

San Fernando de Atabapo, San Carlos, and San Francisco Solano, are the most considerable settlements among the missions of the Upper Orinoco. At San Fernando, as well as in the neighbouring villages of San Balthasar and Javita, the abodes of the priests are neatly-built houses, covered by lianas, and surrounded by gardens. The tall trunks of the pirijao palms were the most beautiful ornaments of these plantations. In our walks, the president of the mission gave us an animated account of his incursions on the Rio Guaviare. He related to us how much these journeys, undertaken "for the conquest of souls," are desired by the Indians of the missions. All, even women and old men, take part in them. Under the pretext of recovering neophytes who have deserted the village, children above eight or ten years of age are carried off, and distributed among the Indians of the missions as serfs, or *poitos*. According to the astronomical observations I took on the banks of the Atabapo, and on the western declivity of the Cordillera of the Andes, near the *Paramo de la suma Paz*, the distance is one hundred and seven leagues only from San Fernando to the first villages of the provinces of Caguan and San Juan de los Llanos. I was assured also by some Indians, who dwelt formerly to the west of the island of Amanaveni, beyond the confluence of the Rio Supavi, that going in a boat on the Guaviare (in the manner of the savages) beyond the strait (*angostura*) and the principal cataract, they met, at three days' distance, bearded and clothed men, who came in search of the eggs of the terekay turtle. This meeting alarmed the Indians so much, that they fled precipitately, redescending the Guaviare. It is probable, that these bearded white men came from the villages of Aroma and San Martin, the Rio Guaviare being formed by the union of the rivers Ariari and Guayavero. We must not be surprised that the missionaries of the Orinoco and the Atabapo little suspect how near they live to the missionaries of Mocoa, Rio Fragua, and Caguan. In these desert countries, the real distances can be known only by observations of the longitude. It was in consequence of astronomical data, and the information I gathered in the convents of Popayan and of Pasto, to the west of the Cordillera of the Andes, that I formed an accurate idea of the respective