

space of thirty-two months only one marriage had been entered in the registers of the parish church. Two others had been contracted by uncatechised natives, and celebrated before the Indian *Gobernador*. At the first foundation of the Mission, the Atures, Maypures, Meyepures, Abanis, and Quirupas, had been assembled together. Instead of these tribes we found only Guahibos, and a few families of the nation of Macos. The Atures have almost entirely disappeared; they are no longer known, except by the tombs in the cavern of Atarupe, which recall to mind the sepulchres of the Guanches at Teneriffe. We learned on the spot, that the Atures, as well as the Quaquas, and the Macos or Piaroas, belong to the great stock of the Salive nations; while the Maypures, the Abanis, the Parenis, and the Guaypuñaves, are of the same race as the Cabres or Caveres, celebrated for their long wars with the Caribs. In this labyrinth of petty nations, divided from one another as the nations of Latium, Asia Minor, and Sogdiana, formerly were, we can trace no general relations but by following the analogy of tongues. These are the only monuments that have reached us from the early ages of the world; the only monuments, which, not being fixed to the soil, are at once moveable and lasting, and have as it were traversed time and space. They owe their duration, and the extent they occupy, much less to conquering and polished nations, than to those wandering and half-savage tribes, who, fleeing before a powerful enemy, carried along with them in their extreme wretchedness only their wives, their children, and the languages of their fathers.

Between the latitudes of 4° and 8° , the Orinoco not only separates the great forest of the Parime from the bare savannahs of the Apure, Meta, and Guaviare, but also forms the boundary between tribes of very different manners. To the westward, over treeless plains, wander the Guahibos, the Chiricoas, and the Guamos; nations, proud of their savage independence, whom it is difficult to fix to the soil, or habituate to regular labour. The Spanish missionaries characterise them well by the name of *Indios andantes* (errant or vagabond Indians), because they are perpetually moving from place to place. To the east of the Orinoco, between the neighbouring sources of the Caura. Cataniapo,