

**RICHARD
BONNYCASTLE**

SPANISH
AMERICA, VOL.
II (OF 2)

Richard Bonnycastle
Spanish America, Vol. II (of 2)

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Spanish America, Vol. II (of 2):*

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Richard Henry Bonnycastle

Spanish America, Vol. II (of 2)

CAPTAIN-GENERALSHIP OF CARACCAS

Caraccas is a name taken from that of a tribe of Indians, and given to a country which includes New Andalusia, or Cumana, with Margarita, Barcelona, Venezuela, or Caraccas Proper, Maracaybo and Coro, on the coast of the Caribbean sea, Varinas and Spanish Guiana in the interior.

BOUNDARIES AND EXTENT

It is bounded on the north by the Caribbean sea, east by the Atlantic, south by Peru and Dutch Guiana, and west by the kingdom of Santa Fé or New Granada; its extent may be computed from the twelfth to the eighteenth degrees of north latitude, and occupies a space extending over a surface equal to 48,000 square leagues.

POLITICAL DIVISIONS AND GOVERNMENT

The Caraccas are subdivided into seven provinces; *viz.* New Andalusia or Cumana; Barcelona, Venezuela or Caraccas Proper, containing Venezuela and Coro, Maracaybo, Varinas and Guiana, with the detached government of the island of Margarita; the whole of these are under the particular superintendence of an officer of the highest rank, who is styled captain-general of the provinces of Venezuela, and the city of Caraccas. The population amounts to nearly one million, of whom sixty thousand are slaves, and about one-ninth Indians.

DISCOVERY AND HISTORY

The coast of this country was originally discovered by Columbus in 1498, during his third expedition. Several adventurers succeeding in exploratory voyages on this part of the continent, the Spanish government came to the determination of endeavouring to place colonies on its soil. These being chiefly ill conducted, and managed by priests unacquainted with the manners and customs of the natives, did not succeed, and it was found necessary to endeavour to subdue the inhabitants by force. When this was partially effected, and Spanish settlers were placed in some security, the management of the new colonies was entrusted to the care of the Welsers, a German mercantile company. These people exercised, for a length of time, an uncontrolled sway over the unfortunate Indians and the colonists. Their excess of punishment and their fraud becoming at last notorious, the king of Spain deprived them of their power, in 1550, and appointed an officer of the crown to administer justice to the oppressed.

This office, under the title of captain-general of the Caraccas, has subsisted ever since, and with some few variations in the territorial divisions, and some abridgments of the authority of the person who fills it, it existed in the same form, until the year 1810. At this period, the mother country, subdued in part by the victorious arms of the French nation, had no time to attend to

the situation of her transatlantic colonies. Engaged in destructive and terrible struggle herself, she little knew of the events which were taking place in the Americas, or if she did know them, was unable to assist those subjects devoted to her cause, or to quell the insurgent and ambitious. Taking advantage of the shackled state of the resources of Spain, the disaffected raised the standard of rebellion, and formed a *junta suprema* (a congress, or supreme council) in Caraccas. At first they published their acts in the name of Ferdinand the Seventh; but soon, however, on the arrival of Miranda with some troops, declared themselves independent of the mother country, and appointed Miranda to the chief command. Spain now placed their ports in a state of nominal blockade.

They have since been daily engaged in hostile measures, and junta has succeeded to junta, royal power to insurgent government, and *vice versa*, with little interval up to the present moment. The Caraccas may indeed be styled the focus of the Spanish American revolution. Numerous and bloody actions have taken place between the Spanish troops and the Caraccanians, Miranda has been beheaded, and the captain-general has reinstated himself.

Don Simon Bolivar, a native of the country, possessing much property and considerable influence, has been the great leader of this revolt, styling himself president and commander in chief of the united provinces of Venezuela. Obtaining from the congress of a neighbouring state (New Granada) an army of 600 men,

he marched against Monteverde, the captain-general who had beheaded Miranda and punished his colleagues, and meeting with few obstacles to surmount entered the city of Caraccas as conqueror, on the 4th August, 1813. The captain-general fled, and refusing to treat with the insurgents, as derogatory to the honour of the master he represented, remained quiet until he received from Spain a reinforcement of 1200 men; he then attacked the city, but was repulsed with the loss of nearly his whole army, and himself severely wounded. In discussing the historical facts relating to South America in general, we have entered more at large upon this subject. At present Bolivar occupies the lower parts of the Orinoco, having made the town of Angostura his head-quarters.

We have chosen the description of the kingdom of Peru as the proper place to give detail of the general historical facts relating to the whole of South America, as it was in that kingdom that the Spanish government first took a consolidated form; we shall, therefore, at present recur to the metropolis, description, and political divisions of the captain-generalship we are now engaged in treating of.

CAPITAL

The city of Caraccas, or as it is written by the Spaniards, Caracas, is the metropolis of this vast region, and has given its name, within a late period, to the whole government. It is situated in $10^{\circ} 30' 15''$ north-latitude, and $67^{\circ} 4' 45''$ west longitude, the highest square being elevated 2903 feet above the level of the sea, at the commencement of a fine plain or valley, which extends nine miles to the eastward, and has nearly the same breadth, through which runs the river Guayra; the site of the town is an uneven ground with a steep slope; it was founded by Diego de Losada, in 1567, and called Santiago de Leon de Caracas, in order to have a permanent settlement in the neighbourhood of some gold mines, which were imagined to be very productive. The ground is so precipitous, that the few carriages which the inhabitants possess are little used. The Anauco, the Catache, and the Caraguatu, three small streams, run through the city from north to south; the second of these furnishes the water used by the labouring classes, the rich inhabitants having that useful fluid brought from a stream about three miles off, supposed to possess peculiar medicinal qualities.

The streets of Caraccas are straight, wide, and intersect each other at right angles; the houses very handsome and spacious; there are some fine squares, and a handsome cathedral, with eight churches and five convents. This city is the seat

of the metropolitan, archbishop of Caraccas, and contains a royal audience, which governs the civil affairs of the captain-generalship, and of which court the officer holding the reins of government is always president, it being in fact a sort of legislative council, composed of the governor and great state officers. The number of inhabitants of this celebrated town are stated not to exceed 20,000 at present, owing to the tremendous loss sustained by the earthquake in 1812, and to the recent sanguinary events which have taken place. The theatre of Caraccas holds from fifteen to eighteen hundred persons, and is well frequented; the female part of the audience occupy the pit, and are separated from the men. The pleasantest part of the year is during the months of November and December, when the air is cool, and the mornings very fine, but the evenings are foggy and damp. During the months of June and July, the nights are beautiful and serene; in fact, the climate during the whole year is so good, that this city may be said to enjoy a perpetual spring.

This state of the atmosphere is finely contrasted with the dreary and savage appearance of the mountains in the neighbourhood, the tremendous precipice of the Silla, or Saddle, and the confused appearance of the country on the right of the plain; which plain, called Chacao, is highly cultivated in many parts, and affords the principal objects of subsistence to the town. In it grows the plantain, the orange, the apple, the apricot, the coffee-tree, the sugar-cane, the pine-apple, the strawberry, vine, peach, quince, maize, corn, vegetables, rice, &c. and in

this fertile valley, numerous herds of cattle abound, it having been computed that forty thousand head are annually brought to the market, for the purpose of being salted, and of immediate consumption.

The only inconvenience felt during this eternal spring is from the effects of certain winds, which cause the weather to prove occasionally inconstant, and produce low nervous fevers, and other disorders incident to a variable atmosphere. The yellow fever sometimes, though rarely, extends its ravages to this place, and once lasted (in the year 1696) for sixteen months, and in 1802 was fatal to the garrison newly arrived from Europe.

The season of periodical rain lasts during the months of April, May and June; but hail is seldom or ever known oftener than once in four or five years.

This capital, placed in so charming a climate, compared to many others in the same latitude, has been subjected to a scourge, which no beauty of situation, or salubrity of the air, can ever compensate. In the year 1812 the whole city was nearly destroyed by an awful earthquake. On the 26th of March, in that year, the population of Leon de Caraccas amounted to fifty thousand souls; in a short space, even in the passing of a moment, these devoted people were reduced to thirty eight thousand, and as if an enormous mine had been exploded under the city, the earth was upheaved to a tremendous height, and twelve thousand persons were swallowed up, or perished amid the ruins of their houses.

The survivors have been ever since busily engaged in repairing

the damages, and rebuilding the city, which is now rapidly advancing to its former state, and the population annually increasing.

La Guayra, a small town situated on the coast of the Spanish Main, is the port of Caraccas, in $10^{\circ} 36' 19''$ north latitude, and $67^{\circ} 6' 45''$ west longitude, at the foot of the chain of mountains which terminate abruptly in precipices on the coast, and which form the sides of the valley in which the capital is built. From the city to the port, it requires a journey of two hours on the mules of the country, which are very safe and swift. The road is kept in excellent repair, and is fortified by draw-bridges, thrown over the natural clefts, and by small batteries. The harbour itself is rather a roadsted than a haven, and contains a newly formed mole, protected by strong batteries. The wall of rocks rise perpendicularly from the back of the town, and forbid all access, excepting by the regular road. At *La Guayra* the sea is always agitated, and the vessels are laden and discharged with much difficulty; so much so, that mules are not embarked, the mulattoes and negroes carrying the cacao and other merchandizes to the vessels, by wading into the water.

The flat space on which *La Guayra* stands is only about 900 feet in breadth, from the precipice at the back to the sea, and the whole aspect of the place is arid, gloomy and unpleasant.

This town is surrounded on the sea side by works and batteries, some of which are very strong, and contain within their limits two streets, parallel to each other, with 8000 inhabitants.

It may be said, that this port is one of the hottest places in Spanish America; the yellow-fever had, however, only commenced its destructive ravages within ten or twelve years, before which time, it was unknown; some are of opinion, that it was brought there after the port was opened to foreign commerce, by the seamen from the United States; others, that it was caused by the overflowing of the river Guayra, which filled the cellars and deep places with water, that soon became stagnant, and exhaled putrid effluvia. However it may be, the inhabitants and strangers who reside at La Guayra, have suffered dreadfully of late years from this disorder.

The annual amount of the commerce of this port, which is the principal one of the province, has been estimated (in peaceable times) to arise to the sum of 346,600*l.*, in the exportation of cacao, indigo, cotton, coffee and hides; and the importations of European and other goods to 511,700*l.* sterling in the same period.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FEATURES, &C. OF THE COUNTRY

The coast of Caraccas which extends for an immense length, is exceedingly rocky and mountainous, affording views of some of the most tremendous precipices in the world, that near the capital, called the *Precipice of the Silla*, being of the height of 8000 feet above the sea, which washes its base.

The chain of the Andes, traversing the whole territory in the direction of its shores, elevates itself the most in the western parts; and is lost in the sea opposite to the great island of Trinidad, which is itself very mountainous.

The average height of the Cordillera of Caraccas may be estimated at 4500 feet, though it occasionally exceeds 8000; its breadth varies from ten to twenty leagues, and it forms some extensive and beautiful valleys. Owing to this elevation of the land, the heat is not so insupportable as might be imagined from its situation; along the coast it is very great; but ascending gradually into the higher regions, the traveller finds it sensibly diminish, and observes with delight, the vegetable productions of different countries, concentrated in a small space. The great valley or plain of the Orinoco bounds the Cordillera to the south, and far from possessing those elevated lands which characterise the southern portion of the New World, Nature has here spread the country into immense flats, or savannahs, known by the name

of Los Llanos (the Plains).

In these plains innumerable herds of cattle are fed, attended by the slaves or servants of the owners, who reside in the towns and villages. These people, living entirely in the desert, have become little better than so many wandering savages; they pass the greater part of their time on horseback, and are said to infest the roads on the borders of the savannahs with their robberies. The heat in the valley of the Orinoco is intense, the thermometer rising even to 115°.

The seasons are divided into rainy and dry, the rainy season lasting from March to November, not however, without ceasing, as there are many days in that period, in which no rain falls; during the time of incessant rain, it does not descend in drizzling misty showers, but comes with such volume and rapidity, that streams, which have been dried to their very channels, now assume in the short space of a few hours, the appearance of large rivers; the plains bordering the Orinoco, and its tributary streams, are inundated by seas of fresh water extending three or four hundred miles in length.

Rivers.— There is no country in the world which possesses more numerous rivers than Caraccas, most of which rise in the Andes and its dependent branches; every valley is traversed by its river; the ridge which divides the provinces as it were into two distinct portions, furnishes abundance of sources on both its declivities. Those which arise on the northern side of this ridge, run from south to north, and fall into the bosom of the

Spanish main. Of these the *Manzanares*, *Tuy*, *Guiges*, *Tocuyo*, *Aroa*, *Yaracuy*, *Unara* and *Neveri*, are the largest.

The southern flank and main chain of the Andes afford rivers which traverse the great Llanos in a southern direction, and swell, by their junction with the Orinoco, the majestic body of that grand river; of these, the *Mamo*, *Pariagou*, *Pao*, *Chivita*, *Zoa*, *Cachimamo*, *Arauca*, *Capanaparo*, *Sinaruco*, the *Apura* and the *Meta*, are the principal; and the *Parima*, *Siaba*, *Joa Parana* and the *Cassiquiari*, fall into this river on its southern bank, the latter forming a communication with the still more majestic stream of the Maranon.

The Orinoco, or Oronoco, is not only amongst the largest, but the finest of South American rivers, and is chiefly distinguished by its very singular and intricate course. Its sources are not well known, but according to La Cruz, it rises in a small lake called Ipava, in 5° 5' north-latitude, and thence winding upon itself, enters the lake of Parima to the south-east, and issues by two outlets towards the north and south; on the western shores of the lake; receiving the Guaviara, it bends north, then north-east, and embracing the Meta, the Apura, the Arauca, and the other large streams above-mentioned, with thousands of smaller ones, falls into the Atlantic ocean, by numerous estuaries, opposite the island of Trinidad, its chief mouth being considerably to the south-east of that island. This noble river communicates with the Maranon, and it is supposed, that a stream called the Siaba flows from the south-west of the lake Parima into the Negro, and that to

the south-east of the same lake, the Rio Blanco, or Parima, joins the Rio Negro also, this last communicating with the Marañon by means of the Joa Parana.

