

the island, La Asuncion, the port of Pampatar, and the villages of Pueblo de la Mar, Pueblo del Norte, and San Juan, belong to the second and most easterly of these groups. The western group, the Macanao, is almost entirely uninhabited. The isthmus that divides these large masses of mica-slate was scarcely visible; its form appeared changed by the effect of the mirage, and we recognized the intermediate part through which runs the Laguna Grande, only by two small hills of a sugarloaf form, in the meridian of the Punta de Piedras. Nearer we look down on the small desert archipelago of the four Morros del Tunal, the Caribbee, and the Lobos Islands.

After much vain search we at length found, before we descended to the northern coast of the peninsula of Araya, in a ravine of very difficult access (Aroyo del Robalo,) the mineral which had been shown to us at Cumana. The mica-slate changed suddenly into carburetted and shining clay-slate. It was an ampelite; and the waters (for there are small springs in those parts, and some have recently been discovered near the village of Maniquarez) were impregnated with yellow oxide of iron, and had a styptic taste. We found the sides of the neighbouring rocks lined with capillary sulphate of alumina in effervescence; and real beds, two inches thick, full of native alum, extending as far as the eye could reach in the clay slate. The alum is greyish white, somewhat dull on the surface, and of an almost glassy lustre internally. Its fracture is not fibrous, but imperfectly conchoidal. It is slightly translucent when its fragments are thin; and has a sweetish and astringent taste, without any bitter mixture. When on the spot, I proposed to myself the question whether this alum, so pure, and filling beds in the clay-slate without leaving the smallest void, be of a formation contemporary with the rock, or whether it be of a recent, and in some sort secondary, origin, like the muriate of soda, found sometimes in small veins, where strongly concentrated springs traverse beds of gypsum or clay. In these parts nothing seems to indicate a process of formation likely to be renewed in our days. The slaty rock exhibits no open cleft; and none is found parallel with the direction of the slates. It may also be inquired, whether this aluminous slate be a transition-