

of two rivers which descend from the paramos of Chingasa and Suma Paz. The first is the Rio Negro, which, lower down, receives the Pachaquiario; the second is the Rio de Aguas Blancas, or Umadea. The junction takes place near the port of Marayal. It is only eight or ten leagues from the Passo de la Cabulla, where you quit the Rio Negro, to the capital of Santa Fé. From the villages of Xiramena and Cabullaro to those of Guanapalo and Santa Rosalia de Cabapuna, a distance of sixty leagues, the banks of the Meta are more inhabited than those of the Orinoco. We find in this space fourteen Christian settlements, in part very populous; but from the mouths of the rivers Pauto and Casanare, for a space of more than fifty leagues, the Meta is infested by the Guahibos, a race of savages.\*

The navigation of this river was much more active in the time of the Jesuits, and particularly during the expedition of Iturriaga, in 1756, than it is at present. Missionaries of the same order then governed the banks of the Meta and of the Orinoco. The villages of Macuco, Zurimena, and Casimena, were founded by the Jesuits, as well as those of Uruana, Encaramada, and Carichana.

These Fathers had conceived the project of forming a series of Missions from the junction of the Casanare with the Meta to that of the Meta with the Orinoco. A narrow zone of cultivated land would have crossed the vast steppes that separate the forests of Guiana from the Andes of New Grenada.

At the period of the "harvest of turtles' eggs," not only the flour of Santa Fé descended the river, but the salt of Chita,† the cotton cloth of San Gil, and the printed counterpanes of Socorro. To give some security to the little traders who devoted themselves to this inland commerce, attacks were made from time to time from the *castillo* or fort of Carichana, on the Guahibos.

To keep these Guahibos in awe, the Capuchin missionaries, who succeeded the Jesuits in the government of the

\* I find the word written *Guajibos*, *Guahivos*, and *Guagivos*. They call themselves *Gua-iva*.

† East of Labranza Grande, and the north-west of Pore, now the capital of the province of Casanare.