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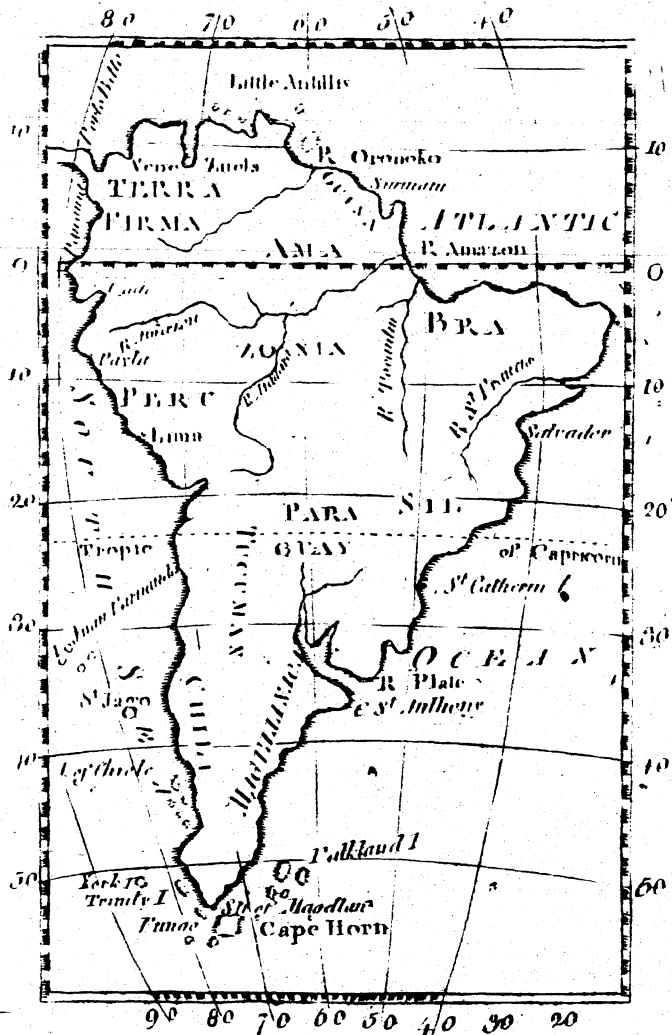
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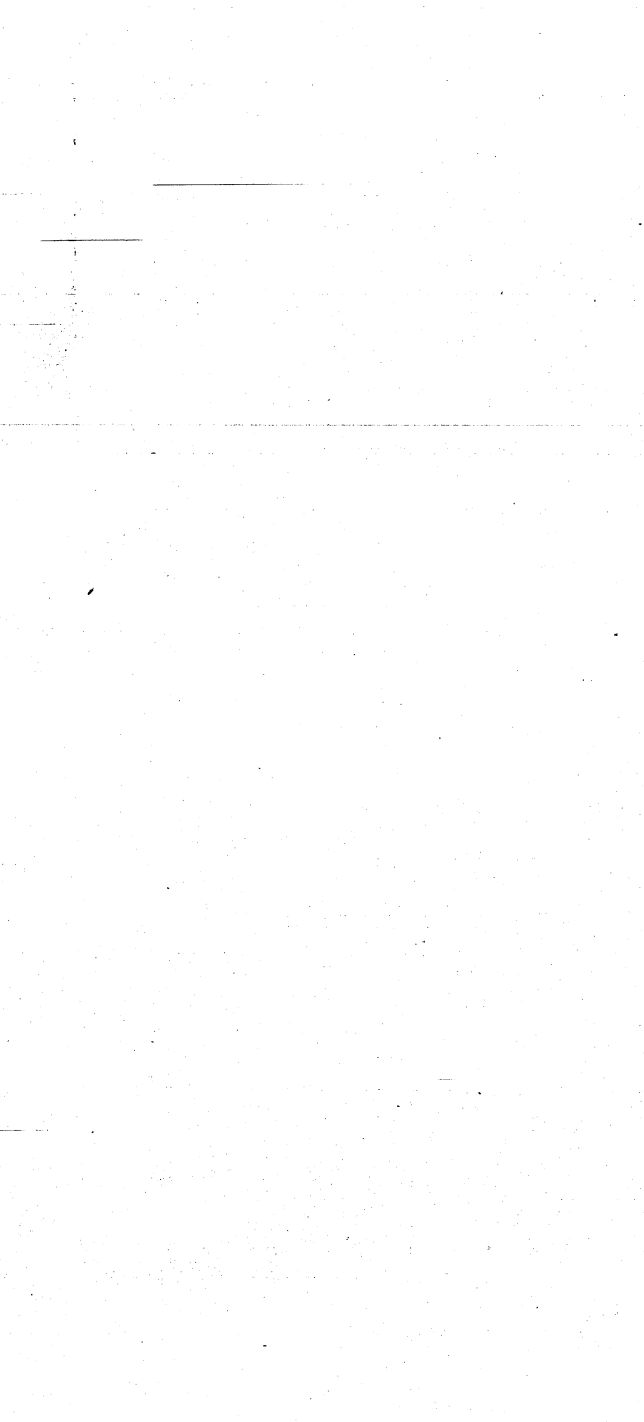
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SOUTH AMERICA





this, together with the excessive heat, so impregnates the air with vapours, that in many provinces, particularly about Popayan and Porto Bello, it is extremely unwholesome.

The soil of this country is very different, the inland parts being exceedingly rich and fertile, and the coasts sandy and barren. It is impossible to view without admiration, the perpetual verdure of the woods, the luxuriance of the plains, and the towering height of the mountains. This country produces corn, sugar, tobacco and fruits of all kinds; the most remarkable is that of the manzanillo tree. It bears a fruit resembling an apple, but which, under this specious appearance, contains the most subtle poison. The bean of Carthage is the fruit of a species of willow about the bigness of a bean, and is an excellent and never failing remedy for the bite of the most venomous serpents, which are very frequent all over this country. Among the natural merchandize of Terra Firma, the pearls found on the coast, particularly in the bay of Panama, are not the least considerable. An immense number of negro slaves are employed in fishing for these, and have arrived at a wonderful dexterity in this occupation. They are sometimes, however, devoured by sharks while they dive to the bottom, or are crushed against the shelves of the rocks.

Animals.] Among the animals peculiar to this country, the most remarkable is the sloth; or, as it is called by way of derision, the *Scurf Peter*. It resembles an ordinary monkey, in shape and size, but is of a most wretched appearance, with its bare hams and feet, and its skin all corrugated. He stands in no need of a chain, as he never stirs, unless compelled by hunger—and he is said to be several minutes in moving one of his legs—nor will blows make him mend his pace. When he moves, every effort is attended with such a plaintive, and, at the same time, so disagreeable a cry, as at once excites pity and disgust. In this cry consists the whole defence of this wretched animal; for on the first hostile approach, it is natural for him to be in motion, which