded pyramids of the Silla, and the craggy ridge of the Cerro de Avila. But towards evening the atmosphere thickens; the mountains are overhung with clouds; streams of vapour cling to their evergreen slopes, and seem to divide them into zones one above another. These zones are gradually blended together; the cold air which descends from the Silla, accumulates in the valley, and condenses the light vapours into large fleecy clouds. These often descend below the Cross of La Guayra, and advance, gliding on the soil, in the direction of the Pastora of Magellan, that water is much praised which comes in contact with the roots of the *Canella winterana*.