

the waters, the aspect of the sky and the clouds, would lead an experienced navigator to guess whether he were in the Atlantic, in the Mediterranean, or in the equinoctial part of the Pacific.

The wind blew fresh from east-north-east. Its direction was favourable for sailing up the Orinoco, towards the Mission of Encaramada; but our canoes were so ill calculated to resist the shocks of the waves, that, from the violence of the motion, those who suffered habitually at sea were equally incommoded on the river. The short, broken waves are caused by the conflict of the waters at the junction of the two rivers. This conflict is very violent, but far from being so dangerous as Father Gumilla describes. We passed the Punta Curiquima, which is an isolated mass of quartzose granite, a small promontory composed of rounded blocks. There, on the right bank of the Orinoco, Father Rotella founded, in the time of the Jesuits, a Mission of the Palenka and Viriviri or Guire Indians. But during inundations, the rock Curiquima and the village at its foot were entirely surrounded by water; and this serious inconvenience, together the sufferings of the missionaries and Indians from the innumerable quantity of mosquitos and *niguas*,\* led them to forsake this humid spot. It is now entirely deserted, while opposite to it, on the right bank of the river, the little mountains of Coruato are the retreat of wandering Indians, expelled either from the Missions, or from tribes that are not subject to the government of the monks.

Struck with the extreme breadth of the Orinoco, between the mouth of the Apure and the rock Curiquima, I ascertained it by means of a base measured twice on the western beach. The bed of the Orinoco, at low water, was 1906 toises broad; but this breadth increases to 5517 toises, when, in the rainy season, the rock Curiquima, and the farm of Capuchino near the hill of Pocopocori, become islands. The swelling of the Orinoco is augmented by the impulse of the waters of the Apure, which, far from forming, like other rivers, an acute angle with the upper part of that into which it flows, meets it at right angles.

We first proceeded south-west, as far as the shore inhabited

\* The chego (*Pulex penetrans*), which penetrates under the nails of the toes in men and monkeys, and there deposits its eggs.