The river Cassiquiari, long conjectured to be a strong branch of the Orinoco, but now known to be an arm of the Negro, communicates also with the Amazons, its streams having been visited by M. de Humboldt, who encountered great perils in the undertaking, by the force of the current and other obstacles. The whole country for 300 miles was a complete desert, in which the ants and mosquitoes were so exceedingly troublesome as almost to deter the traveller from proceeding. He entered the Orinoco, by the Cassiquiari in $3^{\circ} 30'$ north-latitude, and mounted the current of the great river as far as Esmeraldas, the last Spanish settlement in that quarter. The mouths of the Orinoco are very dangerous to navigators; the largest is six leagues in width, and seven of them are navigable for large vessels. The isles formed by these are of very great extent, and are inhabited by the *Guaraounos* and *Mariusos* Indians. On the banks of the Orinoco the magnificence of the scenery is beyond description. Forests of the greatest extent are filled with aromatic trees, which diffuse the most delightful odour; birds of every singular variety of beautiful plumage are everywhere observed, and hordes of monkeys follow the astonished traveller. Passing these forests, enormous plains extend their verdant surfaces further than the eye can reach, and the cataracts of the Orinoco give their name to the whole Cordillera, and are represented to

be the most tremendous that have ever been observed; but no good description of these falls has yet been given, though they constitute the only outlets from the country situated on the east of the Andes to the vast plains of the Maranon. These cataracts are at Maypura and Atures, two villages in about 6° north-latitude, near the great bend of the river.

The periodical inundation of the Orinoco begins in April and ceases in August; in October the flood is low, arriving at its shallowest point in February; the rise is equal to thirteen fathoms at the distance of ninety leagues from the ocean. The mouth of the great estuary is in $8^{\circ} 30'$ north-latitude, and $59^{\circ} 50'$ west longitude.

The caymans, or alligators, are very numerous, and very formidable throughout its whole length, which may be estimated at about 1250 miles.

Indians.— On the banks of the Orinoco the Indian tribes are not numerous, consisting only of from 500 to 2000 warriors each; of these, the *Caribs* are the most powerful as well as the most formidable. The *Otomacs* follow them, and all are nearly in the same state of nature. In this part of the Caraccas, the total number of the natives cannot be accurately ascertained; but in the province of New Andalusia, they amount to 24,000, and in the two provinces of Barcelona and Cumana to 60,000. In Cumana they live almost wholly under the missionaries in little towns or amongst the Europeans, each mission containing about five or six hundred. In the province of Barcelona, the Indian villages contain

from two to even three thousand inhabitants. The *Guaraounoes*, who inhabit the islands of the Orinoco, are independent of the Spaniards, and amount to about six thousand.

To the north of the Orinoco, there are few natives in a state of absolute barbarism; it is only to the south of this river that the efforts of missionaries have been ineffectual.

The provinces of New Andalusia and Barcelona contain fourteen tribes, the *Chaymas*, *Guayquerias*, *Pariagotoes*, *Quaquas*, *Araucas*, *Caribbees*, *Guaraounoes*, *Cumanagotoes*, *Palenkas*, *Piritoos*, *Tomoozas*, *Topocuares*, *Chacopatas*, and *Guarivas*.

The *Guayquerias*, who are civilized Indians residing at Cumana and Araya, amount to 2000.

The *Chaymas*, the Caribs of the Savannahs, and the *Cumanagotoes*, are the most numerous. A few, and only a few, of the savages of the islands of the Orinoco, who build their huts on trees, have been formed into missions on the left bank of the Orinoco. These four last possess languages which are the most universal in this part of the world, the *Cumanogoto* language prevailing in the western part of the captain-generalship, and the *Caribbean* and *Chayman* in the southern and eastern districts.

The missions are not always formed of the same tribe, but often consist of families of different nations, speaking different languages; they all cultivate the land, their huts are all erected in the same style, and they have all a common field for the uses of the community, and are governed by fixed laws; the

magistrates are chosen from among themselves, and each village is superintended in its religious and civil affairs by a monk.

The *Chaymas* were reduced to subjection in the seventeenth century, by Francisco of Pamplona, a monk who had been the captain of a ship; and the oldest mission bears its date from 1660. Of these there are at present twenty-five, containing 15,000 souls. They suffered much from 1681 to 1720 from the Caribs, who burnt the settlements.

In stature, the natives of this tribe are short, being not more than five feet two inches, their body thick, with broad shoulders and flat chest, their colour a dull brown, and they are of a melancholic temperament.

They have a great aversion to European clothing, and remain naked whilst in their houses, but when obliged to go out, they put on a vest with sleeves, which reaches almost to the knees; the women wear this habit without the sleeves, and both sexes use a narrow bandage tied round the loins: they also carefully eradicate the hair from the chin, and are a neat people, keeping their persons, houses and utensils very clean.

Their language, as well as those of the Caribs and Cumanagotoes, has each had a dictionary composed for the use of the missionaries; no word begins with *l*, and it is destitute of *f*, *b* and *d*.

The *Pariagotoes* are mixed with the Chaymas, in the missions; and exist in the villages on the banks of the Caroni. They speak a language peculiar to themselves.

The *Guaraounoes* build their huts on the trunks of the mangrove and palm trees, to raise them above the waters in the great inundations of the Orinoco; as we before observed, they are independent, with the exception of a very few, who have been converted by the monks. Sir Walter Raleigh describes them under the names of Aroottes, Trititivas and Warawites. They make their bread of the flour extracted from the palm tree, which they cut down for this purpose, just previous to the appearance of the flowers.

Five or six hundred of this race quitted the islands a short time ago, and formed two villages on the north and south banks of the great river, twenty-five leagues distant from the sea, where they live independent of the missionaries. They are of a middle size, and very strong, and are able to run on the mud of the marshes, where no other Indians can walk. These people are the pilots of the Orinoco, possessing a perfect knowledge of its navigation, and are concerned in the clandestine commerce carried on from Trinidad.

The *Guayquerias* will be described in speaking of the town of Cumana which they chiefly inhabit.

A tribe called the *Quaquas* are mixed with the Chaymas in the missions, and inhabit an immense tract of country as far as the main Cordilleras of the Andes.

The *Cumanagotoes*, to the amount of 26,000, live in the west of Cumana, in the missions of Piritoo. The chief mission of the Piritoo (so called on account of a thorny palm of which pipes

are made) was founded in 1556, and was named La Conception.

In this country, the *Caribbees* are spread over a great extent, existing also in French Guyana, and in Trinidad; and the Guarivas, as well as many others, are Carib tribes. A few missions are found in the great plains, in which some of these people are settled. The Caribs are distinguished in the Caraccas by their great size.

A tribe on the banks of the Orinoco, named the *Otomacs*, raise their dead at the end of twelve months, and place the bones in a general burying place; they cover their grain, fish, vegetables, &c., with earth, to preserve them, and devour their food mingled with the soil in which it has lain. The substances become quite hard in these pits, by the incrustations of the soil, and some of them are said to eat a pound and a half of the earth in a day. The Indians of all these tribes, who prefer a wandering life to the subjected state of their brethren in the missions, are frequently attacked in the night by the monks and their followers, and made prisoners. When the missionaries give the young people to the converted Indians as slaves, in which capacity they remain until of an age to marry, in consequence of this, the mission Indians frequently instigate the priests to attack these unfortunate people, being eager to possess them. Those who are thus taken are called *Poitos*, and in general consist only of children, torn with unrelenting severity from the arms of their terrified parents. The motive assigned by the monks for such arbitrary measures, is the hope of their ultimate conversion.

Lakes— The lakes of Caraccas are chiefly those of Valencia and Maracaybo. *Maracaybo* is a body of water of an oval form, lying in a north and south direction, and communicating with the gulf of Venezuela by a very narrow channel. In length it is 150 miles, in breadth 90, and 450 in circumference; its waters being always fresh, excepting when violent storms force the salt waters of the gulf into it. There is generally a considerable undulation on its surface, and in some winds, particularly those from the north, the waves rise to a great height. The depth of this lake is very profound, and it is navigable for vessels of the greatest burthen.

The produce of the interior is conveyed by the rivers which feed it, to the town of Maracaybo, and thence shipped for Europe or the adjoining colonies; and the various sorts of fish, common to the American rivers, are to be found in this lake.

The shores in the immediate vicinity of its waters, are unhealthy, owing to the vapours arising in the night after the great heat of the day.

When the Spaniards first landed in this country, they observed several villages built in the lake, which is the mode adopted by the Indians at present, considering this plan as the healthiest.

The appearance of one of these little towns amid the waters, caused the Spanish adventurers to name it Little Venice, or Venezuela, which title was afterwards transferred to the whole province in the neighbourhood. Four of these villages still remain, and are under the government of a monk, who has a church, and the spiritual charge of these people.

The principal employment of the Indians of these towns is fishing and catching the aquatic birds which frequent the lake.

To the north-west of Lake Maracaybo, is a vein, or mine of mineral pitch, (used by mixing it with grease, to grave vessels,) which is of such an inflammable nature, that during the hot weather, and particularly at night, corruscations are seen arising from its surface, which have the appearance of quickly repeated lightnings. The Indians and Spaniards, who navigate the vessels and canoes of the lake, called them St. Antony's Lanthorns, or the Lanthorns of Maracaybo, as they serve them to steer by during the dark nights, so prevalent in the torrid zone.

The lake of *Valencia*, which though not so extensive as the last we have described, is far more beautiful and useful. Its banks are fertile and healthy, and clothed with the most luxurious vegetation. It is situated three miles from the city of Valencia, and eighteen from the sea, from which it is separated by inaccessible mountains; the lake of Valencia is of an oblong form, stretching north-east and south-west, and is forty miles in length and twelve in breadth, in a valley surrounded by very high and steep land, excepting on the west.

This extraordinary lake receives the waters of twenty rivers, and has no visible outlet. It has been diminishing for twenty years, and its waters are still receding, leaving behind them a rich and productive soil, but at the same time an unhealthy air; and the cultivators are in some parts under the necessity, from the want of water, of drawing off the neighbouring streams to

irrigate their plantations.

The eastern side is laid out in tobacco grounds, which occupy 15,000 people, who are paid by the crown; and the islands in which it abounds are highly fertile, the largest called Caratapona, being well populated.

The woods near this lake are famous for the diversity and beauty of the birds, and its waters furnish fish, and the guanas, or edible lizard, which are considered as a very delicious food; of these, two species are common to the lake. The water of Lake Valencia is not so good for drinking as that of Maracaybo, being thick and nauseous.

This lake bears the Indian name of Tacarigua, as does a bay or lake on the coast, which is situated a league and a half from the mouth of the river Tuy, of a circular form, and is twenty-one miles in length from the sea on the north-east to the south-east, it abounds in fish, and is remarkable for the great number of alligators it contains.

The lake of *Parina*, or *Paranapitınca*, in Guiana is said to be an oblong sheet of water, 100 miles in length, and 50 broad, in an island of which is a rock of glittering mica, celebrated as having been the seat of El Dorado, a supposititious city, the streets of which were paved with gold, alluded to by Milton in his *Paradise Lost*.

"And yet unspoil'd Guiana
Whose great city Geryon's sons

Call El Dorado."

This lake is in $3^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and $45^{\circ} 20'$ west longitude, and gives birth to a large river, called Rio Blanco, or Parima, which we have before spoken of.

PROVINCE OF NEW ANDALUSIA

This province, which is also known by the names of Cumana and Paria, is bounded on the north by the Caribbean sea; on the east by the Atlantic ocean; west by Barcelona, and south by Spanish Guiana, or the river Orinoco.

The government of Cumana usually includes the adjacent province of New Barcelona. We shall therefore describe these two under the same head, mentioning however the distinct boundaries of —

NEW BARCELONA,

Which is limited on the north by the Caribbean sea; east by Cumana; west by Venezuela, or Caraccas Proper, and south by Guiana and the Orinoco.

The great extent of the territory of Cumana and Barcelona, its being washed on two of its sides by the ocean, and by the broad expanse of the Orinoco on the third, render it one of the most important governments of the captain-generalship.

History, &c.— The eastern part of New Andalusia is famous as having been the scene of the first continental discoveries of Columbus. The mouths of the Orinoco and the adjacent shores of Paria were visited by him during his third voyage. The first land discovered during this expedition, was however not the continent, but the island of Trinidad, which was so named because the admiral had vowed to give the appellation of the Trinity to the first land he should see, and also because three mountains were observed at the same moment. This happened on Tuesday, 31st July, 1498, and having but one cask of water left, he landed at Punta de la Playa, where he procured the necessary supply.

On the 1st of August, whilst plying between Cape de la Galera (the first cape they made) and Punta de la Playa, he discovered the main land twenty-five leagues distant; but imagining it another island, he named it Isla Santa. The channel between Trinidad and Isla Santa was named Boca del Sierpe, and the next

day he sailed into the lower channel, and called it Boca del Drago. They were so styled on account of the furious hissing noise which the current of an immense river made in rushing towards the ocean. He coasted the supposed island until Sunday, the 5th of August, when he anchored and went on shore. Soon afterwards he took some of the natives into his ship, and landing further to the west, by the direction of these people, discovered that the supposed island was part of an immense continent, and that the natives called it Paria.

Being informed that pearls were found in great abundance among some islands to the west, he steered in that direction, and discovered the islands of Margarita, or of Pearls, Cubagua, and Los Testigos, or the Witnesses, &c. On the 16th of August he stood to the north-west, and anchored on the coast of Hispaniola soon afterwards.

The admiral was followed by Ojeda, in 1499, who traced the coast as far as Cape de la Vela, entering several ports to procure information. Christoval Guerra, accompanied by Pedro Nino, who had been with Columbus on this coast, obtained a licence to explore the continent and islands for gold and pearls. They procured plenty of the latter in the bay of pearls, between Margarita and the main, and visited the coasts of Venezuela and Coro.

