

distances, but by the peculiar interest attached to the regions he may traverse. This powerful motive led us to the mountains of Los Teques, to the hot springs of Mariara, to the fertile banks of the lake of Valencia, and through the immense savannahs of Calabozo to San Fernando de Apure, in the eastern part of the province of Varinas. Having determined on this route, our first direction was westward, then southward, and finally to east-south-east, so that we might enter the Orinoco by the Apure in latitude $7^{\circ} 36' 23''$.

On the day on which we quitted the capital of Venezuela, we reached the foot of the woody mountains which close the valley on the south-west. There we halted for the night, and on the following day we proceeded along the right bank of the Rio Guayra as far as the village of Antimano, by a very fine road, partly scooped out of the rock. We passed by La Vega and Carapa. The church of La Vega rises very picturesquely above a range of hills covered with thick vegetation. Scattered houses surrounded with date-trees seem to denote the comfort of their inhabitants. A chain of low mountains separates the little river Guayra from the valley of La Pascua* (so celebrated in the history of the country), and from the ancient gold-mines of Baruta and Oripoto. Ascending in the direction of Carapa, we enjoy once more the sight of the Silla, which appears like an immense dome with a cliff on the side next the sea. This rounded summit, and the ridge of Galipano crenated like a wall, are the only objects which in this basin of gneiss and mica-slate impress a peculiar character on the landscape. The other mountains have a uniform and monotonous aspect.

A little before reaching the village of Antimano we observed on the right a very curious geological phenomenon. In hollowing the new road out of the rock, two large veins of gneiss were discovered in the mica-slate. They are nearly perpendicular, intersecting all the mica-slate strata, and are

* Valley of Cortes, or Easter Valley, so called because Diego de Losada, after having defeated the Teques Indians, and their cacique Guaycaypuro, in the mountains of San Pedro, spent the Easter there in 1567, before entering the valley of San Francisco. In the latter place he founded the city of Caracas.