

disposing of many of them; but the conditions were, that the articles must be on the beach in a few hours, which was ample time to have dug up an acre. As soon, however, as he learned these terms, he shrugged his shoulders, and declared the thing impossible, took down his guitar, seated himself in front of his house, and began to play a lively air, which his two sons accompanied with their voices.

The coast and the banks of the Rio Negro are composed of sand-hills, of from thirty to fifty feet in height, covered with a scattered growth of grass, which prevents the sand from blowing away. These gradually rise to the height of one hundred feet, except to the southward of the river, where the bank is perpendicular; at this height the ground stretches away in a level prairie, without a single tree to break the monotony of the scene, and affords a view as uninterrupted as the ocean.

The apparent hills along the river are found to be no more than the face of the excavation made or worn down by the river, forming the valley through which it flows.

The only verdure on the prairie is a small shrub, which when the lower branches are trimmed off serves a useful purpose. From an optical illusion, (the effect of refraction,) they appear, when thus trimmed, as large as an ordinary sized apple-tree, and one is not a little surprised to find them, on a near approach, no higher than the surrounding shrubs, four or five feet. Shrubs are trimmed in this manner at distances of about half a mile from each other, and are used as guide-posts on the prairie. A similar optical effect is spoken of by travellers on the steppes of Russia.

Game is most plentiful, consisting of deer, guanacoes, and caviars, cassowaries, partridges, bustards, ducks, &c. Armadillos were common, and the ostrich was frequently seen; porcupines are said also to be found. The caviars were seen running about in single file, with a sort of halting gait.

The soil of the Campos was mostly a mixture of clay, sand, and small pebbles, but is destitute of vegetable mould. They have the practice of burning the prairies in order to produce a new crop of sweet and nutritious grass for the cattle. The rock of the cliff, and along the river where it can be seen, is a soft, gray sandstone, in some places so friable as to be easily crumbled between the fingers, while other specimens are of sufficient hardness for building-stone. The stratification is perfectly horizontal.

The width of the river is less than a third of a mile; it has a rapid current, and a large body of water is carried by it to the ocean. The ordinary tide is about eight feet rise, and the spring tides fourteen feet.