Having got 1200 ounces of very fine pearls, these adventurers sailed back, along the shore to the gulf of Paria, whence they stretched over for Spain, in which country they arrived on the

6th of February, 1500.

Vicente Yanez Pinzon having discovered the mouth of the great Marañon in 1500, sailed northwards from it, and explored the estuary of the Orinoco, and the coast of Paria, from which he sailed for St. Domingo, having first laden his vessels with Brazil wood.

The report of the arrival of Guerra, with such a valuable cargo, soon spread over the whole kingdom of Spain; and expeditions were fitted out in every part for the American continent. Charles the Fifth gave these adventurers permission to enslave the Indians who should resist them; in consequence of this, avarice and rapacity soon made a dreadful havoc among these unfortunate people; a complaint of these proceedings at last reached the royal audience of St. Domingo, which court immediately took measures to punish the offenders. They appointed Juan Ampues, to the government of the country, who landed on the coast of Curiana, in 1527, with an armed force.

The mildness of his measures gained him the affections of the Indians, and the cacique of the Curiana nation took the oath of allegiance to Spain, on the 26th of July, 1527. – This governor laid the foundation of the city of Coro.

At this time the company of the Welsers, a German establishment of Augsburgh, having advanced great sums to Charles the Fifth, that Emperor granted them, at their earnest request, the sovereignty of the province of Venezuela from Cape Vela, to Maracapna, and with unlimited boundaries to the south.

Their power did not last long, and Juan Perez de Tolosa was appointed governor, with the rank of captain-general. New laws were made, and the Indians were declared free from involuntary servitude; as soon as a nation or tribe was subjected, a town was built, and a hundred Europeans were sent to colonize it. The laws of the repartimientos and encomiendas were established, and every thing went on properly at first, but the settlers abusing their authority over the natives, these laws were repealed, and Spanish America was declared a kingdom united to the Spanish crown. The council of the Indies was formed at Madrid, the legislative functions were declared to be vested solely in the king, aided by this council, and the executive was to belong only to officers appointed by the court; accordingly, on the 4th of September, 1519, this act was decreed and promulgated, since which Caraccas has been governed by a captain-general, and subordinate officers.

In treating of Cumana we must not omit mentioning the history of the visit paid to this coast by Las Casas, the bishop of Chiapa in Guatemala. Bartolemeo de Las Casas who was born at Seville in 1474, and when only nineteen years of age, accompanied his father and Columbus to the west Indies, returning to Spain after an absence of five years, took the habit of a monk, and again embarked with Columbus to Hispaniola; on the settling of Cuba, he was appointed rector of Zaguarama, where he strenuously objected against reducing the Indians to servitude, at the same time relinquishing his own share in

the partition of these people among the whites. Meeting with great opposition, on account of his determined resistance to the oppression of the aborigines, he set out for Spain in 1516, for the purpose of laying the grievances, under which the newly-discovered nations laboured, before the King. Ferdinand promised that new laws should be made, but death prevented his resolves from being put into execution; Las Casas then applied to Cardinal Ximenes the regent, and that minister sent out three commissioners to enquire into the circumstances of the case. These three persons were monks of St. Jerome, and were accompanied by a lawyer of great abilities, and Las Casas, who was granted the title of "Protector of the Indians."

On their arrival at St. Domingo, these commissioners finding it impossible to do away with the enslavement of the Indians at once, they adopted some salutary measures to better their condition. Las Casas remonstrated with them, but found his efforts useless, and as he had made all the planters his enemies, he saw himself under the necessity of retreating to the protection of the convent from the effects of their malignity. He again set out for Spain, with a determination not to abandon the cause in which he had embarked. Ximenes being on his death-bed, and the Emperor Charles the Fifth having appointed his Flemish ministers to the chief offices of state, Las Casas was obliged to endeavour to interest them in his favour; in this he succeeded, and they recalled the monks of St. Jerome, and appointed a judge to examine the complaints of the Indians with ample powers to

redress them.

But Las Casas here tarnished the glory he would otherwise have enjoyed unsullied. To carry his favourite scheme the more certainly into execution, he proposed that a certain number of negroes should be purchased from the Portuguese in Africa, to replace the Indians who were to be liberated. His plans, unfortunately for the poor Africans, were adopted, and ever since that period these degraded people have suffered the most galling servitude, which it is now the delight of an Englishman to know, that his nation have stepped forward to put a lasting stop to; and the reign of the Prince Regent, would, independent of the brilliant events which have rendered it immortal, have been remembered, to the remotest ages by this magnanimous act alone. The emperor Charles granted a patent to one of his Flemish courtiers, containing the exclusive right of sending 4000 negroes to the West Indies; this patent was sold to Genoese merchants for 25,000 ducats, and these people have the odium of being the first who brought this abominable traffic to a regular form. Las Casas proposed also to send mechanics and labourers to Hispaniola with the negroes, who should be allowed an advance to go thither; but the bishop of Burgos, who was the great enemy of Columbus and his followers, defeated this project, as well as every other that Las Casas offered.

Fearful that he should not succeed in relieving the Indians in the new settlements, he requested from the Emperor the grant of a district, then unoccupied, from the gulf of Paria to Cape de la

Vela, thus including Cumana, Barcelona, Venezuela, Coro, and Maracaybo. In his memorial, he proposed settling this country with a colony of priests, husbandmen, and labourers; he engaged in two years, to instruct the natives in the arts of social life; to civilize 10,000 of them, and that at the end of that time, the king should derive a revenue of 15,000 ducats, which was to increase to 50,000 in ten years. After much difficulty, in consequence of the opposition of the meddling bishop, this extent of coast was granted to him, with liberty to extend it indefinitely into the interior. He sailed from Spain with 200 followers in 1521. Many of these left him at Puerto Rico, others died, and he landed on the coast of Cumana, with a few only who still adhered to him; here he found the country in a state of great agitation from a recent invasion of the Spanish islanders, who had attacked the natives, for the purposes of procuring slaves and gold. He was obliged to go over to Hispaniola to procure a reinforcement, and during his absence, the Indians attacked the colony he had planted, destroyed many of the people, and forced the remnant to take refuge in the little isle of Cubagua.

This isle they soon abandoned, and not a Spaniard was then left in any part of the continent from Paria to Darien. Las Casas, mortified beyond every thing, by the failure of his splendid schemes, shut himself up in the Dominican convent at Hispaniola. Here he devoted himself to the performance of religious duties, still keeping in mind the great object of his ambition. The sufferings of the Indians increasing daily, and

a chapter of his order at Chiapa in New Spain, having made him their messenger to Europe, on some important affairs, he once more revisited Madrid in 1542, and took a favourable opportunity of pleading the cause of the injured Indians before Charles V. He also composed a treatise, which he called "A Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indians;" in which was painted, in the most pathetic and forcible manner, the enormities which had taken place in every country of the New World which the Spaniards had visited.

This work created the most lively sensations throughout Europe, and such a general abhorrence of the cruel measures of the adventurers, that the Spanish court thought fit to adopt some measures to silence the universal clamour. New regulations were adopted, some of which tended to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunate Americans; and Las Casas was elevated to the dignity of bishop of Chiapa, in order to afford every relief in the power of the church to bestow.

He returned to America in 1544, and continued in this see until 1551, exerting himself in every possible manner to attain the object of his wishes; in which he succeeded greatly, but his health failing in 1551, he resigned his bishopric, and once more revisited his native country; in the same year, and for five years subsequent to his return, he lived in Madrid, still exerting all his influence to consolidate the measures which had been taken for the prosperity of the people to whom he was so much attached; at last nature became worn out, and this indefatigable,

and benevolent man, closed his career in 1556, in the 92d year of his age.

Besides the work alluded to above, he wrote several others, among which, is a "General History of the Indies," of which Antonio de Herrera is said to have availed himself in the compilation of his celebrated history of the New World.

FEATURES, CLIMATE, &C

The provinces of Barcelona and Cumana are extremely mountainous; the first branch from the main chain of the Andes running through these districts, and terminating in the ocean at the gulf of Paria.

This ridge gives birth to the rivers which flow into the Orinoco on the south, and into the Caribbean sea on the north, and contains some highly picturesque and singular scenery; the most noted parts of which will be hereafter described.

The climate of this government varies according to the situation of its districts, on the high land of the mountains, or in the valleys or plains of the interior.

Capitals.— The chief town of New Andalusia is Cumana, where the governor of the two provinces usually resides. The chief town of New Barcelona, is Barcelona.

Cumana is situated in $10^{\circ} 27' 52''$ north latitude, and $64^{\circ} 9' 47''$ west longitude, a mile from the battery of the Boca, or mouth of the harbour, between which and the town extends a great plain, called El Salado. The port is formed by the fine river Manzanares, which runs through the town. East of the city is another extensive plain, and north of it a rocky mass, on which stands the citadel of St. Antonio. The city occupies the space between the citadel, the river Manzanares, and another smaller stream called the Santa Catalina, and the plains which surround

it are highly cultivated; that towards the sea having an Indian suburb and gardens filled with sapotes, mameis, plantains, &c. The suburb is divided into three parishes; on the east is that of Sarritos, on the south-east, St. Francisco, and the great town of the Guayqueria Indians. Cumana is one of the oldest cities of the continent, and was built by Gonzalo Ocampo in 1520.

In the city of Cumana are no very remarkable buildings, owing to the fatal effects of the last earthquake. There is only one parish church and two convents, but additions are daily making to it, which will render it a fine town.

This city is remarkable for the purity and healthiness of its climate, on account of the heat being moderated by the sea-breezes; the most fatal disorders are fluxes, which carry off numbers of children annually, owing to the great use they make of green indigestible fruits. The women, particularly the Indians, are very prolific, which in some measure compensates for the loss annually experienced of the younger branches of society. The population of Cumana amounts at present to 16, or 17,000 souls, of which, two-fifths are Indians of the Guayqueria, Chayma, and other tribes. Of these, the *Guayquerias* are the most noted tribe not only of Cumana, but of Caraccas; they are a branch of the Guarounoes, who inhabit the swampy island, at the mouth of the Orinoco; but they have now become so incorporated with the Spaniards, that for the last century they have spoken the Spanish language only. When Columbus was on this coast, his people saw these Indians fishing with long poles

pointed at one end, and tied to a cord at the other; demanding of them the name of their country, they immediately replied Guiake, which signified pointed stick; the sailors thought this was the name of the tribe, and accordingly called them Guaikerias, which name they have since retained.

These people, who also inhabit the islands, show to Europeans with pride the Punta de la Galera, so called, because Columbus's vessel touched there, as well as port Manzanillo, where they swore fidelity in 1498 to the whites, which vow they have never violated. The Guayquerias are the pilots of the coast of Cumana, and their suburb is composed of rows of uniform low buildings disposed into the form of streets, which have a very neat appearance.

On a naked rock which commands the city, 100 feet above the level of the sea, is the castle of St. Antonio, which commands the place. There is also another fort in ruins, on the south-west; and the entrance into the port is defended with inconsiderable batteries, but the military positions of Cumana are of little importance, as the citadel is commanded by a part of the same rock on which it stands; the chief defence of this post being a thick wood of the cactus, whose thorny shoots defy admission into its recesses.

The entrance of the harbour of Cumana is highly picturesque, the city rising out of the plain backed by the citadel, its rocks and groves, the plantations of cocoa-nuts, cassias, capers, and arborescent mimosas; the shores covered with alcatras or brown

pelicans, egrets, and flamingoes. The beauty of the river, and the clear blue of the sky, contrasted with the dark and gloomy appearance of the mountains in the interior, conspire to afford a landscape of the most captivating character.

The European inhabitants, and the descendants of Europeans, are noted for their great politeness and hospitality to strangers; they are chiefly occupied in commercial enterprize, this and Barcelona being ports where much trade is carried on. The manner and customs of these people is nearly allied to those of their brethren in the other great cities of Spanish America. One of the most singular of their customs is that of passing most of their evenings sitting on chairs placed in the river.

In this city, the first question in a morning is, "Is the water cool?" Their conversaciones are carried on in the rivers where the evening parties are mostly spent in talking about the weather, the news, and in smoking. All the inhabitants of the town it is said can swim, and the children pass the greater part of their time in the water. The alligator is not dangerous at Cumana, as they are seldom seen, and are only of the smallest kind; the chief fear that the women have whilst bathing is from the dolphin, which sometimes comes up the river and spouts like the whale.

The port of Cumana is formed by the gulf of Cariaco, and its harbour by the river Manzanares. The gulf of Cariaco is thirty-eight miles in length and sixty-eight in breadth, with excellent anchoring ground; and the ocean is always smooth and unruffled from Porto Cabello to the point of Paria; so much so, that the

coasting vessels are not decked; the only danger in the port of Cumana being a shoal, called Morro Roxo, half a mile in breadth and very steep on all sides.

This city has been repeatedly shook by subterrene convulsions; and the natives have a tradition that the gulf of Cariaco was formed by an earthquake, just before the third voyage of Columbus. In 1530, the whole coast was shaken, and the city, then called New Toledo, suffered by having its fort at the mouth of the river destroyed; an immense rent was made in the coast, from which asphaltum and water issued.

These shocks were very frequent towards the end of the 16th century, the sea often rising fifteen or twenty fathoms. On the twenty-first of October, 1766, the city was overthrown, and numbers of persons perished; the tremblings of the earth continued hourly for fourteen months; but in 1767, the inhabitants incamped in the streets, when the shocks only took place once a month; a great drought had happened in 1766, but during 1767, the rains were so continual, that the harvest was very abundant. In this memorable earthquake the ground opened and threw out hot water.

In 1794, they experienced another tremendous convulsion, and on the 14th of December, 1797, four-fifths of the city were utterly destroyed, the earth heaving up with loud subterraneous noises; but the people got into the streets in time, and a small number only perished of those who sought for refuge in the churches. Half an hour before this happened, there was a strong

sulphureous smell near the castle, and a loud noise under the ground; flames were seen to rise from the banks of the river, and in several other places. These flames are frequently observed near the city on the plains, they do not burn the herbage, and issue from no apparent crevices, the people calling them the soul of the tyrant Aguirra, who took part in a revolt against Ursua, governor of Omaguas, and styled himself "the traitor." He descended the Amazons, and reached the island of Margarita by the rivers of Guiana.

