

the importance of the commerce of that rich country. Even under the thralldom of the colonial system, the value of the exported products of agriculture, and of the gold-washings, amount to eleven or twelve millions of piastres, in the countries at present united under the denomination of the Republic of Columbia. The exports of the Capitanía-General of Caracas alone, exclusive of the precious metals, which are the objects of regular working, was (with the contraband), from five to six millions of piastres, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Cumana, Barcelona, La Guayro, Porto Cabello, and Maracaybo, are the most important parts of the coast; those that lie most eastward have the advantage of an easier communication with the Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Vincent. Angostura, the real name of which is Santo Tomè de Nueva Guiana, may be considered as the port of the rich province of Varinas. The majestic river, on whose banks this town is built, affords by its communications with the Apure, the Meta, and the Rio Negro, the greatest advantages for trade with Europe.

The shores of Venezuela, from the beauty of their ports, the tranquillity of the sea by which they are washed, and the fine timber that covers them, possess great advantages over the shores of the United States. In no part of the world do we find firmer anchorage, or better positions for the establishment of ports. The sea of this coast is constantly calm, like that which extends from Lima to Guayaquil. The storms and hurricanes of the West Indies are never felt on the Costa Firme; and when, after the sun has passed the meridian, thick clouds charged with electricity, accumulate on the mountains of the coasts, a pilot accustomed to these latitudes knows that this threatening aspect of the sky denotes only a squall. The virgin-forests near the sea, in the eastern part of New Andalusia, present valuable resources for the establishment of dockyards. The wood of the mountains of Paria may vie with that of the island of Cuba, Huasacualco, Guayaquil, and San Blas. The Spanish Government, at the close of the last century, fixed its attention on this important object. Marine engineers were sent to mark the finest trunks of Brazil-wood, mahogany, cedrela, and laurinea, between Angostura and