

between the sources of the Guayra and the Tuy is more than twenty-five square leagues in extent. We there found only one miserable village, that of Los Teques, south-east of San Pedro. The soil is as it were furrowed by a multitude of valleys, the smallest of which, parallel with each other, terminate at right angles in the largest valleys. The back of the mountains presents an aspect as monotonous as the ravines; it has no pyramidal forms, no ridges, no steep declivities. I am inclined to think that the undulation of this ground, which is for the most part very gentle, is less owing to the nature of the rocks, (to the decomposition of the gneiss for instance), than to the long presence of the water and the action of currents. The limestone mountains of Cumana present the same phenomenon north of Tumiriquiri.

From Las Lagunetas we descended into the valley of the Rio Tuy. This western slope of the mountains of Los Teques bears the name of Las Cocuyzas, and it is covered with two plants with agave leaves; the *maguey of Cocuyza*, and the *maguey of Cocuy*. The latter belongs to the genus *Yucca*.* Its sweet and fermented juice yields a spirit by distillation; and I have seen the young leaves of this plant eaten. The fibres of the full-grown leaves furnish cords of extraordinary strength.† Leaving the mountains of the Higuerote and Los Teques, we entered a highly cultivated country, covered with hamlets and villages; several of which would in Europe be called towns. From east to west, on a line of twelve leagues in extent, we passed La Victoria, San Mateo, Turmero, and Maracay, containing together more than 28,000 inhabitants. The plains of the Tuy may be considered as the eastern extremity of the valleys of Aragua, extending from Guigne, on the borders of the lake of Valencia, as far as the foot of Las Cocuyzas. A barometrical measurement gave me 295 toises for the absolute height of the Valle del Tuy, near the farm of Manterola, and 222 toises for that of the surface of the lake. The Rio Tuy, flowing from the mountains of Las Cocuyzas, runs first towards the west, then turning to the south and to the east,

* *Yucca acaulis*, Humb.

† At the clock of the cathedral of Caracas, a cord of maguey, half an inch in diameter, sustained for fifteen years a weight of 350 pounds.