

Parime, stretching from west to east,* in the interior of the continent, and not in a direction parallel with the coast, between the mouths of the river Amazon and the Orinoco. But though we find no chain of mountains at the north-east extremity of Terra Firma, having the same direction as the archipelago of the smaller West India Islands, it does not therefore follow that the volcanic mountains of the archipelago may not have belonged originally to the continent, and formed a part of the littoral chain of Caracas and Cumana.†

In opposing the objections of some celebrated naturalists, I am far from maintaining the ancient contiguity of all the smaller West India Islands. I am rather inclined to consider them as islands heaved up by fire, and ranged in that regular line, of which we find striking examples in so many volcanic hills in Auvergne, in Mexico, and in Peru. The geological constitution of the Archipelago appears, from the little we know respecting it, to be very similar to that of the Azores and the Canary Islands. Primitive formations are nowhere seen above ground; we find only what belongs unquestionably to volcanos: feldspar-lava, dolerite, basalt, conglomerated scorïæ, tufa, and pumice-stone. Among the limestone formations we must distinguish those which are essentially subordinate to volcanic tufas‡ from

* From the cataracts of Atures towards the Essequibo River. This chain of Pacaraimo divides the waters of the Carony from those of the Rio Parime, or Rio de Aguas Blancas.

† Among many such examples which the structure of the globe displays, we shall mention only the inflexion at a right angle formed by the Higher Alps towards the maritime Alps, in Europe; and the Belour-Tagh, which joins transversely the Mouz-Tagh and the Himalaya, in Asia. Amid the prejudices which impede the progress of mineralogical geography, we may reckon, 1st, the supposition of a perfect uniformity of direction in the chains of mountains; 2nd, the hypothesis of the continuity of all chains; 3rd, the supposition that the highest summits determine the direction of a central chain; 4th, the idea that, in all places where great rivers take rise, we may suppose the existence of great tablelands, or very high mountains.

‡ We have noticed some of the above, following Von Buch, at Lance-rote, and at Fortaventura, in the system of the Canary Islands. Among the smaller islands of the West Indies, the following islets are entirely calcareous, according to M. Cortès: Mariegalante, La Desirade, the Grande Terre of Guadaloupe, and the Grenadillas. According to the observations of that naturalist, Curaçoa and Buenos Ayres present only