

These last, situated between five and six degrees of north latitude, and a hundred leagues west of the Cordilleras of New Grenada, in the meridian of Porto Cabello, are only twelve leagues distant from each other. It is surprising that their existence was not known to D'Anville, who, in his fine map of South America, marks the inconsiderable cascades of Marimara and San Borja, by the names of the rapids of Carichana and Tabaje. The Great Cataracts divide the Christian establishments of Spanish Guiana into two unequal parts. Those situated between the *Raudal* of Atures and the mouth of the river are called the Missions of the Lower Orinoco; the Missions of the Upper Orinoco comprehend the villages between the *Raudal* of Maypures and the mountains of Duida. The course of the Lower Orinoco, if we estimate the sinuosities at one-third of the distance in a direct line, is two hundred and sixty nautical leagues: the course of the Upper Orinoco, supposing its sources to be three degrees east of Duida, includes one hundred and sixty-seven leagues.

Beyond the Great Cataracts an unknown land begins. The country is partly mountainous and partly flat, receiving at once the confluents of the Amazon and the Orinoco. From the facility of its communications with the Rio Negro and Grand Para, it appears to belong still more to Brazil than to the Spanish colonies. None of the missionaries who have described the Orinoco before me, neither Father Gumilla, Gili, nor Caulin, had passed the *Raudal* of Maypures. We found but three Christian establishments above the Great Cataracts, along the shores of the Orinoco, in an extent of more than a hundred leagues; and these three establishments contained scarcely six or eight white persons, that is to say, persons of European race. We cannot be surprised that such a desert region should have been at all times the land of fable and fairy visions. There, according to the statements of certain missionaries, are found races of men, some of whom have an eye in the centre of the forehead, whilst others have dogs' heads, and mouths below their stomachs. There they pretend to have found all that the ancients relate of the Garamantes, of the Arimaspes, and of the Hyperboreans. It would be an error to suppose that these simple and often rustic missionaries