

vast extent of the new continent between the lake of Nicaragua and lake Ontario. I admit that the United States will contain above eighty millions of inhabitants a hundred years hence, allowing a progressive change in the period of doubling from twenty-five to thirty-five and forty years; but, notwithstanding the elements of prosperity to be found in equinoctial America, I doubt whether the increase of the population in Venezuela, Spanish Guiana, New Grenada and Mexico, can be in general so rapid as in the United States. The latter, which are situated entirely in the temperate zone, destitute of high chains of mountains, embrace an immense extent of country, easy of cultivation. The hordes of Indian hunters flee both from the colonists, whom they abhor, and the methodist missionaries, who oppose their taste for indolence and a vagabond life. The more fertile land of Spanish America produces indeed on the same surface a greater amount of nutritive substances. On the table lands of the equinoctial regions, wheat doubtless yields annually from twenty to twenty-four for one; but Cordilleras furrowed by almost inaccessible crevices, bare and arid steppes, forests that resist both the axe and fire, and an atmosphere filled with venomous insects, will long present powerful obstacles to agriculture and industry. The most active and enterprising colonists cannot, in the mountainous districts of Merida, Antioquia, and Los Pastos, in the llanos of Venezuela and Guaviare, in the forests of the Rio Magdalena, the Orinoco, and the province of Las Esmeraldas, west of Quito, extend their agricultural conquests as they have done in the woody plains westward of the Alleghanies, from the sources of the Ohio, the Tennessee, and the Alabama, as far as the banks of the Missouri and the Arkansas. Calling to mind the account of my voyage on the Orinoco, it may be easy to appreciate the obstacles which nature opposes to the efforts of man in hot and humid climates. In Mexico, large extents of soil are destitute of springs; rain seldom falls, and the want of navigable rivers impedes communication. As the ancient native population is agricultural, and had been so long before the arrival of the Spaniards, the lands most easy of access and cultivation have already their proprietors. Fertile tracts of country, at the disposal of the first occupier,