

the quality of the soil and the metallic riches of the districts of Aroa, of Barquesimeto, and of Carora.

From the Sierra Nevada of Merida, and the paramos of Niquitao, Bocono, and Las Rosas,\* which contain the valuable bark-tree, the eastern Cordillera of New Granada† decreases in height so rapidly, that, between the ninth and tenth degrees of latitude, it forms only a chain of little mountains, which, stretching to the north-east by the Altar and Torito, separates the rivers that join the Apure and the Orinoco from those numerous rivers that flow either into the Caribbean Sea or the lake of Maracaybo. On this dividing ridge are built the towns of Nirgua, San Felipe el Fuerte, Barquesimeto, and Tocuyo. The first three are in a very hot climate; but Tocuyo enjoys great coolness, and we heard with surprise, that, beneath so fine a sky, the inhabitants have a strong propensity to suicide. The ground rises towards the south; for Truxillo, the lake of Urao, from which carbonate of soda is extracted, and La Grita, all to the east of the Cordillera, though no farther distant, are four or five hundred toises high.

On examining the law which the primitive strata of the Cordillera of the coast follow in their dip, we believe we recognize one of the causes of the extreme humidity of the land bounded by this Cordillera and the ocean. The dip of the strata is most frequently to the north-west; so that the waters flow in that direction on the ledges of rock; and form, as we have stated above, that multitude of torrents and rivers, the inundations of which become so fatal to the

\* Many travellers, who were monks, have asserted that the little Paramo de Las Rosas, the height of which appears to be more than 1,600 toises, is covered with rosemary, and the red and white roses of Europe grow wild there. These roses are gathered to decorate the altars in the neighbouring villages on the festivals of the church. By what accident has our *Rosa centifolia* become wild in this country, while we nowhere found it in the Andes of Quito and Peru? Can it really be the rose-tree of our garden?

† The bark exported from the port of Maracaybo does not come from the territory of Venezuela, but from the mountains of Pamplona in New Grenada, being brought down the Rio de San Faustino, that flows into the lake of Maracaybo. (Pombo, *Noticias sobre las Quinas*, 1814, p. 65.) Some is collected near Merida, in the ravine of Viscucucuv.