Though so continually exposed to this dreadful calamity, the inhabitants of Cumana are in a measure insensible to it, as they imagine that it never occurs but at particular intervals, and that they have always sufficient notice by the state of the weather and other occurrences.

The neighbourhood of Cumana is infested with the rattle snake, the coral vipers, centipedes, &c.

Farms and country-seats adorn the banks of the Manzanares; at a little distance from the city these are beautifully situated, amid groves of cactus, tamarinds, brazilletoes, the enormous ceiba, palms, &c., and the soil is so rich for pasturage, that excellent milk and butter are produced.

Near Cumana the most noted mountains are the Cerro or chain of the Brigantin, about eighteen miles distant, the highest summit of which has a flat top, and is elevated more than 5000 feet above the sea, and the sides of this chain are nearly perpendicular, the country about it being a mere desert.

The inhabitants of Cumana attempted to cross these mountains with a road, but found it impracticable, and the passage to the plains of the interior lies over a part of the chain, known by the name of the Impossible, over which a new road is carrying on, the present one being very steep. This chain is continued to the extremity of the gulf of Cariaco, and forms the barrier between it and the ocean.

On the peninsula formed by this gulf are the salt works of Araya, which have been successively worked by most of the European nations who possess colonies in the West Indies. The Dutch were however expelled in 1605, when a fort or battery was built to prevent their return, and the mere or lake which these salt-works consist of, was overflowed by the sea in the great hurricane in 1726, which also destroyed the battery; but pits or reservoirs have been since dug, and the sea dyked out, so that great quantities of salt are still procured.

The consumption of this article in forming tasajo, or salted provision, amounts, in Barcelona and Cumana, to 9 or 10,000 fanegas (each 400lbs.) annually, of which the salt marsh or grounds of Araya, furnish 3000 fanegas, and the sea the rest.

The Indians use very little salt with their food, but the creoles and negroes live almost entirely on salted meat and fish. Salt being a royal monopoly, the revenue derived from Araya is considerable.

A small village is established on the peninsula of Araya, where the Indians keep large flocks of goats. This strip of land was the

first place where the Spaniards began to found a town; and it contains springs and masses of petroleum; this substance existing also on its coasts, at Cape de la Brea, Punta Soto, and Guararitto. A stream of naphtha issues from the bed of the sea, near these shores, and forms a visible spot, 1000 feet in diameter, among the weeds, with which the beach is covered.

Nueva Barcelona, the chief town of the province of the same name, is situated in a plain on the left bank of the river Neveri, half a league distant from the sea, in $10^{\circ} 10'$ north latitude, and $64^{\circ} 47'$ west longitude; ten leagues by land from Cumana.

This city was founded in 1636, by Juan de Urpin, who had been a canon, doctor, and counsellor of laws in St. Domingo, and a private soldier in the fort of Araya; he gave the name of New Catalonia to the province, which was afterwards changed to that of the city. It is meanly built, though it has a regular appearance; the streets are very dirty in the rainy season, and very dusty in the hot weather; and the immense quantity of hogs bred in this place renders the town disgustingly dirty, from the filth which they spread over the footways; and it was not till the year 1803, that some measures were taken to put a stop to this nuisance.

Barcelona contains one parish church and a convent of Franciscans, with a population of 14,000 souls, half whites and half mulattoes and negroes.

Such is the trade in live and dead cattle in this city, that the inhabitants have not turned their attention to the cultivation of the land, though excellently suited for cotton, cacao, and

maize. Barcelona is the emporium for the contraband goods of Trinidad, and from hence they are dispersed through all the inland provinces.

The value of this trade has been computed at 400,000 dollars annually. Hides, tallow, oxen, mules, jirked and salted beef, form the great commercial articles of this port; this trade is chiefly carried on with the Havannah and West India Islands.

In the jurisdiction of Barcelona, which declared itself independent in the year 1811, commence those immense plains that stretch with those of Caraccas, as far south as the Orinoco. They are covered with excellent pasturage, and feed innumerable herds of cattle and mules, which are mostly kept on the banks of the rivers. Such immense quantities were killed before the breaking out of the present commotions, that the trade was at one time very considerable, the inhabitants of Barcelona being noted for their skill in salting meat; but just after the first symptoms of this struggle, the plains became infested with robbers, who deprived the owners of their beasts, and greatly lessened the value of the trade.

The other towns of Cumana are chiefly missionary establishments seated near the rivers, and on the great plains, the greater part of the country being yet in a state of nature. Of these towns the principal one is *Cumanacoa*, twelve leagues distant from Cumana, on a plain surrounded with lofty mountains, which was founded in 1717, by Domingo Arias, on his return from the Guaripiche river, where some Frenchmen had attempted to

plant a colony; it was at first called San Baltazar de las Arias, but soon lost that appellation, for its present one. The climate of this place is mild, and even cold, although it is not more than 630 feet above the sea, owing probably to the abundance of rain, to the frequency of thick fogs, and to being surrounded by humid forests.

The dry season begins here in the winter solstice, and lasts till the vernal equinox. Light showers are frequent in April, May and June; the dry weather again commences, and lasts to the end of August, when the winter rains set in, which only cease in November; and during this interval, the country is deluged with water.

The environs of Cumanacoa are very fertile, and are chiefly cultivated with tobacco, with which article it supplies the whole province. Indigo is also grown here and in this town; the population amounts to about 2300 souls.

The road from Cumana over the Imposible, through the forest, to Cumanacoa, passes by the mission of St. Fernando, of the Chayma Indians. It is described as highly picturesque. The forest consists of trees, whose trunks are of the largest dimensions, and which are clasped in every direction by creeping or parasitical plants, of which the lianas reach to the very summits of the trees, and pass from one to another, at the height of more than a hundred feet, displaying beautiful festoons of dark green leaves, intermixed with the most fragrant and splendid flowers. Under these arcades, which scarcely admit the rays of the sun, the

traveller proceeds, viewing, at intervals only, the deep blue of the sky. The parrots, macaws, and innumerable tribes of birds of the most brilliant plumage, are continually hovering about, and here the oriole builds his bottle-shaped and pendant nest. The screaming of the parrots actually drowns the roar of small cataracts which here and there fall from the rocky mountains.

On quitting this forest path to go to St. Fernando, the country is open for a short space, and the road is now lined with the bamboo or guadua, whose elegant form, agitated by the slightest winds, strikes the European traveller with the most agreeable sensations. We shall describe the village of St. Fernando, as a type of all the other missionary settlements, which are too numerous to name.

The huts of the Indians are built of mud or clay, strengthened by the stems of the lianas, and are disposed into streets, very wide and straight, and crossing each other at right angles, the whole appearing very neat. The gardens are either in, or at a short distance from the village, and each family possesses one which they cultivate, together with a large plot of ground, common to all, and called the conuco, at which the grown-up young men and women are obliged to work one hour in the morning and one in the evening. In the missions near the coast, this conuco is generally an indigo or sugar plantation, the profits of which are divided by the priest, for the support of the church and the village.

The great square of San Fernando is situated in the centre of

the village; in it is placed the church, the priest's house, and the Casa del Rey, or king's-house, destined for the accommodation of travellers. The priest governs the people in their spiritual and temporal affairs, but the parish officers are always chosen from among the Indians; a matter of necessity, as no whites are to be found in these settlements. They have their governor, alguazil, mayor and militia officers, and the company of archers have their colours, and perform their exercise at stated periods, shooting at a mark.

The villages in which the Europeans or Creoles are settled, and in which Indians are occasionally found occupying a distinct part, are called *doctrinas*, and differ entirely from the missions. Of these there are many on the side of the country nearest the coast, the missions being mostly in the interior.

Near Cumanacoa, is the great mountain called Tumiriquiri, where an enormous wall of rock rises out of the forest, and is joined on the west by the Cerro de Cuchivano, where the chain is broken by an enormous precipice more than 900 feet in width, filled with trees, whose branches are completely interlaced with each other. The Rio Juagua traverses this crevice, which is the abode of the jaguar, or American tiger, of a very formidable size, being six feet in length. They carry off the horses and cattle in the night from the neighbouring farms, and are as much dreaded as the most ferocious of the feline race are in the East Indies. Two immense caverns open into this precipice, from which flames occasionally rush out that may be seen in the night at a great

distance.

The great mountain of *Tumiriquiri* is situated on the road to Caripe, the chief mission of the Chaymas, which passes over the summit of a lower part of the chain, which bears the general name of the *Cocollar*. From the summit of this last chain, at more than two thousand feet in height, the eye wanders over the immense plains which reach towards the banks of the Orinoco, in the ravines alone of which can be distinguished any trees, and these but thinly scattered; the remainder of the surface is covered with an uniform coat of long waving grass, intermixed with flowering shrubs.

From this point the traveller ascends towards the *Tumiriquiri*; the road is partly traversed on horseback, but soon becomes too steep and slippery for these animals.

The round summit of the *Tumiriquiri* is covered with turf, and is elevated more than 4400 feet above the ocean. This elevation gradually diminishes towards the west by a ridge of steep rocks, and is interrupted at the distance of a mile by an immense crevice, which descends towards the gulf of Cariaco. Beyond this two enormous peaks arise, the northernmost of which, named the *Cucurucho of Tumiriquiri*, is more than 6500 feet in height, surpassing that of the *Brigantin* with which it is connected. These peaks are covered with mahogany, javillo, and cedar trees, of an enormous size, whose shades are frequented by tigers and other wild beasts, which are hunted now and then for the sake of their beautiful skins. The view from the summit of this mountain is

very fine; the chain which extends from west to east is seen in all its forms; its ridges running parallel to each other at short distances, form longitudinal valleys, intersected by crevices worn by the waters in their passage to the Orinoco or the sea. The sea bounds the prospect on the north, and the immeasurable plains form its horizon on the south. The rivers Colorado and Guaripiche rise in the chain of the Cocollar, and mingle their streams near the east coast of Cumana. The Colorado at its mouth is very broad, and the Guaripiche more than twenty-five fathoms deep; and between this river and the Areo which falls into it, are some springs of petroleum. Beyond Tumiriquiri the road descends the mountains towards Caripe, by the mission of *San Antonio* across savannahs strewn with large blocks of stone, over a thick forest lying on two steep ridges called Los Yepes and Fantasma, into a valley in which are the missions of *San Antonio* and *Guanaguana*, which are separated by the rivers Colorado and Guaripiche. Guanaguana valley is divided from that of Caripe, by a ridge called the *Cuchillo de Guanaguana*, which is difficult to pass, the path being often only fourteen inches broad and extremely slippery, as the slope is covered with grass.

These paths are traversed on mules, whose footing is so sure, that accidents rarely occur. The height of the Cuchillo is about 3430 feet, and the descent to Caripe is by a winding path through a forest; and as the valley is high, the journey is short and easy. Here the climate is mild and delightful, but in the valley of Guanaguana it is hot and unwholesome; so great is the difference

which is experienced in this country in passing from one side of a mountain to the other. The height of the convent of *Caripe*, in which the missionary monks reside, is 2575 feet above the sea, in $10^{\circ} 10' 14''$ north-latitude; and this appears to be the only high valley of Cumana, which is well inhabited.

The convent is seated on a delightful plain, backed with an immense wall of perpendicular rocks, covered with plants; the ceiba and palms show their gigantic and elegant forms, numberless springs gush out on every side, and it is difficult to imagine a more picturesque spot than that which these priests have chosen. The cultivation of the valley adds to the natural beauty of the scene, as the gardens of the Indians are filled with plantains, papaws, and all the fruit-bearing plants common to the tropical regions.

The conuco or common plantation contains maize, the sugar cane, culinary plants, and coffee trees. Near this valley is the cavern of the Guacharo, three leagues from the convent towards the west. This cave gives its name to the range of mountains in which it is situated. The cavern is pierced in the face of the perpendicular side of the lofty Guacharo mountain, the access to its mouth being rather difficult, on account of the numerous little torrents which cross the valley. Its entrance is towards the south, and forms an arch eighty feet broad, and seventy-two high, surmounted with rocks, covered by gigantic trees; festoons of creeping plants throw themselves across the chasm, and variegate the scene with the beautiful and vivid tints of their flowers; a

river issues from the vault which continues at the same height as at its entrance for a considerable distance; and arums, heliconias and palms, follow the banks of the stream for thirty or forty paces into the interior. It is not necessary to use torches for 430 feet from the mouth, as the grotto keeps the same direction, and forms but one channel from south-east to north-west; when the day-light fails, the hollow murmuring sound of a vast number of nocturnal birds, inhabiting the recesses of the cave, may be distinguished; advancing further by the help of lights the whole rock is seen covered with the nests of these birds, which are called Guacharoes, and are of the size of a fowl, with a crooked bill, feathers of a dark bluish grey, mixed with specks of black, the head, wings and tail, being studded with large white heart-shaped spots edged with black; the spread of the wings is three feet and a half; its eye, which is blue and small, cannot endure the light of day, these birds quitting the cavern only at night in search of the fruits on which they exist; their nests are seen by fixing a torch at the end of a pole, and are generally on the very highest parts of the arch.

The Indians enter this cave once a year to destroy the young for the sake of a layer of fat, with which the abdomen is covered. These people construct temporary huts at the mouth of the cavern, and melt the fat in pots of clay, over brushwood fires; this fat is called the butter of the guacharo, is transparent, half liquid, without smell, and so pure as to keep more than a year without becoming rancid; the monks purchase this oil of the natives

for culinary purposes. Notwithstanding this annual destruction of the birds, their numbers do not sensibly diminish, as it is conjectured that other guacharoes re-people the grotto from neighbouring caves, which are inaccessible to man.

