

which in these latter years has furnished a subject of speculation to geologists, occupied us much during our journey across the Llanos. I allude not to those blocks of primitive rock which occur, as in the Jura, on the slope of limestone mountains, but to those enormous blocks of granite and syenite, which, in limits very distinctly marked by nature, are found scattered on the north of Holland, Germany, and the countries of the Baltic. It seems to be now proved, that, distributed as in radii, they came, at the time of the ancient revolutions of our globe, from the Scandinavian peninsula southward; and that they did not primitively belong to the granitic chains of the Harz and Erzgebirg, which they approach, without, however, reaching their foot.\* I was surprised at not seeing one of these blocks in the Llanos of Venezuela, though these immense plains are bounded on the south by the Sierra Parima, a group of mountains entirely granitic, and exhibiting in its denticulated and often columnar peaks traces of the most violent destruction. Northward, the granitic chain of the Silla de Caracas and Porto Cabello are separated from the Llanos by a screen of mountains, that are schistose between Villa de Cura and Parapara, and calcareous between the Bergantin and Caripe. I was no less struck by this absence of blocks on the banks of the Amazon. La Condamine affirms that from the Pongo de Manseriche to the Strait of Pauxis not the smallest stone is to be found. Now the basin of the Rio Negro and of the Amazon is also a Llano, a plain like those of Venezuela and Buenos Ayres. The difference consists only in the state of vegetation. The two Llanos situated at the northern and southern extremities of South America are covered with gramina; they are treeless savannahs; but the intermediate Llano, that of the Amazon, exposed to almost continual equatorial rains, is a thick forest. I do not remember having heard that the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, or the savannahs of the Missouri† and New Mexico, contain granitic blocks. The absence of this phenomenon appears general in the New World, as it probably also is in Sahara, in Africa; for we must not confound the rocky masses that pierce the soil in the midst of

\* Leopold von Buch, *Voyage en Norwège*, vol. i. p. 30.

† Are there any isolated blocks in North America northward of the great lakes?