

The Indians, I repeat, are excellent geographers; they outflank the enemy, notwithstanding the limits traced upon the maps, in spite of the forts and the *estacamentos*; and when the missionaries see them arrive from such distances, and in different seasons, they begin to frame hypotheses of supposed communications of rivers. Each party has an interest in concealing what it knows with certainty; and that love of the mysterious, so general among the ignorant, contributes to perpetuate the doubt. It may also be observed that the various Indian nations, who frequent this labyrinth of rivers, give them names entirely different; and that these names are disguised and lengthened by terminations that signify 'water,' 'great water,' and 'current.' How often have I been perplexed by the necessity of settling the synonymes of rivers, when I have sent for the most intelligent natives, to interrogate them, through an interpreter, respecting the number of tributary streams, the sources of the rivers, and the *portages*. Three or four languages being spoken in the same mission, it is difficult to make the witnesses agree. Our maps are loaded with names arbitrarily shortened or perverted. To examine how far they may be accurate, we must be guided by the geographical situation of the confluent rivers, I might almost say by a certain etymological tact. The Rio Uaupe, or Uapes of the Portuguese maps, is the Guapue of the Spanish maps, and the Ucayari of the natives. The Anava of the old geographers is the Anauahu of Arrowsmith, and the Uanauhau or Guanauhu of the Indians. The desire of leaving no void in the maps, in order to give them an appearance of accuracy, has caused rivers to be created, to which names have been applied that have not been recognized as synonymous. It is only lately that travellers in America, in Persia, and in the Indies, have felt the importance of being correct in the denomination of places. When we read the travels of Sir Walter Raleigh, it is difficult indeed to recognise in the 'lake of Mrecabo' the laguna of Maracaybo, and in the 'Marquis Paraco' the name of Pizarro, the destroyer of the empire of the Incas.

The great tributary streams of the Amazon are designated by the missionaries by different names in their upper