The river which runs through the cave, is from twenty-eight to thirty feet in width, and can be traced into the recesses for a considerable distance, the cave preserving its altitude and regular form for 1458 feet; farther than this the river forms a small cascade over a hill covered with vegetation; and surrounded with stalactites; after this ascent the grotto contracts its height to forty feet, still preserving the same dimensions; here the bottom is covered with a black mould on which plants, deposited accidentally by the birds, have vegetated; their characters are however so much changed by want of light and air that it is impossible to recognise the species. Beyond this spot the cries of the birds were so shrill and piercing that no persuasions could induce the Indians to proceed, and M. De Humboldt was obliged unwillingly to return.

This subterraneous river is the source of the Rio Caripe, which joining the river Santa Maria a few leagues distant, is navigable for canoes, and falls into the river Areo under the name of Canno de Terezen.

The forests of this and of every other part of Cumana are peopled with numerous tribes of monkeys, of which the araguato is the most common and singular; it is three feet in height from the top of the head to the tail, with a reddish brown bushy coat

of fur which covers its whole body, being very fine on the belly and breast; its face is of a blackish blue, and covered with a delicate wrinkled skin; the beard long, and its eye, voice and gait, denoting melancholy; when domesticated they have not that vivacity which most monkeys are celebrated for; on the rains, or any sudden change of weather approaching, the howling noises made by this creature are beyond conception dismal, and add, during a storm, to the horrors of the uninhabited wilds in which the traveller finds himself alone, and unprotected.

Near Cumana, at the farther end of the gulf of Cariaco, is the little town of *Cariaco*, in the middle of a large plain filled with plantations, huts and groups of cocoa and palms; on a hill behind this town, at some distance, and named Buenavista, may be seen the range of mountains which stretch towards the east under the names of Sierra de Paria and Areo; from this hill it is said the most extensive view is to be had which can be seen on the coast of Cumana.

The town of Cariaco is small and very unhealthy, owing to the great heat of the climate, the humidity arising from the surrounding plains and the exhalations from the shallow mere or lake Campona.

The number of inhabitants of this town amounted in 1800 to 6000, and the population is on the increase. Its chief commerce is in cotton of a fine quality; Cumana and Barcelona exported 18,000 quintals of this article in 1800, of which the town of Cariaco furnished six or 7000. Cacao is also attended to, but the

cultivation of this plant does not flourish. The sugar cane has of late become an object of much speculation at Cariaco, where considerable quantities of it are now grown.

From Cariaco the gulf stretches to Cumana, its northern shore being naked, dry, and rocky, while the south coast is covered the whole way with plantations of cocoa nut trees; and between Cumana and Cariaco is the small village of *Mariguitar*, seated in the midst of these plantations.

Eastward of Cariaco the range of mountains continue to bend towards the promontory of Paria; they contain in their bosom, a short distance from Cariaco a large lake, four or five leagues in diameter, called Putacua, which communicates with the river Areo. These mountains are visited only by the Indians, and are haunted by the great boa serpent. This part of Cumana, as well as all the country lying towards the east, is nearly uninhabited by Europeans, but a new town has lately been founded at Punta de Piedra, opposite Spanish harbour in Trinidad; and people are daily forming settlements along the coast and in the fertile valleys of the interior; of which, *Concepcion del Pao*, forty-five leagues south of Barcelona, fifty-five from Cumana, and twenty-eight south-east of Caraccas, has lately been raised to the rank of a city, and contains 2300 persons, mostly proprietors of cattle and land in the northern plains of the Orinoco.

The provinces of Barcelona and Cumana contain about 100,000 inhabitants, of which the Indians compose more than one-half, 24,000 inhabiting New Andalusia alone, without

including the Guaraounoes of the islands of the Orinoco; and who, as it were, command the mouths of this fine river, which extend along the sea-coast for more than sixty leagues. These mouths are very numerous, but seven of them only are navigable. The first of these is twelve leagues south of the mouth of the Rio Guaripiche, and is called *Grande Manamo*. The second is two leagues south-east of the first, and is named *Canal de Pedernales*; on the east of it is the island Guarispa, and three leagues south-west is Isla del Soldado, at the south entrance of the gulf of Paria; these two channels are too shallow for large vessels.

The third is called *Capure*, and is a branch of the second, detaching itself about seven leagues inland.

The fourth is *Macareo*, six leagues south of Capure, navigable for schooners and brigs, and the principal outlet between Guiana and Trinidad, its mouth being opposite Erin river in that island.

The fifth is called *Maruisas*, from the tribe which dwell on its shores; it is twelve leagues south of the fourth entrance, but is little frequented.

Eighteen leagues farther is a branch of the *Maruisas*, which is the sixth mouth, and is navigable for small vessels.

Eight leagues south of this is the *Boca de los Navios*, or grand mouth of the Orinoco, which is navigable for large ships.

The rivers of Cumana and Barcelona which fall into the Caribbean sea, beginning from the west are chiefly, the *Unare*, which bounds the provinces of Venezuela and Barcelona. It is navigable for six leagues from the sea, as far as the village of

San Antonio de Clarinas. Its whole course from the mountains is about thirty leagues from south to north; the small river *Ipire* joins this last at about half its course from the interior.

The next river eastward of any consequence is the *Neveri*, on which Barcelona is built. The Indian name of the stream is Enipricuar; it is infested with crocodiles, but by means of this river which rises in the mountains of the interior, the port of Barcelona carries on its trade in cattle and skins.

The animals are brought from the plains behind the mountains by three days' journey, so easy is the road, whilst it requires eight or nine days to reach Cumana by a similar route, on account of the steepness of the Brigantin and Imposible; this has greatly facilitated commercial speculation, and will one day render New Barcelona an important place.

In 1800, eight thousand mules were embarked at Barcelona for the West India Islands, and it is computed that the plains of the government of Caraccas furnished annually 30,000 of these animals to the Spanish, English, and French islands. Barcelona has been lately fortified, by having a small fort erected on an eminence on the right bank of the *Neveri*, about 400 feet above the sea. But this is commanded on the south by a more lofty hill. The distance by sea between Cumana and Barcelona is twelve leagues, but by land considerably more, and over a most difficult road.

At Cumana the river *Manzanares*, which is only navigable for canoes beyond the town, is noted only for having its shores

lined with the most fruitful plantations. Beyond Cumana, the mountains approach so near the coast, that they leave no room for any streams of importance to flow; and therefore proceeding round the point of Paria, and verging towards the Orinoco, the next river we find, of any consequence, is the *Guaripiche* which flows into the Atlantic by a broad mouth just above the first estuary of the Orinoco; this river rises in the interior as has been before mentioned.

Of the rivers which join the Orinoco and flow through the plains of Cumana, the *Mamo*, the *Pao*, and the *Suara* are the largest; and on the banks of these are some newly erected settlements.

PROVINCES OF VENEZUELA AND CORO

The government of Venezuela comprehends Venezuela, or Caraccas Proper and Coro.

It is bounded on the north by the Caribbean sea; east by Barcelona; west by Maracaybo and Varinas; and south by the great plains of Varinas, and the Orinoco.

This extensive government was named Venezuela from the towns inhabited by Indians which were seen by the Spaniards on the lake Maracaybo, having a resemblance to Venice.

In 1801 the population of Venezuela, including Varinas, amounted to 500,000 persons.

The soil of Venezuela is fertile, and yields in abundance all the products of the West Indies, besides many others, which those islands do not possess. Its most noted commercial article is cacao, which is inferior to none in the Americas; vanilla, maize, indigo, cotton, sugar, tobacco and coffee, are a few of the richest objects of cultivation; wild cochineal, dyewoods, medicinal drugs, gums, resins, balsams, sarsaparilla, sassafras, liquorice, squills, storax, cassia and aloes, here find that climate the most favourable to their growth; and the immense plains in the interior feed multitudes of cattle, horses and mules, and in the valleys and mountains, sheep and deer are numerous. All kinds of game are found in this country, the rivers of which also abound with fish.

The climate of Venezuela is modified according to the situation of its districts in the mountains, on the coast or on the plains; on the coast and in the plains a scorching heat prevails, accompanied in the latter with deluges of rain. In the mountain valleys the air is in general pure and mild, and in some elevated parts even cold.

These mountains, which form a part of the great branch extending from the west to the gulf of Paria, divide the lands of the coast from the plains of the valley of the Orinoco. Their surface is rent in every direction by the force of subterraneous convulsions; it is on these mountains that the climate is so singularly altered that a traveller may observe the fruits of the tropics luxuriating at a short distance from those of Europe. To the south of this chain the Llanos or plains, which stretch to the Orinoco are inhabited solely by herds of cattle tended by mulattoes, who are as nearly in a state of nature as the beasts they guard.

On the plains of Venezuela, the rainy season commences in April, and continues till November. The rains fall oftener in the morning than in the evening, and on an average generally occupy three hours of each day; during which period, the plains nearest the rivers are converted into lakes of immense extent.

For about a century after this country was subdued by the Spaniards, all their thoughts were turned towards its mineral productions, and the pearl fishery on its coasts. But being disappointed in their expectations of finding immense riches

from these sources, they at last turned their attention to the cultivation of the soil. They first planted cacao trees, and so abundant were the profits which this labour yielded, that cacao alone occupied their fields till a very late period. About the year 1774 indigo plantations appeared, and immense plains, hitherto desert, were soon covered with this plant, which was speedily followed by cotton, sugar, tobacco, coffee, &c., but notwithstanding the aptitude of the soil, and the genial nature of the climate, agriculture still languishes in these fine regions, partly from want of enterprise, and active industry, and partly from a too great confidence in the prolific nature of the soil.

Besides the articles before mentioned, the forests of Venezuela produce every species of timber fit for the purposes of the joiner, the cabinet-maker, the carpenter, or the shipwright. Cedar is used for their door-posts, window-frames, tables, &c. Black, red, and yellow ebony are common. Mahogany, brasiletto, and all sorts of ornamental woods are abundant, so much so that the workman would be puzzled in his choice of the finest; but the immense forests which overspread the chain of mountains, remain unexplored, and continue to be the receptacles of ferocious animals and venomous reptiles.

The lakes of Venezuela are not numerous, for we can hardly give that appellation to the sheets of water produced by the periodical swell of the Orinoco, or the rains, and which are generally without any depth; the lake of Valencia has been already described.

The rivers of Venezuela are more numerous than in any other part of Spanish America. Every valley has its stream, and though many of them are not of sufficient size to be navigable, yet all afford ample supplies of water to irrigate the plantations on their banks. The principal of these, which run from the mountains of Caraccas and Coro into the Caribbean sea, are the *Guiges*, *Tocuyo*, *Aroa*, *Yaracuy*, and the *Tuy*.

The *Guiges* falls into that sea sixteen leagues west of the city of Coro; the *Tocuyo* discharges its waters twenty-five leagues east of the *Guiges* or *Gaigues*; its source is fifteen leagues south of the town of Carora, at the distance of nearly one hundred miles from the ocean; and it is navigable as far as the village of Banagua, at the distance of forty leagues from its mouth; its banks furnishing abundance of timber of the largest size, and fit for every kind of building. The *Aroa* rises in the mountains, west of the town of St. Felipe, and enters the ocean near Burburata bay. The *Yaracuy* is another river which enters the Caribbean sea, near the latter; and the *Tuy* discharges itself into the sea, thirty leagues east of La Guayra; it rises in the mountains of St. Pedro, ten leagues from the capital, and being joined by the *Guayra*, becomes navigable, and serves to transport the produce of the cultivated plains or valleys of Aragoa, Tacata, Cua, Sabana, Ocumara, Santa Lucia and Santa Teresa, through which it passes, and which particularly abound in cacao of the best quality.

The rivers which rise on the southern side of the chain, and flow to the Orinoco, are the *Guarico*, which receives some of

the branches of the Apure, and then following a course parallel to that river, enters the Orinoco a short distance eastward of it. The islands formed by the junctions of the Apure and Guarico are three in number; the first, near the town of St. Fernando de Apure, is called *Isla de Blanco*; the second, which is very large, and is north of the Indian town of Santa Barbara, is named *Isla del Apurito*; and the third, which is between the mouths of the Guarico and Apure, is the *Isla de las Garzitas*. The Guarico, which is a very fine river, is joined near its confluence with the Orinoco, by the *Rio Mancapra*, which flows through the plains of Calabozo. The *Iguane*, the *Cachivamo*, and several others which fertilise the vast uninhabited plains of the Orinoco, flow into that river west of the junction of the great Apure. Most of these swell in the month of April, and continue to overflow their banks during three or four months, covering the low lands in their neighbourhood; they abound in alligators and fish. The *Portughuesa*, which is formed by the union of the two rivers, the *Pao* and the *Barquisimeto*, flows through the greater part of Venezuela, and joins the Apure forty miles north-west of its mouth.

Commerce.— The relation of the commercial undertakings of these provinces will necessarily comprehend those of all the governments of Caraccas, the produce of each being nearly the same.

The settlement of the Dutch at Curaçoa, in 1634, first roused the inhabitants of Caraccas to exert their minds in agricultural

pursuits: cacao and hides were soon exported in sufficient quantities to answer the purposes of carrying on an exchange trade with the Dutch for such articles of European produce as were necessary to the colonists of Venezuela. This trade became so brisk, that the mother country thought it time to interfere; edicts were issued to suppress it, and two vessels were freighted from Spain with merchandise for the colony, for which enormous duties were charged: the Dutch accordingly commenced a contraband trade, and so greatly undersold the Spanish merchants, that they were left until 1700, in quiet possession of the traffic. From 1700 to 1730, the merchants of Spain endeavoured to revive their speculations, but the activity of the Hollanders was so great, that they were undersold in every article; at this period, the annual produce of the Caraccas in cacao alone was 65,000 quintals (of 1600 ounces to each quintal); the exports through the royal custom houses amounted to 21,000, so that the Dutch received the remaining 44,000 quintals in their smuggling vessels. The court of Madrid viewing this decrease of its revenues, resolved to put a stop to the intercourse of the foreigners by forcible methods, and confiscations of property, fines and punishments were inflicted on every person discovered engaging in commerce with the Dutch. Notwithstanding these measures, the contraband trade still continued, and the means taken not being found to answer the proposed end, it was at last suggested that a company should be created to monopolize the whole export and import trade of the captain-generalship. This

was accordingly done, and such was the vigilance of the members of this company, that the unlawful trade was soon destroyed, and they succeeded by their constant supplies, and by purchasing every article which could be turned to account, in giving complete satisfaction to the colonies. In 1742, this mercantile body, known by the appellation of the Caraccas and Guipuscoa Company, obtained an exclusive grant of the monopoly of the trade; but in consequence of the discontent which this concession raised in the minds of the colonists, a board was appointed, composed of an equal number of members of the company and of planters, the governor-general being president; this board was to regulate the prices at which the planters and company should respectively exchange their merchandise, at the same time permitting the cacao growers to export one-sixth of their cacao to Spain, on their own account in the company's ships. To prevent all irregular supply, ten armed vessels were built, carrying 86 guns and 518 men, and 102 men were equipped on shore, to guard the harbours.

