

nicates, by the valleys of Tacagua and of Tipe, with the coast near Catia. A ridge of rock, the summit of which is forty toises above the bottom of the valley of Caracas, and more than three hundred toises above the valley of Tacagua, divides the waters which flow into the Rio Guayra and towards Cabo Blanco. On this point of division, at the entrance of the branch, the view is highly pleasing. The climate changes as we descend westward. In the valley of Tacagua we found some new habitations, and also *conucos* of maize and plantains. A very extensive plantation of tuna, or cactus, stamps this barren country with a peculiar character. The cactuses reach the height of fifteen feet, and grow in the form of candelabra, like the euphorbia of Africa. They are cultivated for the purpose of selling their refreshing fruits in the market of Caracas. The variety which has no thorns is called, strangely enough, in the colonies, *tuna de España* (Spanish cactus). We measured, at the same place, magueys or agaves, the long stems of which, laden with flowers, were forty-four feet high. However common this plant is become in the south of Europe, the native of a northern climate is never weary of admiring the rapid development of a liliaceous plant, which contains at once a sweet juice and astringent and caustic liquids, employed to cauterize wounds.

We found several veins of quartz in the valley of Tipe visible above the soil. They contained pyrites, carbonated iron-ore, traces of sulphuretted silver (glasserz), and grey copper-ore (fahlerz). The works which had been undertaken, either for extracting the ore, or exploring the nature of its bed, appeared to be very superficial. The earth falling in had filled up those excavations, and we could not judge of the richness of the lobe. Notwithstanding the expense incurred under the intendency of Don Jose Avalo, the great question whether the province of Venezuela contains mines rich enough to be worked, is yet problematical. Though in countries where hands are wanting, the culture of the soil demands unquestionably the first care of the government, yet the example of New Spain sufficiently proves that mining is not always unfavourable to the progress of agriculture. The best-cultivated Mexican