

THE LLANOS.

The third region of the South American plains is that of the Llanos, which occupy 153,000 square miles between the deltas of the Orinoco and the river Coqueta: a sea of grass, unrelieved by mountain billow, and level as the flats of Essex or Lincolnshire. It is possible, we are told, to travel over these flat plains for 1000 miles from the delta of the Orinoco to the foot of the Andes of Pasto; frequently there is not an eminence a foot high in 270 square miles. They are twice as long as they are broad; and as the wind blows constantly from the east, the climate is the more ardent the farther west. The steppes, for the most part, are destitute of trees or bushes, yet in some places they are dotted with the *Mauritia* and other palms. Flat as these plains are, in some places two kinds of inequalities occur: one consisting of banks or shoals of grit or compact limestone, five or six feet high, perfectly level for several leagues, and imperceptible except on their edges; the other inequality can only be detected by the barometer or levelling instruments—it is called a *Mesa*, and forms an eminence rising imperceptibly to the height of some few yards. Small as the elevation is, a *mesa* forms the watershed from S.W. to N.E., between the affluents of the Orinoco and the streams flowing to the northern coast of Terra Firma. In the wet season, from April to the end of October, the tropical rains pour down in torrents, and hundreds of square miles of the llanos are inundated by the floods of the rivers. The water sometimes lies twelve feet deep in the hollows; and here so many horses and other animals perish that the ground smells of musk, an odour peculiar to several South American quadrupeds.

The mean annual temperature of the llanos is about 84° Fahrenheit; the heat is greatest during the rainy season.

THE PRAIRIES.

The immense plains of North America, lying between the Rocky Mountains, west, and the range of the Alleghany, east, and stretching northward to the frozen shore of the Polar Sea, southward to the