

five pounds) of *tasajo*,* or dried meat slightly salted. It is not from the advancement of agriculture, or the progressive encroachments on the pastoral lands, that the *hatos* (herds and flocks) have diminished so considerably within twenty years; it is rather owing to the disorders of every kind that have prevailed, and the want of security for property. The impunity conceded to the skin-stealers, and the accumulation of marauders in the savannahs, preceded that destruction of cattle caused by the ravages of civil war, and the supplies required for troops. A very considerable number of goat-skins is exported to the island of Marguerita, Punta Araya, and Corolas; sheep abound only in Carora and Tocuyo. The consumption of meat being immense in this country, the diminution of animals has a greater influence here than in any other district on the well-being of the inhabitants. The town of Caracas, of which the population in my time was one-tenth of that of Paris, consumed more than one-half the quantity of beef annually used in the capital of France.

I might add to the productions of the vegetable and animal kingdoms of Venezuela the enumeration of the minerals, the working of which is worthy the attention of the government; but having from my youth been engaged in the practical labours of mines, I know how vague and uncertain are the judgments formed of the metallic wealth of a country from the mere appearance of the rocks, and of the veins in their beds. The utility of such labours can be determined only by well directed experiments, by means of shafts or galleries. All that has been done in researches of this kind, under the dominion of the mother-country, has left the question wholly undecided, and the most exaggerated ideas have been recently spread through Europe, concerning the riches of the mines of Caracas. The common denomination of Columbia given to Venezuela and

* The back of the animal is cut in slices of moderate thickness. An ox or cow of the weight of 25 arrobas produces only 4 to 5 arrobas of *tasajo* or *tasso*. In 1792, the port of Barcelona alone exported 98,017 arrobas to the island of Cuba. The average price is 14 reals, and varies from 10 to 18 (the real is worth about $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ English). M. Urquinasa estimates the total exportation of Venezuela in 1809, at 200,000 arrobas of *tasajo*.