

V.—PLAINS OF THE RIO DE LA PLATA, AND OF PATAGONIA, from the south-western slope of the group of the Brazil mountains, to the strait of Magellan; from 20° to 53° of latitude. These plains correspond with those of the Mississippi and of Canada in the northern hemisphere. If one of their extremities approaches less nearly to the polar regions, the other enters much further into the region of palm-trees. That part of this vast basin extending from the eastern coast towards the Rio Paraguay, does not present a surface so perfectly smooth as the part situated on the west and the south-east of the Rio de la Plata, and which has been known for ages by the name of Pampas, derived from the Peruvian or Quichua language.* Geognostically speaking, these two regions of east and west form only one basin, bounded on the east by the Sierra de Villarica or do Espinhaço, which loses itself in the Capitania of San Paul, near the parallel of 24° ; issuing on the north-east by little hills, from the Serra da Canastra and the Campos Parecis towards the province of Paraguay; on the west, by the Andes of Upper Peru and Chile; and on the north-west, by the ridge of the partition of the waters which runs from the spur of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, across the plains of the Chiquitos, towards the Serras of Albuquerque (lat. $19^{\circ} 2'$) and San Fernando. That part only of this basin lying on the west of the Rio Paraguay, and which is entirely covered with gramina, is 70,000 square leagues. This surface of the Pampas or Llanos of Manse, Tucuman, Buenos Ayres, and eastern Patagonia, is consequently four times greater than the surface of the whole of France. The Andes of Chile narrow the Pampas by the two spurs of Salta and Cordova; the latter promontory forms so projecting a point, that there remains (lat. 31° – 32°) a plain only 45 leagues broad between the eastern extremity of the Sierra de Cordova and the right bank of the river Paraguay, stretching in the direction of a meridian, from the town of Nueva Coimbra to Rosario, below Santa Fè. Far beyond the southern frontiers of the old vice-royalty of Buenos Ayres, between the Rio Colorado and the

* *Hatan Pampa* signifies in that language, 'a great plain.' We find the word *Pampa* also in Riobamba and Guallabamba; the Spaniards, in order to soften the geographical names, changing the *p* into *b*.