

From Cabruta to the mouth of the Rio Sinaruco, a distance of nearly two degrees of latitude, the left bank of the Orinoco is entirely uninhabited; but to the west of the *Raudal de Cariven* an enterprising man, Don Felix Relinchon, had assembled some Jaruro and Ottomac Indians in a small village. It is an attempt at civilization, on which the monks have had no direct influence. It is superfluous to add, that Don Felix lives at open war with the missionaries on the right bank of the Orinoco.

Proceeding up the river we arrived, at nine in the morning, before the mouth of the Meta, opposite the spot where the Mission of Santa Teresa, founded by the Jesuits, was heretofore situated.

Next to the Guaviare, the Meta is the most considerable river that flows into the Orinoco. It may be compared to the Danube, not for the length of its course, but for the volume of its waters. Its mean depth is thirty-six feet, and it sometimes reaches eighty-four. The union of these two rivers presents a very impressive spectacle. Lonely rocks rise on the eastern bank. Blocks of granite, piled upon one another, appear from afar like castles in ruins. Vast sandy shores keep the skirting of the forest at a distance from the river; but we discover amid them, in the horizon, solitary palm-trees, backed by the sky, and crowning the tops of the mountains. We passed two hours on a large rock, standing in the middle of the Orinoco, and called the *Piedra de la Paciencia*, or the Stone of Patience, because the canoes, in going up, are sometimes detained there two days, to extricate themselves from the whirlpool caused by this rock.

The Rio Meta, which traverses the vast plains of Casanare, and which is navigable as far as the foot of the Andes of New Grenada, will one day be of great political importance to the inhabitants of Guiana and Venezuela. From the Golfo Triste and the Boca del Drago a small fleet may go up the Orinoco and the Meta to within fifteen or twenty leagues of Santa Fé de Bogotá. The flour of New Grenada may be conveyed the same way. The Meta is like a canal of communication between countries placed in the same latitude, but differing in their productions as much as France and Senegal. The Meta has its source in the union