

prise cannot be denied, particularly by having recourse to tunnels, or subterranean canals. The progressive retreat of the waters has given birth to the beautiful and luxuriant plains of Maracay, Cura, Mocundo, Guigue, and Santa Cruz del Escoval, planted with tobacco, sugar-canes, coffee, indigo, and cacao; but how can it be doubted for a moment that the lake alone spreads fertility over this country? If deprived of the enormous mass of vapour which the surface of the waters sends forth daily into the atmosphere, the valleys of Aragua would become as dry and barren as the surrounding mountains.

The mean depth of the lake is from twelve to fifteen fathoms; the deepest parts are not, as is generally admitted, eighty, but thirty-five or forty deep. Such is the result of soundings made with the greatest care by Don Antonio Manzano. When we reflect on the vast depths of all the lakes of Switzerland, which, notwithstanding their position in high valleys, almost reach the level of the Mediterranean, it appears surprising that greater cavities are not found at the bottom of the lake of Valencia, which is also an Alpine lake. The deepest places are between the rocky island of Burro and the point of Caña Fistula, and opposite the high mountains of Mariara. But in general the southern part of the lake is deeper than the northern: nor must we forget that, if all the shores be now low, the southern part of the basin is the nearest to a chain of mountains with abrupt declivities; and we know that even the sea is generally deepest where the coast is elevated, rocky, or perpendicular.

The temperature of the lake at the surface during my abode in the valleys of Aragua, in the month of February, was constantly from 23° to 23.7° , consequently a little below the mean temperature of the air. This may be from the effect of evaporation, which carries off caloric from the air and the water; or because a great mass of water does not follow with an equal rapidity the changes in the tempera-

ridge, and on its southern declivity, no point of level corresponding to the 182 toises, except near San Juan. The absolute height of this village is 194 toises. But, I repeat that, farther towards the west, in the country between the Caño de Cambury and the sources of the Rio Pao, which I was not able to visit, the point of level of the bottom of the lake is much further north.