

*Pampas* of Buenos Ayres. As the region of forests comprises at once the plains and the mountains, it extends from  $18^{\circ}$  south to  $7^{\circ}$  and  $8^{\circ}$  north,\* and occupies an extent of near a hundred and twenty thousand square leagues. This forest of South America, for in fact there is only one, is six times larger than France. It is known to Europeans only on the shores of a few rivers, by which it is traversed; and has its openings, the extent of which is in proportion to that of the forests. We shall soon skirt the marshy savannahs, between the Upper Orinoco, the Conorichite, and the Cassiquiare, in the latitude of  $3^{\circ}$  and  $4^{\circ}$ . There are other openings, or as they are called, 'clear savannahs,'† in the same parallel, between the sources of the Mao and the Rio de Aguas Blancas, south of the Sierra de Pacaraima. These last savannahs, which are inhabited by Caribs, and nomad Macusis, lie near the frontiers of Dutch and French Guiana.

Having noticed the geological constitution of South America, we shall now mark its principal features. The western coasts are bordered by an enormous wall of mountains, rich in precious metals wherever volcanic fire has not pierced through the eternal snow. This is the Cordillera of the Andes. Summits of trap-porphry rise beyond three thousand three hundred toises, and the mean height of the chain ‡ is one thousand eight hundred and fifty toises. It stretches in the direction of a meridian, and sends into each hemisphere a lateral branch, in the latitudes of  $10^{\circ}$  north, and  $16^{\circ}$  and  $18^{\circ}$  south. The first of these two branches, that of the coast of Caracas, is of considerable length, and forms in fact a chain. The second branch, the Cordillera of

are covered with snow; but this colossal group almost belongs to the Andes de la Paz, of which it forms a promontory or spur, directed toward the east.

\* To the west, in consequence of the Llanos of Manso, and the Pampas de Huanacos, the forests do not extend generally beyond the parallels of  $18^{\circ}$  or  $19^{\circ}$  south latitude; but to the east, in Brazil (in the capitancias of San Pablo and Rio Grande), as well as in Paraguay, on the borders of the Parana, they advance as far as  $25^{\circ}$  south.

† *Savannas limpias*, that is to say, clear of trees.

‡ In New Grenada, Quito, and Peru, according to measurements taken by Bouguer, La Condamine, and myself.