

had formed. We could rely upon the interest and solicitude of the governor of Cumana, Don Vicente Emparan, as well as on the recommendations of the Franciscan monks, who are in reality masters of the shores of the Orinoco.

Fortunately for us, one of those monks, Juan Gonzales, was at that time in Cumana. This young monk, who was only a lay-brother, was highly intelligent, and full of spirit and courage. He had the misfortune shortly after his arrival on the coast to displease his superiors, upon the election of a new director of the Missions of Piritu, which is a period of great agitation in the convent of New Barcelona. The triumphant party exercised a general retaliation, from which the lay-brother could not escape. He was sent to Esmeralda, the last Mission of the Upper Orinoco, famous for the vast quantity of noxious insects with which the air is continually filled. Fray Juan Gonzales was thoroughly acquainted with the forests which extend from the cataracts towards the sources of the Orinoco. Another revolution in the republican government of the monks had some years before brought him to the coast, where he enjoyed (and most justly) the esteem of his superiors. He confirmed us in our desire of examining the much-disputed bifurcation of the Orinoco. He gave us useful advice for the preservation of our health, in climates where he had himself suffered long from intermitting fevers. We had the satisfaction of finding Fray Juan Gonzales at New Barcelona, on our return from the Rio Negro. Intending to go from the Havannah to Cadiz, he obligingly offered to take charge of part of our herbals, and our insects of the Orinoco; but these collections were unfortunately lost with himself at sea. This excellent young man, who was much attached to us, and whose zeal and courage might have rendered him very serviceable to the missions of his order, perished in a storm on the coast of Africa, in 1801.

The boat which conveyed us from Cumana to La Guayra, was one of those employed in trading between the coasts and the West India Islands. They are thirty feet long, and not more than three feet high at the gunwale; they have no decks, and their burthen is generally from two hundred to two hundred and fifty quintals. Although the sea is extremely rough from Cape Codera to La Guayra, and although