

beings even to its utmost depths, changing perpetually in colour and aspect, moveable at its surface like the element that agitates it, all charm the imagination during long voyages by sea ; but the dusty and creviced Llano, throughout a great part of the year, has a depressing influence on the mind, by its unchanging monotony. When, after eight or ten days' journey, the traveller becomes accustomed to the mirage and the brilliant verdure of a few tufts of mauritia* scattered from league to league, he feels the want of more varied impressions. He loves again to behold the great tropical trees, the wild rush of torrents, or hills and valleys cultivated by the hand of the labourer. If the deserts of Africa, and of the Llanos or savannahs of the New Continent filled a still greater space than they actually occupy, nature would be deprived of many of the beautiful products peculiar to the torrid zone.† The heaths of the north, the steppes of the Volga and the Don, are scarcely poorer in species of plants and animals than are the twenty-eight thousand square leagues of savannahs extending in a semicircle from north-east to south-west, from the mouths of the Orinoco to the banks of the Caqueta and the Putumayo, beneath the finest sky in the world, and in the land of plantains and bread-fruit trees. The influence of the equinoctial climate, everywhere else so vivifying, is not felt in places where the great associations of gramina almost exclude every other plant. Judging from the aspect of the soil, we might have believed ourselves to be in the temperate zone, and even still farther northward, but that a few scattered palms, and at nightfall the fine constellations of the southern sky (the Centaur, Canopus, and the innumerable nebulae with which the Ship is resplendent), reminded us that we were only eight degrees distant from the equator.

A phenomenon which fixed the attention of De Luc, and

* The fan-palm, or sago-tree of Guiana.

† In calculating from maps on a very large scale, I found the Llanos of Cumana, Barcelona, and Caracas, from the delta of the Orinoco to the northern bank of the Apure, 7,200 square leagues; the Llanos between the Apure and Putumayo, 21,000 leagues; the Pampas on the north-west of Buenos Ayres, 40,000 square leagues; the Pampas south of the parallel of Buenos Ayres, 37,000 square leagues. The total area of the Llanos of South America, covered with gramina, is consequently 105,200 square leagues, twenty leagues to an equatorial degree.