Immense warehouses were constructed at the different ports, and advances of money without interest were made to the cultivators. Flourishing villages arose in every direction, and the land was converted from immense marshes and forests to smiling plantations. In 1735, 65,000 quintals of cacao were only exported, whilst in 1763, the amount of this article increased to 110,650 quintals. Cattle multiplied rapidly in the vast plains on the south, and hides were added to the other objects of the

export trade. From this time the duties paid at the various custom houses, was so great, that Caraccas was no longer supplied with remittances from Mexico, to defray the expences of its government. But with all these advantages, which lasted only a short time, the directors of the company assumed powers foreign to the intentions under which their grant was conferred, they became corrupt; and such was the state of the trade from the abuses they daily committed, that, in 1778, the court of Madrid opened the ports of Venezuela and Spain reciprocally to each other. New regulations were adopted, and the trade of the colony gradually increased till 1796, when it experienced a check from the operations of the maritime warfare so vigorously carried on by Great Britain at that period. At present it is not in a very flourishing state, owing to the dreadful struggle which has existed between the mother country and her colonies.

Capital.— The capital of Venezuela is *Caraccas*, which is also the metropolis of the captain-generalship, and has already been described. *Coro* is the principal place of the province of that name, and is situated in 11° north-latitude, and $72^{\circ} 30'$ west-longitude, on an isthmus which divides the gulf of Venezuela or Maracaybo, from the Caribbean sea: it was founded in 1527, and was the second settlement made by Europeans on this coast.

Coro was considered, for a long while, the capital of Venezuela, till in 1576, when the governor transferred his residence to Leon de Caraccas, since which time no person of high rank, excepting the bishop, remains at Coro.

This city is placed on a dry sandy plain, covered with Indian figs or plants of the cactus family; it is supplied with fruit and vegetables from some fertile plains three leagues distant.

The inhabitants, who amount to 10,000, are in general not rich, possessing little activity or enterprise; many of them pride themselves, on account of being descended from the conquerors of the country. Some trade is carried on among them with the West India islands in mules, hides, goats, coarse pottery ware, cheese, &c. which are all brought from the interior. Their chief commercial relations are with Curaçoa, from which island, they are distant only a day's sail.

Coro contains but few negroes, as the laborious work is performed by the Indians who inhabit the suburbs. Such is the scarcity of water, that the city is supplied from a distance of two miles, by means of mules and asses, laden with that necessary aliment.

The streets of Coro are regular, but the houses are mean, and the city is not paved, its public buildings being a church, and a small convent of Franciscans. The local government is lodged in a council, of which the commandant of the place is president.

Its port lies open from north to north-east and neither its accommodations, nor the commodities it trades in, are sufficient to render it a place of much resort.

The peninsula, which lies to the north of Coro, is called Paragoana, and the isthmus is about a league in width, from which the peninsula stretches from south-west to north-west for

twenty leagues. It is inhabited by people of colour and Indians, who breed great quantities of cattle on it, which they ship off clandestinely to Curaçoa, that island being supplied from this place with meat and vegetables, by open boats, which cross over daily.

Coro is 80 leagues west of Caraccas, 65 north of Maracaybo, and 33 north-west of Barquisimeto.

The next place of note in the government of Venezuela, is *Porto Cavello*, or *Puerto Cabello*, 30 leagues north-east of Caraccas, in $10^{\circ} 20'$ north latitude, and $69^{\circ} 11'$ west longitude. It lies in a fine harbour, in the Golfo Triste, near Curaçoa, to the neighbourhood of which island it owes its importance.

Burburata, a village and harbour, a league to the east of Porto Cavello, was originally the port of Venezuela, and was founded for that purpose in 1549. The harbour of Puerto Cabello, being well adapted for carrying on a contraband trade with Burburata, its shores were soon settled by fishermen, and many Dutch smugglers erected huts there. Such was the boldness and enterprising spirit of these people, that all the efforts of the Spaniards were unable to check them, and they continued their unlawful trade under the eyes of the local authorities. When the Guipuscoa company obtained their final charter, they ejected the most troublesome of these people by force, built a town, a wharf, and forts for its defence; and they also erected immense warehouses, some of which still remain.

The site of this town was a small peninsula, the neck of which

was almost under water; this isthmus was cut through, a canal formed, and the town detached from the suburbs.

The exterior buildings are by far the most numerous, they are however built very irregularly, and the island town is chiefly occupied by the forts and warehouses; the communication between the two being by a bridge over the canal, at the end of which is placed a gate that is always closed at night.

The population of this town amounts to about 8000, their sole employment being navigation and commerce, and their principal connection is with the continental harbours and the islands. About 60 vessels are employed in the coasting, and four or five in the European trade. It is the place of resort for ships requiring repair, and some vessels are built here; and it may also be said to be the entrepôt of eastern Venezuela.

The climate is very hot and unhealthy, which prevents its becoming a place of importance.

Puerto Cabello is supplied with water by canals from a river a league to the west, and distributed to the public in cisterns, built at proper distances.

It has one parish church near the harbour, and two hospitals, one for the soldiers, and one for private persons; and the local authority is vested in the hands of the commandant.

This place was attacked by the English in 1743, but they lost many men, and were obliged to relinquish the undertaking.

Porto Cavello is 30 leagues from La Guayra by sea, 48 by land, from Caraccas, following the road through the towns of Valencia,

Maracay, Tulmero, Victoria and San Pedro.

Carora, an inland town, in 10° north latitude, lying on the Morera river, is 110 miles north-east of Gibraltar, on the lake Maracaybo, and contains a population of 6200 souls, resembling in its commerce, inhabitants, &c. —

Tocuyo, a large town, in $9^{\circ} 35'$ north latitude, and $70^{\circ} 20'$ west longitude, seated in a fine valley between two ranges of high mountains. The city of Tocuyo is very regularly built, the streets being all wide and straight, containing a church, chapel and two monasteries.

In this city, the climate is very fine and wholesome, owing to the vicinity of high mountains, but the air is occasionally cold. The inhabitants who amount to 10,200, are in general artizans, traders, graziers, and agriculturists.

The wheat of Tocuyo is reckoned the best in the province, and furnishes flour to many towns of the interior. Manufactories of woollens are also established, in which coverlids, blankets, &c., are made, and sent to Maracaybo, and even as far as Carthagena. Tanneries and taweries supply work to a great part of the inhabitants, who work up as much of the raw materials as they can find hands to do, and export the rest. Salt from the salt ponds of Coro affords a lucrative article of traffic to the merchants of this town. Tocuyo is 90 leagues south-west of Caraccas, and 20 north of Truxillo.

Guanara, on a river of the same name, that flows into the Portuguesa, which furnishes the inhabitants with excellent

water, and fertilizes the land by its overflowings; on the western parts of this stream, the country is very fruitful; and on the south and east are the immense plains of Varinas.

The chief wealth of the people of Guanara consists in cattle, of which they possess immense herds. They supply the provinces of Caraccas with vast numbers of oxen and mules, and export their surplus by Coro, Puerto-Cavello, or Guiana.

This city consists of a number of streets disposed in an uniform and regular manner, and the houses, though not sumptuous, are well built. The church is large, handsome, and much adorned, and there is a very good hospital. The image of Nuestra Senora de Comoroto, which is supposed to have a particular virtue, attracts a great concourse of devotees from the neighbouring provinces, and renders Guanara a lively place; it is 93 leagues south-west of Caraccas, in $8^{\circ} 14'$ north latitude, and $69^{\circ} 54'$ west longitude.

Barquisimeto, which contains a population of 11,300 souls, is situated in $8^{\circ} 55'$ north latitude, and $66^{\circ} 55'$ west longitude; 120 miles west-south-west of Caraccas, 450 north-north-east of Santa Fé, 45 north-north-east of Tocuyo, 80 miles south of Valencia, and 175 north-west of Calabozza, on a small river of the same name, which joins the Portuguesa. It was founded in 1552, after the surrounding country had been reduced, and is one of the oldest cities of Venezuela; being placed on a plain at such an elevation, that it enjoys every cool breeze from the river, and owing to this happy situation, the great heat of the

climate becomes supportable. The north-east winds are the most constant, and whenever these do not blow, the thermometer rises to 82° and 84° of Fahrenheit.

The inhabitants pasture the plains with herds of cattle, and find this a lucrative occupation, and an easy method of making use of their time; but they also cultivate the valleys, which produce cacao of an excellent quality, owing to the periodical overflowing of the stream; and the sides of the mountains are now planted with coffee-trees, which only require a little more care to be of the purest quality. The houses of Barquisimeto are well built, and the streets are on a wide, regular, and good plan. Its church is a handsome structure, and the luxury of its ornaments, as well as the general aspect of the city, show the ease and affluence in which the inhabitants, who are mostly Europeans and their descendants, live.

The city is governed by a lieutenant-governor, and common council.

Victoria is situated on the road leading from Caraccas to Puerto Cavello, six leagues east of Tulmero. It was founded by the missionaries, and for a long time consisted wholly of Indians, till the fruitful nature of the valley of Aragoa drew a number of whites to it. The lands were soon cultivated, and Victoria was covered with houses instead of huts.

The principal ornament of this place is a handsome church, so large that it might well be termed a cathedral; the number of inhabitants of the town is about 8000.

Tulmero is another town in the same fertile valley at six leagues distance west of the latter, and two from Maracay. This town is modern, well built, and the residence of a number of tobacco, coffee, indigo, cacao, &c., planters, but has been peculiarly the abode of the officers appointed to the administration of the tobacco farm; it is embellished with a handsome church and neat private buildings, and is governed by a lieutenant; a vicar also resides here, for the direction of ecclesiastical affairs.

The population is about 8000 souls.

Maracay, forty miles south-west of Caraccas, is also seated in the same rich vale of Aragoa, and is a beautiful new town famous for the excellent chocolate made in its neighbourhood. The inhabitants who are mostly descendants of Biscayan Spaniards, have been computed to amount to 8500, who cultivate indigo, cacao, cotton, coffee and grain.

Valencia in $10^{\circ} 9'$ north latitude, and $68^{\circ} 25'$ west longitude, sixteen miles south-west of Caraccas, was founded in consequence of Faxardo, one of the conquerors having greatly praised the surrounding country; it was first built by Villacinda in 1555, with the view of establishing a port near the capital; but Alonzo Diaz Moreno afterwards preferred a scite more distant from lake Tacarigua (now Valencia), and he accordingly removed the colony half a league west of the lake to a beautiful plain, where the air was pure and the soil fertile.

The population of this city is said to be about 8000 souls,

mostly creoles, of good families, with some Biscayans and Canarians; the streets are wide and well paved, and the houses built like those of Caraccas, but not of stone. This town has a beautiful square, in which the church, a very pretty structure, stands. In 1802 another church was built and dedicated to Nuestra Senora de la Candelaria; and the Franciscans have a monastery which has also a neat church.

The inhabitants were formerly noted for their indolence, but have lately become active and industrious, and the situation of the place is peculiarly favourable for trade, being separated from Puerto Cavello by only ten leagues of good road. Every commodity landed at that port for the consumption of the provinces of the interior passes through Valencia, which necessarily causes much traffic. The adjacent country produces every sort of provision and fruits in great abundance, and the plains feed immense herds of cattle, with sheep, horses and mules, so that its markets are well supplied. Near it is the lake of Valencia, which has been described already.

Valencia, with the towns of Victoria and Barquisimeto, suffered very much from the earthquake which overthrew Caraccas, La Guayra, Merida and the villages of San Felipe and Maiqueta, on the 26th of March, 1812.

Ocumara, though only a village, is celebrated for having a very fine port, the entrance to which has a battery for eight pieces of cannon. *Ocumara* is five leagues east of Porto Cabello; the port is excellent and well sheltered, with fine moorings. The village

is about a league distant from the anchoring place on a small river of the same name, which, after fertilizing a fine valley, enters the sea at the foot of the fort. Between this bay and La Guayra are the bays of *Choroni*, *Puerto*, *La Cruz*, *Los Arcifes* and *Catia*, and between Ocumara, or Seinega de Ocumara are the bays of *Turiamo*, *Burburata*, and *Paranego*, from all of which the inhabitants of the coasts export their produce to La Guayra, Porto Cavello, or the West Indies, as each of these afford fine anchoring places for vessels. In the bay of Burburata there is a village, formerly a place of consequence, but principally of note for the number of mules which it exports.

San Carlos was formerly a missionary village, which owes its present beauty to the luxuriancy of the surrounding country; it is twenty-eight leagues south-south-west of Valencia, in 9° 20' north latitude; the climate is very hot, but owing to the prevalence of the north-east wind it is much ameliorated. The inhabitants amount to 9500, composed of Spaniards from the Canaries, and Creoles, and are engaged in rearing cattle, horses and mules, which form their chief riches; the quality of the soil is so good that it gives an exquisite flavour to the fruits, particularly to its oranges, which are celebrated throughout the province.

Indigo and coffee are the chief articles cultivated at San Carlos, and the town is large, handsome, and well laid out.

Araura on the shore of the river Acarigua is north-north-east of Truxillo, in a fertile country, where numerous herds of cattle are reared, and cotton and coffee are cultivated; this town, which

was, till lately, a missionary village, contains a fine square, a handsome church, and several streets of well built houses.

Calaboso was also a mission until lately; it was formed into a town for the sake of those Spanish owners who wished to be near their cattle which roam on the vast plains of the same name.

