

19½°. I noticed on the north-west extremity of the basin of the West Indies, that the secondary formations dip towards S.E.; along the coast of Venezuela, rocks of gneiss and primitive mica-slate dip to north-west. The basalts, amygdaloids, and trachytes, which are often surmounted by tertiary limestones, appear only towards the eastern and western banks.

III.—THE BASIN OF THE LOWER ORINOCO, OR THE PLAINS OF VENEZUELA.—This basin, like the plains of Lombardy, is open to the east. Its limits are the littoral chain of Venezuela on the north, the eastern Cordillera of New Grenada on the west, and the Sierra Parime on the south; but as the latter group extends on the west only to the meridian of the cataracts of Maypures (long. 70° 37'), there remains an opening or land-strait, running from north to south, by which the Llanos of Venezuela communicate with the basin of the Amazon and the Rio Negro. We must distinguish between the basin of the Lower Orinoco, properly so called (north of that river and the Rio Apure), and the plains of Meta and Guaviare. The latter occupy the space between the mountains of Parime and New Grenada. The two parts of this basin have an opposite direction; but being alike covered with gramina, they are usually comprehended in the country under the same denomination. Those Llanos extend, in the form of an arch, from the mouth of the Orinoco, by San Fernando de Apure, to the confluence of the Rio Caguan with the Jupura, consequently along a length of more than 360 leagues.

(a) *Part of the basin of Venezuela running from east to west.*—The general slope is eastward, and the mean height from 40 to 50 toises. The western bank of that great sea of verdure (mar de yerbas) is formed by a group of mountains, several of which equal or exceed in height the Peak of Teneriffe and Mont Blanc. Of this number are the Paramos del Almorzadero, Cacota, Laura, Porquera, Mucuchies, Timotes, and Las Rosas. The height of the northern and southern banks is generally less than 500 or 600 toises. It is somewhat extraordinary that the maximum of the depression of the basin is not in its centre, but on its southern limit, at the Sierra Parime. It is only between the meridians