

ground: man has there less extended his empire; he may be said to appear, not as an absolute master, who changes at will the surface of the soil, but as a transient guest, who quietly enjoys the gifts of nature. There, in the neighbourhood of the most populous cities, the land remains studded with forests, or covered with a thick mould, unfurrowed by the plough. Spontaneous vegetation still predominates over cultivated plants, and determines the aspect of the landscape. It is probable that this state of things will change very slowly. If in our temperate regions the cultivation of corn contributes to throw a dull uniformity upon the land we have cleared, we cannot doubt, that, even with increasing population, the torrid zone will preserve that majesty of vegetable forms, those marks of an unsubdued, virgin nature, which render it so attractive and so picturesque. Thus it is that, by a remarkable concatenation of physical and moral causes, the choice and production of alimentary plants have an influence on three important objects at once; the association or the isolated state of families, the more or less rapid progress of civilization, and the individual character of the landscape.

In proportion as we penetrated into the forest, the barometer indicated the progressive elevation of the land. The trunks of the trees presented here an extraordinary phenomenon; a gramineous plant, with verticillate branches,* climbs, like a liana, eight or ten feet high, and forms festoons, which cross the path, and swing about with the wind. We halted, about three o'clock in the afternoon, on a small flat, known by the name of Quetepe, and situated about one hundred and ninety toises above the level of the sea. A few small houses have been erected near a spring, well known by the natives for its coolness and great salubrity. We found the water delicious. Its temperature was only 22.5° of the centigrade thermometer, while that of the air was 28.7° . The springs which descend from the neighbouring mountains of a greater height often indicate a too rapid decrement of heat. If indeed we suppose the mean temperature of the water on the coast of Cumana equal to 26° , we must conclude, unless other local causes modify the temperature of the

* *Carice*, analogous to the *chusque* of Santa Fé, of the group of the *Nastuses*. This gramineous plant is excellent pasture for mules.