It is situated between the rivers Guarico and Orituco, which unite their waters four or five leagues below the town, and then flow into the Apure.

The number of inhabitants in this new town is 4800, and it has 116 settlements in its jurisdiction, containing 1186 free Indians, 3100 people of colour, and 943 slaves. It is fifty-two leagues south of Caraccas, and about the same distance from the Orinoco, in $8^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude.

San Juan del Pao is also inhabited by the proprietors of the cattle on the plains, and consists of a church and several handsome streets on the Pao, which runs into the Orinoco. It contains 5400 souls, and is fifty leagues south-west of Caraccas, in $9^{\circ} 20'$ north latitude.

San Luis de Cura, in $9^{\circ} 45'$ north latitude, twenty-two leagues south-west of Caraccas, and eight leagues south-east of Lake Valencia, possesses 4000 inhabitants, and a miraculous image of the Virgin, to which votaries are constantly flocking.

St. Sebastian de los Reyes in $9^{\circ} 54'$ north latitude, twenty-eight leagues south-south-west of Caraccas, and in a hot climate, contains 3500 souls.

St. Felipe or Cocorota, in a very fertile soil, where cacao,

indigo, coffee, cotton and sugar are cultivated, contains 6800 inhabitants, and is well built. It stands in $10^{\circ} 15'$ north latitude, 50 leagues west of Caraccas, 15 leagues north-west of Valencia, and seven leagues north-west of *Nirgua*; which place was built in the early periods of the conquest, on account of its mines; but it is now in a decaying state, and is inhabited only by Sambos, or the race springing from the Indians and negroes; their number amounts to 3200. This town is in 10° south latitude, 48 leagues west of Caraccas.

Besides the above, there are several other smaller towns, and some very large villages in this government, which are too numerous to describe.

The country of Venezuela is not famous for mines of gold or silver, though some gold has occasionally been found in the streams, which rush from the mountains; the pearl fishery of its coasts will be described in treating of the island of Margarita.

THE PROVINCE OF MARACAYBO

Maracaybo, or Maracaibo, surrounds the lake of the same name. It is bounded on the west by Santa Marta, in New Granada, on the east by Coro and Venezuela; on the north by Santa Marta, and the gulf of Maracaybo; and on the south by Merida and Santa Marta. Owing to the great extent of the lake, this province extends but a short distance inland to the east and west, its length being about 100 leagues.

The soil of Maracaybo is unfruitful on the banks of the lake. The east shore is dry and unhealthy, and on the west shore the land does not begin to be fertile for more than twenty-five leagues south of the city. South of the lake the country may vie with the richest lands of South America.

In this province the population is estimated at about 100,000 souls.

It was from the Indian towns built on posts of iron wood on the lake of Maracaybo that the Spaniards gave the country the name of Venezuela, or Little Venice. This country was long unknown after the conquest. Ampues, who was governor at Coro, had engaged all the neighbouring nations of Indians, by his conciliatory measures, to swear allegiance to Spain, when, in 1528, Alfinger and Sailler, who had been sent, with 400 followers, to assume the government, under the authority of the company of the Welsers, landed at Coro. Unfortunately for the

Indians, they dispossessed Ampues of his government, and began to search in every direction round the lake for gold; finding that their hopes of suddenly acquiring riches from this source were not likely to be realised, Alfinger took the resolution of penetrating into the interior, to pillage the Indian towns, and make prisoners of as many as he could, in order to sell them for slaves. The Indian villages about the lake were soon destroyed; carnage and havoc spread around; the natives were sold to the merchants from the islands, and the whole province was a scene of horror and devastation. Alfinger did not long survive this inhuman conduct, he met his fate in a valley, six leagues from Pamplona, in Merida, the natives killing him there in a skirmish in 1531.

Two other German agents succeeded him, and continued the same barbarous conduct towards the Indians, which coming to the knowledge of the king of Spain, they were formally dispossessed: but it is asserted that the traces of the crimes they committed are visible to this day. Four villages of Maracaybo were all that escaped, and are yet standing, the iron wood on which they are founded becoming like a mass of stone from the petrifying quality of the water. These villages are situated on the east part of the lake, at unequal distances from each other, and have a church, which is also built in the water on piles, and to which the inhabitants of all the villages resort.

Several small rivers empty themselves into this lake: but as the country is uninhabited, excepting by Indians, and immediately

on the shores, nothing is known with accuracy concerning them, the savage Goahiros from La Hacha preventing all access on the western side, and keeping the settlers continually in alarm.

The lake is navigable for vessels of any burden, but this advantage is sometimes rendered useless by a dangerous sand-bank across the narrow entrance, on which vessels drawing twelve feet water will occasionally ground.

Near the borders of the lake, on the west, are the only parts of this province which are cultivated, where, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, and the insalubrity of the air, some whites have fixed their habitations to cultivate cacao, and other plants. These settlers are much scattered, and have a chapel placed in the centre, to which they all occasionally resort.

The climate of the province is in general hot and unhealthy, excepting in the southern parts which border on the snowy mountains of Merida.

Its chief town is the city of *Maracaybo*, in north latitude $10^{\circ} 30'$, and west longitude $71^{\circ} 46'$, on the western side of the narrow or strait which leads into the lake at about six leagues from the sea, on a sandy soil, and in a dry hot climate. In July and August the air is so heated, that it seems as if it issued from a furnace: but the most usual preventative for the ill effects of this abominable climate is constant bathing in the lake. Thunderstorms, hurricanes, and earthquakes, are common in this country.

The city is built with some taste, but disfigured by having

most of its houses covered with reeds. The principal part of the town is on the shore of a small gulf, a league in length, which extends towards the broad part of the lake on the south, and the other part is built on the neck to the north, where the lake is only three leagues in width. The place where the town begins is named Maracaybo Point; that where the gulf commences Aricta Point; opposite to which is Point Sta. Lucia.

Maracaybo was founded in 1571 by Alonzo Pacheco, an inhabitant of Truxillo, who gave it the name of New Zamora. It contains one parish church, a chapel of ease, and a convent of Franciscans and is supplied with water from the lake, which at times is brackish near this place, when the strong breezes, especially in March, impregnate it with salt from the spray of the sea.

The population consists of about 24,000 persons, owing to the number of emigrants who fled hither from St. Domingo. The great families, or people of rank, are about thirty. The whites, or Europeans and Creoles, apply themselves to agriculture, commerce, the fisheries and navigation, and live very comfortably. The slaves and freemen are composed of negroes and mulattoes, who exercise all the laborious trades and handicrafts, and the number of slaves is about 5000.

The best schooners which sail on the Spanish Main are built at this city, which possesses peculiar advantages for ship-building. Though the air is so hot, and the land so arid, yet the natives enjoy a good state of health, and live to an old age, owing, most

probably, to the custom of frequent ablutions, as the children may be said to live in the water, and most of the people pass their time in navigating the lake. The young people are celebrated for their wit and ingenuity: but the charge of a want of probity in their dealings with strangers is brought against these people. The females are sprightly and modest, and are extremely fond of music; the notes of the harp resounding through the streets of an evening. The great object of veneration at Maracaybo is an image of the Virgin, denominated Chiquinquirá, the name of a village in New Granada, from whence she was brought.

A temple was dedicated to her worship in 1586, and immediately a fountain rose up under the altar where she was placed; miraculous virtues were communicated to its waters, and this image has procured a lasting reputation in the surrounding country.

The mariners of the lake invoke this holy shrine in all their undertakings, and it is placed in the chapel of ease of St. Juan de Dios. Three forts protect the harbour of Maracaybo. This place was plundered by Michael de Basco, and Francis Lolonois, in 1667, when they sailed up the gulf of Venezuela, with eight ships and 660 men; they entered the strait, stormed and took the fort of La Barra which defended it, and putting to death the garrison consisting of 250 men, they then advanced to Maracaybo; on their arrival there, the inhabitants abandoned the city, and removed their most valuable goods.

Here they remained a fortnight reveling in drunkenness and

debauchery, and then proceeded to Gibraltar, which the people of Maracaybo had newly fortified; after a severe contest, this place was also taken, but proved a barren triumph, which so exasperated the Buccaneers, that they set fire to the place, and threatened Maracaybo with the same fate; the poor inhabitants collected as much property as they could, and ransomed the city, but not before it had been gutted of every thing.

Soon after this, Henry Morgan a Welsh adventurer attacked Porto Bello, and succeeding in his expedition, fitted out in 1669, a fleet of fifteen vessels, manned with 960 men, with which he sailed to Maracaybo, silenced the fort of the Strait, reached the city, and found it deserted; but following the people to the woods, he discovered their treasures; he then sailed to Gibraltar, which was desolate; while engaged in torturing the people he had made prisoners, in order to make them produce their hidden treasures, he learnt that three Spanish men of war, had arrived at the entrance of the lake. Summoning all the impudence he was master of, Morgan sent an order to the commander of the vessels to ransom the city. The answer was, as might be expected, a denial, and direction to surrender himself immediately; to this he replied, that if the admiral would not allow him to pass, he would find means to do so; accordingly dividing his plunder among his vessels, that each might have a share to defend, he sent a fire-ship into the enemy's fleet, and having burnt two, and captured a third ship, he made a show of landing men to attack the fort, which being thus put off its guard, Morgan passed the bar with

his whole armament, without sustaining the slightest damage.

Maracaybo is the seat of the governor of the province, who enjoys the same salary, and exercises the same authority as the governor of Cumana. This district was at one time under the jurisdiction of the governor of Merida, but since that province has been annexed to the viceroyalty of New Granada, and since the province of Varinas has been formed out of part of Venezuela and part of Maracaybo, the latter has been made a distinct government.

On the east side of Maracaybo Lake are several small towns, of which *Paraute*, *Las Barbacoas*, *Gibraltar*, and *San Pedro*, are the most considerable places.

Paraute is eighty miles south of Coro, and is a small place on the banks of the lake.

Las Barbacoas is situated a short distance farther south, and seventy-five miles south of Coro.

Gibraltar, in $10^{\circ} 4'$ north latitude, and $67^{\circ} 36'$ west longitude, is 100 miles south-east of Maracaybo, on the eastern banks of the lake; it is a very old town, famous for the production of a particular sort of tobacco, called tobacco of Maracaybo, from which the best sort of snuff, vulgarly called Maccabaw, is made.

The country in the vicinity of this town is well watered with rivers, and consequently grows excellent cacao. Cedars of immense size are found in its woods, but the climate is very hot and insalubrious, especially during the rainy season, when the merchants and planters retire to Maracaybo or Merida.

San Pedro is a short distance south of Gibraltar, and also on the banks of the lake. The other places being mere villages, or scattered plantations, are not worth mentioning.

Truxillo, on the confines of Merida, in 8° 40' north latitude, twenty leagues north of Merida, 105 south-west of Caraccas, and thirty west of Guanara, is in a country producing sugar, cacao, indigo, coffee, &c., and in which wheat is cultivated in great abundance, and forms the chief article of the commerce of the inhabitants, who also carry the above fruits, sweetmeats, cheese, woollens, &c. to Maracaybo, by means of the lake, which is only twenty-five leagues distant, but the route to which lies across the desert and unhealthy plains of Llonay.

The inhabitants of Truxillo are an active and an industrious race; and at present amount to 7600 souls, though the city, which is one of the oldest on the continent, was formerly also one of the best peopled, until it was destroyed and sacked by Francis Gramont, the Buccaneer, who, in 1678, traversed the province of Venezuela, with a small band of followers, attracted by the riches of this place.

The scite of Truxillo is between two mountains, and it contains a good parish church, a chapel of ease, two monasteries, a convent of Dominican nuns, and an hospital.

PROVINCE OF VARINAS

Varinas, the next province of Caraccas, divides the territories of this government from those of the kingdom of New Granada.

It is bounded on the north by the provinces of Maracaybo and Venezuela, east by the plains of Caraccas and the Orinoco, west by Merida and New Granada, and south by Juan de los Llanos, or Casanare.

This province was formed in the year 1787, by separating the southern districts of Venezuela and Maracaybo, when it was also constituted a distinct government. The chief has the title of governor, and his functions are the same as those of Cumana and Maracaybo, in the civil, military and ecclesiastical departments.

In order to defend this new province, a militia was raised in 1803, and a garrison allotted to the city of Varinas, consisting of seventy-seven men. The chief products of this extensive country are tobacco, well known in the European markets, and cattle, sugar, coffee, cotton, indigo; and all the fruits of the torrid zone, find here a soil adapted to each; and their qualities are unrivalled.

The commodities of Varinas are exported chiefly by water to Guiana; the place of embarkation being at a spot called Tocunos, five leagues below the city.

The most remarkable features of this country are the extensive plains, of which it is mostly composed, and which are covered with a luxuriant herbage, feeding innumerable herds of cattle,

flocks of sheep, and droves of mules and horses; these are either used in the province, or exported by means of the Great Orinoco.

Varinas is intersected by numerous large and navigable rivers, which occasionally inundate and fertilize its plains. Of these, the *Apure*, the *Portuguesa*, the *Guanarito*, the *Bocono*, *Guanapalo*, the *Arauca*, the *Capanaparo*, the *Sinaruco*, and the *Meta*, are the most noted.

The *Apure* rises in one of the ridges that diverge from the eastern branch of the Andes in New Granada, in the province of Santa Fé; its length is 170 leagues, of which forty are from north-east to south-east, and the rest from west to east, where it joins the Orinoco by a number of mouths, after having received many very fine rivers, which will one day serve to render the carrying on of the trade from the eastern district of New Granada, and the countries bordering on the Atlantic extremely easy. These rivers are the *Tinaco*, *San Carlos*, *Cojeda*, *Agua Blanca*, *Acarigua*, *Areyaruo*, *Hospicia*, *Abaria*, *Portuguesa*, *Guanare*, *Tucapido*, *Bocono*, *Masparro*, *La Yuca*, the *Santo Domingo*, *Paguay*, *Tisnados*, &c., which all come either from the mountains of Granada, or those of Venezuela, and mingle their waters with the *Apure*, in the immense plains of Varinas.

