

caloric. What can we conceive to be more delightful than a temperature which in the day keeps between 20° and 26° ;* and at night between 16° and 18° ,† which is equally favourable to the plantain, the orange-tree, the coffee-tree, the apple, the apricot, and corn? Jose de Oviedo y Baños, the historiographer of Venezuela, calls the situation of Caracas that of a terrestrial paradise, and compares the Anaucó and the neighbouring torrents to the four rivers of the Garden of Eden.

It is to be regretted that this delightful climate is generally inconstant and variable. The inhabitants of Caracas complain of having several seasons in one and the same day; and of the rapid change from one season to another. In the month of January, for instance, a night, of which the mean temperature is 16° , is sometimes followed by a day when the thermometer during eight successive hours keeps above 22° in the shade. In the same day, we may find the temperature of 24° and 18° . These variations are extremely common in our temperate climates of Europe, but in the torrid zone, Europeans themselves are so accustomed to the uniform action of exterior stimulus, that they suffer from a change of temperature of 6° . At Cumana, and everywhere in the plains, the temperature from eleven in the morning to eleven at night changes only 2° or 3° . Moreover, these variations act on the human frame at Caracas more violently than might be supposed from the mere indications of the thermometer. In this narrow valley the atmosphere is in some sort balanced between two winds, one blowing from the west, or the seaside, the other from the east, or the inland country. The first is known by the name of the wind of Catia, because it blows from Catia westward of Cabo Blanco through the ravine of Tipe. It is, however, only a westerly wind in appearance, and it is oftener the breeze of the east and north-east, which, rushing with extreme impetuosity, engulfs itself in the Quebrada de Tipe. Rebounding from the high mountains of Aguas Negras, this wind finds its way back to Caracas, in the direction of the hospital of the Capuchins and the Rio Caraguata. It is loaded with vapours, which it deposits as its temperature decreases, and consequently the summit of the Silla is enveloped in

* Between 16° and 20.8° Reaum.

† Between 12.8° and 14.4° Reaum.