

by the burning of the savannahs, or wrapped in ruddy smoke. At the spot where the bushes were thickest, our horses were frightened by the yell of an animal that seemed to follow us closely. It was a large jaguar, which had roamed for three years among these mountains. He had constantly escaped the pursuits of the boldest hunters, and had carried off horses and mules from the midst of enclosures; but, having no want of food, had not yet attacked men. The negro who conducted us uttered wild cries, expecting by these means to frighten the tiger; but his efforts were ineffectual. The jaguar, like the wolf of Europe, follows travellers even when he will not attack them; the wolf in the open fields and in unsheltered places, the jaguar skirting the road and appearing only at intervals between the bushes.

We passed the day on the 23rd in the house of the Marquis de Toro, at the village of Guacara, a very considerable Indian community. An avenue of carolinas leads from Guacara to Mocundo. It was the first time I had seen in the open air this majestic plant, which forms one of the principal ornaments of the extensive conservatories of Schönbrunn.* Mocundo is a rich plantation of sugar-canes, belonging to the family of Toro. We there find, what is so rare in that country, a garden, artificial clumps of trees, and on the border of the water, upon a rock of gneiss, a pavilion with a *mirador*, or belvidere. The view is delightful over the western part of the lake, the surrounding mountains, and a forest of palm-trees that separates Guacara from the city of Nueva Valencia. The fields of sugar-cane, from the soft verdure of the young reeds, resemble a vast meadow. Everything denotes abundance; but it is at the price of the liberty of the cultivators. At Mocundo, with two hundred and thirty negroes, seventy-seven *tablones*, or cane-fields, are cultivated, each of which, ten thousand *varas* square,† yields a net profit of two

* Every tree of the *Carolina princeps* at Schönbrunn has sprung from seeds collected from one single tree of enormous size, near Chacao, east of Caracas.

† A *tablon*, equal to 1849 square toises, contains nearly an acre and one-fifth: a legal acre has 1344 square toises, and 1.95 legal acre is equal to one hectare.