

*prata*, is manifestly borrowed from the Spanish.\* The notions collected by Acunha, Father Fritz, and La Condamine, on the gold-washings south and north of the river Uaupe, agree with what I learnt of the auriferous soil of those countries. However great we may suppose the communications that took place between the nations of the Orinoco before the arrival of Europeans, they certainly did not draw their gold from the eastern declivity of the Cordilleras. This declivity is poor in mines, particularly in mines anciently worked; it is almost entirely composed of volcanic rocks in the provinces of Popayan, Pasto, and Quito. The gold of Guiana probably came from the country east of the Andes. In our days a lump of gold has been found in a ravine near the mission of Encaramada, and we must not be surprised if, since Europeans settled in these wild spots, we hear less of the plates of gold, gold-dust, and amulets of jade-stone, which could heretofore be obtained from the Caribs and other wandering nations by barter. The precious metals, never very abundant on the banks of the Orinoco, the Rio Negro, and the Amazon, disappeared almost entirely when the system of the missions caused the distant communications between the natives to cease.

The banks of the Upper Guainia in general abound much less in fishing-birds than those of Cassiquiare, the Meta, and the Auraca, where ornithologists would find sufficient to enrich immensely the collections of Europe. This scarcity of animals arises, no doubt, from the want of shoals and flat shores, as well as from the quality of the black waters, which (on account of their very purity) furnish less aliment to aquatic insects and fish. However, the Indians of these countries, during two periods of the year, feed on birds of passage, which repose in their long

\* The Parecas say, instead of *prata*, *rata*. It is the Castilian word *plata* ill-pronounced. Near the Yurubesh there is another inconsiderable tributary stream of the Rio Negro, the *Curicur-iari*. It is easy to recognize in this name the Caribbee word *carucur*, gold. The Caribs extended their incursions from the mouth of the Orinoco south-west toward the Rio Negro; and it was this restless people who carried the fable of El Dorado, by the same way, but in an opposite direction (from south-west to north-east), from the Mesopotamia between the Rio Negro and the Jupura to the sources of the Rio Branco.