

of Mariara. Wherever the waters evaporate in the air, they form sediments and incrustations of carbonate of lime; possibly they traverse strata of primitive limestone, so common in the mica-slate and gneiss of the coasts of Caracas. We were surprised at the luxuriant vegetation that surrounds the basin; mimosas with slender pinnate leaves, clusias, and fig-trees, have pushed their roots into the bottom of a pool, the temperature of which is 85° ; and the branches of these trees extended over the surface of the water, at two or three inches distance. The foliage of the mimosas, though constantly enveloped in the hot vapours, displayed the most beautiful verdure. An arum, with a woody stem, and with large sagittate leaves, rose in the very middle of a pool the temperature of which was 70° . Plants of the same species vegetate in other parts of those mountains at the brink of torrents, the temperature of which is not 18° . What is still more singular, forty feet distant from the point whence the springs gush out at a temperature of 90° , other springs are found perfectly cold. They all follow for some time a parallel direction; and the natives showed us that, by digging a hole between the two rivulets, they could procure a bath of any given temperature they pleased. It seems remarkable, that in the hottest as well as the coldest climates, people display the same predilection for heat. On the introduction of Christianity into Iceland, the inhabitants would be baptized only in the hot springs of Hecla: and in the torrid zone, in the plains, as well as on the Cordilleras, the natives flock from all parts to the thermal waters. The sick, who come to La Trinchera to use vapour-baths, form a sort of framework over the spring with branches of trees and very slender reeds. They stretch themselves naked on this frame, which appeared to me to possess little strength, and to be dangerous of access. The Rio de Aguas Calientes runs towards the north-east, and becomes, near the coast, a considerable river, swarming with great crocodiles, and contributing, by its inundations, to the insalubrity of the shore.

We descended towards Porto Cabello, having constantly the river of hot water on our right. The road is extremely picturesque, and the waters roll down on the shelves of rock. We might have fancied we were gazing on the cascades of the Reuss, that flows down Mount St. Gothard;