

altogether destitute of palm-trees; and where the mountains of the shore and of the Orinoco are so distant that they cannot be seen, as in the Mesa de Pavones. A person would be tempted there to take the altitude of the sun with a quadrant, if the horizon of the land were not constantly misty on account of the variable effects of refraction. This equality of surface is still more perfect in the meridian of Calabozo, than towards the east, between Cari, La Villa del Pao, and Nueva Barcelona; but it extends without interruption from the mouths of the Orinoco to La Villa de Araure and to Ospinos, on a parallel of a hundred and eighty leagues in length; and from San Carlos to the savannahs of Caquet, on a meridian of two hundred leagues. It particularly characterises the New Continent, as it does the low steppes of Asia, between the Borysthenes and the Volga, between the Irtish and the Obi. The deserts of central Africa, of Arabia, Syria, and Persia, Gobi, and Casna, present, on the contrary, many inequalities, ranges of hills, ravines without water, and rocks which pierce the sands.

The Llanos, however, notwithstanding the apparent uniformity of their surface, present two kinds of inequalities, which cannot escape the observation of the traveller. The first is known by the name of banks (*bancos*); they are in reality *shoals* in the basin of the steppes, fractured strata of sandstone, or compact limestone, standing four or five feet higher than the rest of the plain. These banks are sometimes three or four leagues in length; they are entirely smooth, with a horizontal surface; their existence is perceived only by examining their margins. The second species of inequality can be recognised only by geodesical or barometric levellings, or by the course of rivers. It is called a *mesa* or table, and is composed of small flats, or rather convex eminences, that rise insensibly to the height of a few toises. Such are, towards the east, in the province of Cumana, on the north of the Villa de la Merced and Candelaria, the Mesas of Amana, of Guanipa, and of Jonoro, the direction of which is south-west and north-east; and which, in spite of their inconsiderable elevation, divide the waters between the Orinoco and the northern coast of Terra Firma. The convexity of the savannah alone occasions this partition: we there find the 'dividing of the waters' (*divortia aqua-*