

Campos dos Parecis) the Andes of Peru, to the mountains of Brazil. It is the Cordillera of Chiquitos which widens in the Capitania de Minas Gerães, and divides the rivers flowing into the Amazon from those of the Rio de la Plata,\* not only in the interior of the country, in the meridian of Villa Boa, but also at a few leagues from the coast, between Rio Janeiro and Bahia.†

These three transverse chains, or rather these three groups of mountains stretching from west to east, within the limits of the torrid zone, are separated by tracts entirely level, the plains of Caracas, or of the Lower Orinoco; the plains of the Amazon and the Rio Negro; and the plains of Buenos Ayres, or of La Plata. I use the term *plains*, because the Lower Orinoco and the Amazon, far from flowing in a valley, form but a little furrow in the midst of a vast level. The two basins, placed at the extremities of South America, are savannahs or steppes, pasturage without trees; the intermediate basin, which receives the equatorial rains during the whole year, is almost entirely one vast forest, through which no other roads are known save the rivers. The strong vegetation which conceals the soil, renders also the uniformity of its level less perceptible; and the *plains* of Caracas and La Plata bear no other name. The three basins we have just described are called, in the language of the colonists, the Llanos of Varinas and of Caracas, the *bosques* or *selvas* (forests) of the Amazon, and the Pampas of Buenos Ayres. The trees not only for the most part cover the plains of the Amazon, from the Cordillera de Chiquitos, as far as that of Parime; they also crown these two chains of mountains, which rarely attain the height of the Pyrenees.‡ On this account, the vast plains of the Amazon, the Madeira, and the Rio Negro, are not so distinctly bounded as the *Llanos* of Caracas, and the

\* There is only a portage or carrying-place of 5,322 braças between the Guapore (a branch of the Marmore and of the Madeira), and the Rio Aguapehy (a branch of the Jaura and of the Paraguay).

† The Cordillera of Chiquitos and of Brazil stretches toward the southeast, in the government of the Rio Grande, beyond the latitude of 30° south.

‡ We must except the most western part of the Cordillera of Chiquitos, between Cochabamba and Santa Cruz de la Sierra where the summits