

the Iquiare, was the first scene of El Dorado. But where shall we find the names of Yurubesh and Iquiare, given by the Fathers Acunha and Fritz? I think I recognise them in the rivers Urubaxi and Iguari,* on some manuscript Portuguese maps which I possess. I have long and assiduously studied the geography of South America, north of the Amazon, from ancient maps and unpublished materials. Desirous that my work should preserve the character of a scientific performance, I ought not to hesitate about treating of subjects on which I flatter myself that I can throw some light; namely, on the questions respecting the sources of the Rio Negro and the Orinoco, the communication between these rivers and the Amazon, and the problem of the auriferous soil, which has cost the inhabitants of the New World so much suffering and so much blood.

In the distribution of the waters circulating on the surface of the globe, as well as in the structure of organic bodies, nature has pursued a much less complicated plan than has been believed by those who have suffered themselves to be guided by vague conceptions and a taste for the marvellous. We find, too, that all anomalies, all the exceptions to the laws of hydrography, which the interior of America displays, are merely apparent; that the course of running waters furnishes phenomena equally extraordinary in the old world, but that these phenomena, from their littleness, have less struck the imagination of travellers. When immense rivers may be considered as composed of several parallel furrows of unequal depth; when these rivers are not enclosed in valleys; and when the interior of the great continent is as flat as the shores of the sea with us; the ramifications, the bifurcations, and the interlacings in the form of net-work, must be infinitely multiplied. From what we know of the equilibrium of the seas, I cannot think that the New World issued from the waters later than the Old, and that organic life is there younger, or more recent; but without admitting oppositions between the

* It may be written Urubaji. The *j* and the *x* were the same as the German *ch* to Father Fritz. The Urubaxi, or Hyurubaxi (Yurubesh), falls into the Rio Negro near Santa Isabella; the Iguari (Iquiare?) runs into the Issana, which is also a tributary of the Rio Negro.