

series of the volcanos of Guatemala. The basin of the West Indies forms, as we have already observed, a Mediterranean with several issues, the influence of which on the political destinies of the New Continent depends at once on its central position and the great fertility of its islands. The outlets of the basin, of which the four largest\* are 75 miles broad, are all on the eastern side, open towards Europe, and agitated by the current of the tropics. In the same manner as we recognize, in our Mediterranean, the vestiges of three ancient basins by the proximity of Rhodes, Scarpanto, Candia, and Cerigo, as well as by that of Cape Sorello of Sicily, the island of Pantelaria and Cape Bon, in Africa; so the basin of the West India Islands, which exceeds the Mediterranean in extent, seems to present the remains of ancient dykes which joint† Cape Catoche of Yucatan to Cape San Atonio of the island of Cuba; and that island to Cape Tiburon of St. Domingo; Jamaica, the Bank of La Vibora, and the rock of Serranilla to Cape Gracias à Dios on the Mosquito Shore. From this situation of the most prominent islands and capes of the continent, there results a division into three partial basins. The most northerly has long been distinguished by a particular denomination, that of the Gulf of Mexico; the intermediary or central basin may be called the Sea of Honduras, on account of the gulf of that name which makes a part of it; and the southern basin, comprehended between the Caribbean Islands and the coast of Venezuela, the isthmus of Panama, and the country of the Mosquito Indians, would form the Caribbean Sea. The modern volcanic rocks distributed on the two opposite banks of the basin of the West Indies on the east and west, but not on the north and south, is also a phenomenon worthy of attention. In the Caribbean Islands, a group of volcanos, partly extinct and partly burning, stretches from 12° to 18°; and in the Cordilleras of Guatemala and Mexico from lat. 9° to

\* Between Tobago and Grenada; Saint Martin and the Virgin Isles; Porto Rico and Saint Domingo; and between the Little Bank of Bahama and Cape Cañaveral of Florida.

† I do not pretend that this hypothesis of the rupture and the ancient continuity of lands can be extended to the eastern foot of the basin of the West Indies, that is, to the series of the volcanic islands in a line from Trinidad to Porto Rico.