

Bottom of an inland sea, we may conceive that thousands of years have not sufficed for the trees and shrubs to advance from the borders of the forests, from the skirts of the plains either naked or covered with turf, toward the centre, and darken so vast a space with their shade. It is more difficult to explain the origin of bare savannahs, encircled by forests, than to recognize the causes that maintain forests and savannahs within their ancient limits, like continents and seas.

We found the most cordial hospitality at Calabozo, in the house of the superintendent of the royal plantations, Don Miguel Cousin. The town, situated between the banks of the Guarico and the Uritucu, contained at this period only five thousand inhabitants; but everything denoted increasing prosperity. The wealth of most of the inhabitants consists in herds, under the management of farmers, who are called *hateros*, from the word *hato*, which signifies in Spanish a house or farm placed in the midst of pastures. The scattered population of the Llanos being accumulated on certain points, principally around towns, Calabozo reckons already five villages or missions in its environs. It is computed, that 98,000 head of cattle wander in the pastures nearest to the town. It is very difficult to form an exact idea of the herds contained in the Llanos of Caracas, Barcelona, Cumana, and Spanish Guiana. M. Depons, who lived in the town of Caracas longer than I, and whose statistical statements are generally accurate, reckons in those vast plains, from the mouths of the Orinoco to the lake of Maracaybo, 1,200,000 oxen, 180,000 horses, and 90,000 mules. He estimates the produce of these herds at 5,000,000 francs; adding to the value of the exportation the price of the hides consumed in the country. There exist, it is believed, in the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, 12,000,000 cows, and 3,000,000 horses, without comprising in this enumeration the cattle that have no acknowledged proprietor.

I shall not hazard any general estimates, which from their nature are too uncertain; but shall only observe that, in the Llanos of Caracas, the proprietors of the great *hatos* are entirely ignorant of the number of the cattle they possess. They only know that of the young cattle, which are branded every year with a letter or mark peculiar to each herd. The richest proprietors mark as many as 14,000 head every