

of the country, and their appearance alone sufficiently indicated that these valleys had enjoyed for ages undisturbed peace. The capitan-general, in order to give a new impulse to the military service, had ordered a grand review; and the battalion of Turmero, in a mock fight, had fired on that of La Victoria. Our host, a lieutenant of the militia, was never weary of describing to us the danger of these manœuvres, which seemed more burlesque than imposing. With what rapidity do nations, apparently the most pacific, acquire military habits! Twelve years afterwards, those valleys of Aragua, those peaceful plains of La Victoria and Turmero, the defile of Cabrera, and the fertile banks of the lake of Valencia, became the scenes of obstinate and sanguinary conflicts between the natives and the troops of the mother-country.

South of Turmero, a mass of limestone mountains advances into the plain, separating two fine sugar-plantations, Guayavita and Paja. The latter belongs to the family of Count Tovar, who have property in every part of the province. Near Guayavita, brown iron-ore has been discovered. To the north of Turmero, a granitic summit (the Chuao) rises in the Cordillera of the coast, from the top of which we discern at once the sea and the lake of Valencia. Crossing this rocky ridge, which runs towards the west farther than the eye can reach, paths somewhat difficult lead to the rich plantations of cacao on the coast, to Choroni, Turiamo, and Ocumare, noted alike for the fertility of the soil and the insalubrity of their climate. Turmero, Maracay, Cura, Guacara, every point of the valley of Aragua, has its mountain-road, which terminates at one of the small ports on the coast.

On quitting the village of Turmero, we discover, at a league distant, an object, which appears at the horizon like a round hillock, or tumulus, covered with vegetation. It is neither a hill, nor a group of trees close to each other, but one single tree, the famous *zamang del Guayre*, known throughout the province for the enormous extent of its branches, which form a hemispheric head five hundred and seventy-six feet in circumference. The *zamang* is a fine species of mimosa, and its tortuous branches are divided by