

the incursions of the Caribs: it was employed also in an offensive war, or, as they say here, in the conquest of souls (*conquista de almas*). The soldiers, excited by the allurements of gain, made military incursions (*entradas*) into the lands of the independent Indians. They killed all those who dared to make any resistance, burnt their huts, destroyed their plantations, and carried away the women, children, and old men, as prisoners. These prisoners were divided among the Missions of the Meta, the Rio Negro, and the Upper Orinoco. The most distant places were chosen, that they might not be tempted to return to their native country. This violent manner of *conquering souls*, though prohibited by the Spanish laws, was tolerated by the civil governors, and vaunted by the superiors of the society, as beneficial to religion, and the aggrandizement of the Missions. "The voice of the Gospel is heard only," said a Jesuit of the Orinoco, very candidly, in the '*Cartas Edifiantes*,' "where the Indians have heard also the sound of fire-arms (*el eco de la polvora*). Mildness is a very slow measure. By chastising the natives, we facilitate their conversion." These principles, which degrade humanity, were certainly not common to all the members of a society which, in the New World, and wherever education has remained exclusively in the hands of monks, has rendered service to letters and civilization. But the *entradas*, the spiritual conquests with the assistance of bayonets, was an inherent vice in a system, that tended to the rapid aggrandizement of the Missions. It is pleasing to find that the same system is not followed by the Franciscan, Dominican, and Augustinian monks who now govern a vast portion of South America; and who, by the mildness or harshness of their manners, exert a powerful influence over the fate of so many thousands of natives. Military incursions are almost entirely abolished; and when they do take place, they are disavowed by the superiors of the orders. We will not decide at present, whether this amelioration of the monachal system be owing to want of activity and cold indolence; or whether it must be attributed, as we would wish to believe, to the progress of knowledge, and to feelings more elevated, and more conformable to the true spirit of Christianity.

Beyond the mouth of the Rio Paruasi, the Orinoco again