

cumstances that are difficult to characterise. It may be observed that the plague of mosquitos and zancudos is not so general in the torrid zone as is commonly believed. On the table-lands elevated more than four hundred toises above the level of the ocean, in the very dry plains remote from the beds of great rivers (for instance, at Cumana and Calabozo), there are not sensibly more gnats than in the most populous parts of Europe. They are perceived to augment enormously at Nueva Barcelona, and more to the west, on the coast that extends towards Cape Codera. Between the little harbour of Higuerote and the mouth of the Rio Unare, the wretched inhabitants are accustomed to stretch themselves on the ground, and pass the night buried in the sand three or four inches deep, leaving out the head only, which they cover with a handkerchief. You suffer from the sting of insects, but in a manner easy to bear, in descending the Orinoco from Cabruta towards Angostura, and in going up from Cabruta towards Uruana, between the latitudes of  $7^{\circ}$  and  $8^{\circ}$ . But beyond the mouth of the Rio Arauca, after having passed the strait of Baraguan, the scene suddenly changes. From this spot the traveller may bid farewell to repose. If he have any poetical remembrance of Dante, he may easily imagine he has entered the *città dolente*, and he will seem to read on the granite rocks of Baraguan these lines of the Inferno:—

Noi sem venuti al luogo, ov' i' t'ho detto  
Che tu vedrai le genti dolorose.

The lower strata of air, from the surface of the ground to the height of fifteen or twenty feet, are absolutely filled with venomous insects. If in an obscure spot, for instance in the grottos of the cataracts formed by superincumbent blocks of granite, you direct your eyes toward the opening enlightened by the sun, you see clouds of mosquitos more or less thick. At the mission of San Borja, the suffering from mosquitos is greater than at Carichana; but in the Raudales, at Atures, and above all at Maypures, this suffering may be said to attain its maximum. I doubt whether there be a country upon earth where man is exposed to more cruel torments in the rainy season. Having passed the fifth degree of latitude, you are somewhat less stung; but on the Upper Orinoco the stings are more painful, because the heat and the abso-