

great seasons of drought and wet, or, as the Indians say in their expressive language, of sun* and rain,† it is highly interesting to follow the progress of meteorological phenomena in the transition from one season to another. We had already observed, in the valleys of Aragua, from the 18th and 19th of February, clouds forming at the commencement of the night. In the beginning of the month of March the accumulation of the vesicular vapours, visible to the eye, and with them signs of atmospheric electricity, augmented daily. We saw flashes of heat-lightning to the south; and the electrometer of Volta constantly displayed, at sunset, positive electricity. The pith balls, unexcited during the day, separated to the width of three or four lines at the commencement of the night, which is triple what I generally observed in Europe, with the same instrument, in calm weather. Upon the whole, from the 26th of May, the electrical equilibrium of the atmosphere seemed disturbed. During whole hours the electricity was *nil*, then it became very strong, and soon after was again imperceptible. The hygrometer of Deluc continued to indicate great dryness (from 33° to 35°), and yet the atmosphere appeared no longer the same. Amidst these perpetual variations of the electric state of the air, the trees, divested of their foliage, already began to unfold new leaves, and seemed to feel the approach of spring.

The variations which we have just described are not peculiar to one year. Everything in the equinoctial zone has a wonderful uniformity of succession, because the active powers of nature limit and balance each other, according to laws that are easily recognized. I shall here note the progress of atmospherical phenomena in the islands to the east of the Cordilleras of Merida and of New Grenada, in the Llanos of Venezuela and the Rio Meta, from four to ten degrees of north latitude, wherever the rains are constant

* In the Maypure dialect *camoti*, properly "the heat [of the sun]." The Tamanacs call the season of drought *uamu*, "the time of grasshoppers."

† In the Tamanac language *canepo*. The year is designated, among several nations, by the name of one of the two seasons. The Maypures say, "so many suns," (or rather "so many heats;") the Tamanacs, "so many rains."