

These low plains are the bottoms of very extensive and widely expanded valleys. Those of Boulogne and Saint Denis, and others in the neighbourhood of Paris, have had a similar origin. But other low plains there are which owe their formation to the alluvions thrown up by rivers at their embouchures; such are the deltas of the Rhone, the Po, the Nile, the Mississippi; such, too, the muddy swamps of Holland, and those which the Volga traverses on its way to the Caspian Sea.

The Spaniards designate by the name of *llanos*, the American

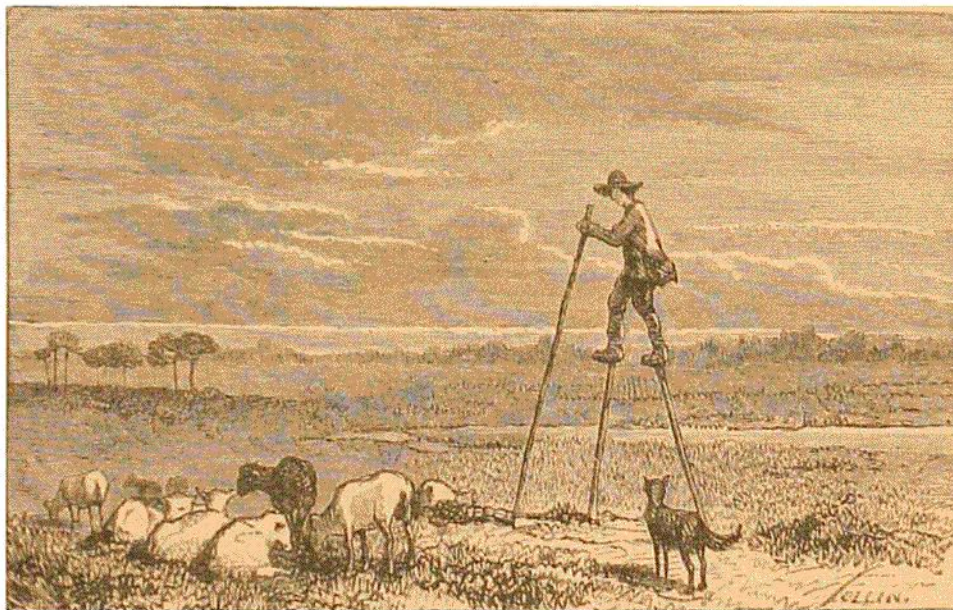


FIG. 81.—PEASANT OF THE LANDES.

Indians by the name of *prairies*, or *pampas*, and the Slaves by that of *steppes*, those immense plains which are more or less thickly clothed with grass. These words have, in fact, very nearly the same signification as *savannahs* or *landes*, but they preserve a local meaning, have certain distinctive features, and are employed as geographical designations.

THE STEPPES.

The steppes begin in Wallachia, and extend, with wearisome monotony, through the Russian provinces of Bessarabia and Kherson, beyond the Caspian Sea and Lake Aral, to the sources of the Amour and the desert of the Gobi, which the Mongolians call "the land of