

leagues twenty to a degree. The part running from north to south is almost double that which stretches from east to west, between the Lower Orinoco and the littoral chain of Caracas. The Pampas on the north and north-west of Buenos Ayres, between this city and Cordova, Jujuy, and the Tucuman, are of nearly the same extent as the Llanos; but the Pampas stretch still farther on to the length of 18° southward; and the land they occupy is so vast, that they produce palm-trees at one of their extremities, while the other, equally low and level, is covered with eternal frost.

The Llanos of America, where they extend in the direction of a parallel of the equator, are three-fourths narrower than the great desert of Africa. This circumstance is very important in a region where the winds constantly blow from east to west. The farther the plains stretch in this direction, the more ardent is their climate. The great ocean of sand in Africa communicates by Yemen* with Gedrosia and Beloochistan, as far as the right bank of the Indus. It is from the effect of winds that have passed over the deserts situated to the east, that the little basin of the Red Sea, surrounded by plains which send forth from all sides radiant caloric, is one of the hottest regions of the globe. The unfortunate captain Tuckey relates,† that the centigrade thermometer keeps there generally in the night at 34° , and by day from 40° to 44° . We shall soon see that, even in the westernmost part of the steppes of Caracas, we seldom found the temperature of the air, in the shade, above 37° .

* We cannot be surprised that the Arabic should be richer than any other language of the East in words expressing the ideas of desert, uninhabited plains, and plains covered with gramina. I could give a list of thirty-five of these words, which the Arabian authors employ without always distinguishing them by the shades of meaning which each separate word expresses. *Makadh* and *kaadh* indicate, in preference, plains; *bakaadh*, a table-land; *kafr*, *mikfar*, *smlis*, *mahk*, and *habaucer*, a naked desert, covered with sand and gravel; *tanufah*, a steppe. *Zahra* means at once a naked desert and a savannah. The word *steppe*, or *step*, is Russian, and not Tartarian. In the Turco-Tartar dialect a heath is called *tala* or *tschol*. The word *gobi*, which Europeans have corrupted into *cobi*, signifies in the Mongol tongue a naked desert. It is equivalent to the *scha-mo* or *khan-hai* of the Chinese. A *steppe*, or plain covered with herbs, is in Mongol, *kudah*; in Chinese, *kouano*.

† Expedition to explore the river Zahir, 1818.