The *Santo Domingo*, and *Portuguesa*, are the largest of these streams, almost the whole of which unite above Santiago, and form a great body of water, which enters the *Apure* twelve leagues below that place, and twenty leagues north of the Orinoco. This immense quantity of water gives such an impulse

to the Apure, that it forces the Orinoco before it for the space of four miles, although the latter river is there a league in width. The shock of the meeting of these two noble rivers is so great, that it occasions a great agitation in the middle of the Orinoco, forming dreadful eddies and whirlpools, at which the most dextrous Indians shudder. For the space of three leagues after the stream of the greater river has regained its force, the waters of the Apure are still distinguishable by their bright and crystal appearance, after which they are lost in the muddy current of the Orinoco. The exportation of cattle by way of Guiana takes place along the banks of these two rivers, on account of the excellent pasturage which they every where afford. All the traders of the eastern portion of Caraccas, are induced by the easy means of conveyance afforded by so many confluent streams, to send their coffee, cotton and indigo to Guiana, instead of sending them on the backs of mules to Caraccas, or Porto Cavello, and traveling 300 miles in a country often almost impassable, from the inundations of the rivers.

The *Arauca* is a river nearly as large as the Apure, and which rises in the mountains of Santa Fé, a short distance south of the sources of the latter, with which it holds a parallel course, through a country inundated by the Apure, and communicates with it near the Orinoco by several branches before it enters that river, thus forming some large and fertile islands.

The *Rio Capanaparo* rises in the marshy country south of the Arauca, and enters the Orinoco, south of the latter river by two

mouths, at some distance from each other.

South of this is another named the *Sinaruco*, which also rises in the marshes, and receives an accession to its waters from the overflowings of the Apure and the Arauca, entering the Orinoco between the Capanaparo and the Meta.

The *Meta* is a noble river, which rises in the mountain ridge opposite to Santa Fé de Bogota, and flowing through the province of Juan de los Llanos, and the district of Casanare, it receives many other large rivers, and enters the Orinoco, thirty leagues below the cataracts of Ature, and 125 leagues from Santo Tomé of Guiana. The Meta receives the *Pachiquiaro*, the *Upia*, the *Cravo*, and the *Pauto* in Juan de los Llanos, and the *Ariporo*, the *Chire*, and the *Casanare* (a fine river into which flow several others) in the province or district of Casanare. The Meta also receives several smaller streams in Varinas, and seems destined to form vast commercial relations between the kingdom of New Granada and the government of Caraccas.

When the annual fleet of galleons was put a stop to, the government issued orders that all the interior produce of New Granada should be carried to Carthagena, and forbid every article, excepting coarse cottons and flour to be exported by way of the Meta, which considerably retarded the progress of the settlers in Varinas, the Llanos, and Guiana, and put a stop to the cultivation of many articles too bulky to be carried over such bad roads as those which descend to the Magdalena and the Cauca.

The banks of the Meta are inhabited chiefly by Indians, of

which the *Guahibos* tribe occupies the country near the Orinoco; and in Juan de los Llanos, the missionary villages, are very numerous on both banks of the stream.

The capital of Varinas is the city of *Varinas* in $7^{\circ} 40'$ north latitude, and 100 leagues south-east of Caraccas. It is a neat little place in a tolerable climate, with one church, and an hospital. Its inhabitants amount to about 6000, the governor of the province residing here.

The other towns of most consequence are *San Jayme*, *St. Fernando de Apure*, and *San Antonio*. *St. Jayme* is situated on the west bank of the Portuguesa, above its junction with the Guanaparo and the Apure in $7^{\circ} 50'$ north latitude on a sand hill. The town is so environed with water for three months, that the inhabitants cannot leave their houses but in canoes; it is seventy-five leagues south of Caraccas.

St. Fernando de Apure is erected on the south bank of the Apure, near its junction with the Portuguesa. This town is well built, in a hot but healthy climate, and contains about 6000 inhabitants, whose occupation consists in rearing mules and cattle, and their property is in large commons, lying south of the city.

San Antonio is situated on the north bank of the Apure, just above where it divides itself into several branches to join the Arauca, in about $7^{\circ} 30'$ north latitude, with a village called *Bancolargo* on the opposite bank of the river. South of this town and between the Capanaparo and the Sinaruco, the country is

inhabited by tribes of wild and independent Indians, who allow no settlements to be made among them.

The whole province of Varinas on its western and northern parts is covered with farms and small villages, mostly situated on the banks of the different rivers.

A road leads from the plains of Calobozo, in Venezuela, through St. Fernando de Apura, and across the rivers to the junction of the Meta with the Orinoco.

This province has lately become the scene of contests between the Spanish troops and the insurgents; particularly in the vicinity of the Apure.

PROVINCE OF GUIANA; OR, SPANISH GUIANA

This immense province extends from the frontiers of Juan de los Llanos and Quixos, in New Granada to the frontiers of British, French and Portuguese Guiana. It is bounded on the north by the Orinoco and the plains of Cumana, Barcelona, and Caraccas; on the east by unknown lands between the settlements of the English and French; west by the Orinoco and the provinces of New Granada; and south by the Portuguese possessions.

It has been computed to be 1000 leagues in circumference; but this vast extent is inhabited chiefly by warlike and savage tribes of Indians, who forbid all access into the interior. The population of those parts which are occupied by the Spaniards, their descendants, and the mission Indians, is computed at 34,000, this population being confined mostly to the banks of the Orinoco.

The precise boundaries of this country cannot be laid down, on the west it is said to extend to the western mouth of the river Yapura, proceeding thence almost due north. On the east it has, from Cape Nassau, a shore of thirty leagues to the mouth of the Orinoco; thence along that river to the Rio Portuguesa, an extent of more than 400 leagues. The Portuguese territories on the south, were formerly bounded by a line passing under the equator, but they have since acquired more settlements to the

north in the western parts of Guiana.

The population of Spanish Guiana is thus divided; 19,400 Indians, under the care of missionaries; 8000 creoles, mulattoes, &c. scattered in the settlements, and the remainder in the capital; the villages being more frequent at from fifty leagues from the Atlantic to about 130 up the Orinoco.

Guiana is subdivided into Upper and Lower Guiana, the capital being the point of separation. The most southern fort of the Spaniards is that of San Carlos, on the Rio Negro, in $1^{\circ} 53'$ north latitude.

Upper Guiana comprehends all the country west of the Caroni river; few plantations are seen there, though the soil is rich beyond imagination. Lower Guiana is east of the Caroni, or in the space bounded by the sea on the east, the Orinoco on the north, the Caroni on the west, and the Essequibo on the south; than which, a more fertile soil cannot be found, watered by numerous rivers, whose periodic overflowings deposit a slime as prolific as the Nile; but this fine district is nearly a waste, harbouring anthropophagical tribes, of whom the Caribs are the most formidable, as well as sanguinary.

The riches of the few Spaniards and creoles settled in this province, consists in cattle, of which the missionary Franciscans alone possess more than 150,000 head.

The trade of Guiana consists entirely in the export of cattle and mules, with some tobacco, cotton, and indigo, and in 1803 they had thirty-four small vessels employed in trading to Trinidad

and the neighbouring Spanish ports.

In the history of the discovery of Guiana much obscurity prevails; but Martin Silva, in 1568, obtained a patent to conquer some tribes to the westward of the present limits. After penetrating through Venezuela, his people deserted him; when he returned to Spain, and collected new followers. Silva then attempted to cross the country from the coast between the Maranon and Orinoco, but he and his followers were slain and devoured by the Caribs. The missionaries, Pizarro's brother, and Diego Ordaz, also attempted to enter and explore Guiana, but were all frustrated by the natives.

Sir Walter Raleigh also twice tried to reach the pretended city of Manoa, or El Dorado, which is supposed to have been situated in lake Parima, and whose streets were paved with gold; which marvellous story had most probably its origin in an Indian village, built on an island whose soil contained mica, which glittering, and appearing splendid in the sunshine, deceived the adventurers who had observed it.

In later times the Spaniards have endeavoured to conquer these regions, but have always been unsuccessful; one of them has had the courage to cross the greater part of the country in the dress of an Indian; and from his researches, the direction of the ranges of mountains has been ascertained. Humboldt, also contrived to go a great distance along the chain of the cataracts, but was prevented from exploring the sources of the Orinoco and the celebrated lake of Parima by the *Guayecas*, a

race of Indians who, though of very diminutive stature, display the utmost courage and activity in defending their possessions. These people resist all persuasion to become the converts of the monks who had visited their frontiers, and equally defy the armed force which generally accompanies these priests.

The rivers flowing through Guiana, which are best known, are the *Orinoco*, into which, on the north, the *Caroni*, the *Aruy*, the *Caura*, and several smaller ones empty themselves; on the west the *Suapure*, the *Sippapu*, &c., join that stream, while on the south the *Guaviare*, the *Ynritta* and the *Atabapo* also add to the magnificence of its course. The *Rio Negro* also flows through a part of Guiana, and forms, by means of the *Cassiquiari*, a junction between the Maranon and the Orinoco, thus constituting Guiana an immense island detached in every direction by a broad expanse of water from the continent of South America.

The *Yapura* and the *Uapes* run through the southern or continental parts of this province, and join the Maranon.

Many large rivers issue from, or rise near lake Parima and the interior; of which *Rio Branco* and the *Siaba* are the most noted, but as the lake itself, and all the surrounding country are as unknown as the internal parts of Africa, it will be useless to repeat names that are gathered from maps, often imaginary, and generally erroneous.

The capital of Guiana is *Santo Tomé*, or *Angostura*, (the strait, so called, because situated in a narrow part of the Orinoco;) it was originally built in 1586, nearer the sea, at the distance of

fifty leagues from the mouth of the river, but having suffered successively from the invasions of the English, French and Dutch, it was removed, in 1764, to its present scite, ninety leagues from the Atlantic, on the right bank of the river, at the foot of a small mountain. Opposite the city is a village and fortress on the left bank of the Orinoco.

This place was built for the defence of the passage of the Strait, and is called Port Rafael. Between this port and the city is the island Del Medio, a low rocky islet, covered during the floods. The channel lies between this shoal and the town, the river being 200 feet broad at low water. Santo Tomé is the seat of government, the bishop and governor of Guiana residing in it, but its buildings are said to be mean, and its appearance unworthy of a better title than that of a large village.

The other towns of Guiana are also no better than villages, and it has many forts near the Portuguese boundaries.

ISLAND OF MARGARITA

This island, which is about thirty leagues in circumference, forms a government separate from that of Cumana, on whose shores it lies, and dependant on the captain-general of Caraccas. It lies in north latitude $10^{\circ} 56'$, and in 64 and 65 degrees west longitude.

It was first discovered by Columbus in 1498. The pearls found on the coasts of this and the neighbouring isle of Cubagua, soon rendered it famous, and the fishery was carried on at the expence of vast numbers of Indians who lost their lives in the undertaking.

The possession of Margarita is an object of some consequence to the Spaniards, as it is separated from the continent by a straight only eight leagues wide, and to windward of all the best ports of Caraccas. It forms the channel through which all vessels coming from Europe, or windward, to Cumana, Barcelona and La Guayra, must pass, though it is not navigable in its whole breadth, the rocky island Coche between it and the continent, leaving only a narrow pass of two leagues, but which is seldom dangerous, owing to the general calmness that reigns in this part of the Caribbean sea.

In this island there are only three ports, *Pampatar* on the east-south-east; *Pueblo de la Mar*, a league to leeward of the preceding, and *Pueblo del Norte* on the north side.

The population of Margarita has been estimated at 14,000

persons, consisting of 5500 whites, 2000 Guayqueria Indians, and 650 °Castes. The pearl fishery formerly constituted their principal occupation, and is still attended to by the Indians, who also take numbers of turtles and fish, the latter of which they salt and export. They fabricate cotton stockings, and hammocks of a very superior quality. Fowls, turkeys, and all kinds of poultry are exported to the continent by the lower classes, and the island is celebrated for its beautiful parrots and other curious birds, which are so much esteemed that scarcely any trading vessel leaves the place without carrying away some of them. Along the coast of Margarita the land is in general rocky and very steep, but the interior is fertile, producing maize and fruits, and covered with groves; its climate, though very hot, is wholesome, the greatest inconvenience experienced by the inhabitants being a want of good fresh water.

The capital of this government is the city of *Asuncion*, situated in the centre of the island, and which, excepting its being the chief place, is otherwise unimportant.

This island has lately been the scene of some sanguinary actions between the insurgents and the Spanish troops under General Morillo; the latter having been defeated in a severe battle, was obliged to retire to the adjacent continent. The chief scene of these operations was near the port of Pampatar.

VICEROYALTY OF PERU

The viceroyalty of Peru is far from being the largest, or the richest of the Spanish American governments, as since the dismemberment of several of its most important provinces it has become of very little comparative importance; to its name is however attached the most interesting recollections, and as the empire of its Incas was formerly the most renowned, the history of its conquest the most extraordinary, and its ancient splendour the greatest, we have judged it proper to place the general outline of the most important historical relations regarding ancient and modern South America, with the particular description of those of Peru.

BOUNDARIES AND EXTENT

Peru is bounded on the north by the southern provinces of Quito, Maynas, Jaen de Bracamoros, and Guayaquil; on the west by the Pacific Ocean; on the east, by the Portuguese possessions, and the provinces of Buenos Ayres; and on the south, by the government of Chili and the viceroyalty of La Plata. It was formerly the most extensive kingdom of South America, but in the year 1718 the provinces of Quito in the north, as far as the river Tumbez, were annexed to the government of New Granada, and in 1778, Potosi, and several other of its richest districts on the east were annexed to the viceroyalty of Buenos Ayres; its present extent is therefore from the Rio Tumbez, in $3^{\circ} 30'$ south latitude, to the chain of Vilcanota, in 15° south latitude, or 690 geographical miles, while along its coast this length maybe prolonged to 375 more; its medial breadth, not including the Pampas del Sacramento, is nearly eighty, so that its area may be estimated at 33,630 square leagues, or according to Humboldt, only at 30,000.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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