

tary live in a state of hostility to the monks, whom they were intended to protect. Everything presents a melancholy picture of misery and privation. We shall soon have occasion to examine more closely that state of man, which is vaunted as a state of nature, by those who inhabit towns. In the second region, in the plains and pasture-grounds, food is extremely abundant, but has little variety. Although more advanced in civilization, the people beyond the circle of some scattered towns are not less isolated from one another. At sight of their dwellings, partly covered with skins and leather, it might be supposed that, far from being fixed, they are scarcely encamped in those vast plains which extend to the horizon. Agriculture, which alone consolidates the bases, and strengthens the bonds of society, occupies the third zone, the shore, and especially the hot and temperate valleys among the mountains near the sea.

It may be objected, that in other parts of Spanish and Portuguese America, wherever we can trace the progressive development of civilization, we find the three ages of society combined. But it must be remembered that the position of the three zones, that of the forests, the pastures, and the cultivated land, is not everywhere the same, and that it is nowhere so regular as in Venezuela. It is not always from the coast to the interior, that population, commercial industry, and intellectual improvement, diminish. In Mexico, Peru, and Quito, the table-lands and central mountains possess the greatest number of cultivators, the most numerous towns situated near to each other, and the most ancient institutions. We even find, that, in the kingdom of Buenos Ayres, the region of pasturage, known by the name of the Pampas, lies between the isolated part of Buenos Ayres and the great mass of Indian cultivators, who inhabit the Cordilleras of Charcas, La Paz, and Potosi. This circumstance gives birth to a diversity of interests, in the same country, between the people of the interior and those who inhabit the coasts.

To form an accurate idea of those vast provinces which have been governed for ages, almost like separate states, by viceroys and captains-general, we must fix our attention at once on several points. We must distinguish the parts of Spanish America opposite to Asia from those on the shores