

prietor at San Pedro had previously to these years 20,000 cattle; at the end not one remained. San Pedro is situated in the middle of the finest country; and even now abounds again with animals; yet, during the latter part of the "gran seco," live cattle were brought in vessels for the consumption of the inhabitants. The animals roamed from their estancias, and, wandering far southward, were mingled together in such multitudes that a government commission was sent from Buenos Ayres to settle the disputes of the owners. Sir Woodbine Parish informed me of another and very curious source of dispute; the ground being so long dry, such quantities of dust were blown about that in this open country the landmarks became obliterated, and people could not tell the limits of their estates.

I was informed by an eye-witness that the cattle in herds of thousands rushed into the Parana, and being exhausted by hunger they were unable to crawl up the muddy banks, and thus were drowned. The arm of the river which runs by San Pedro was so full of putrid carcasses that the master of a vessel told me that the smell rendered it quite impassable. Without doubt several hundred thousand animals thus perished in the river: their bodies when putrid were seen floating down the stream; and many in all probability were deposited in the estuary of the Plata. All the small rivers became highly saline, and this caused the death of vast numbers in particular spots; for when an animal drinks of such water it does not recover. Azara describes¹ the fury of the wild horses on a similar occasion, rushing into the marshes, those which arrived first being overwhelmed and crushed by those which followed. He adds that more than once he has seen the carcasses of upward of a thousand wild horses thus destroyed. I noticed that the smaller streams in the Pampas were paved with a breccia of bones, but this probably is the effect of a gradual increase rather than of the destruction at any one period. Subsequently to the drought of 1827 to

¹ Travels, vol. i. p. 374.