

Portuguese went up most frequently by the Amazon, the Rio Negro, and the Cassiquiare, and when Father Gumilla's letters were carried (by the natural interbranching of the rivers) from the lower Orinoco to Grand Para, that very missionary made every effort to spread the opinion through Europe that the basins of the Orinoco and the Amazon are perfectly separate. He asserts that, having several times gone up the former of these rivers as far as the Raudal of Tabaje, situate in the latitude of $1^{\circ} 4'$, he never saw a river flow in or out that could be taken for the Rio Negro. He adds further, that "a great Cordillera, which stretches from east to west, prevents the mingling of the waters, and renders all discussion on the supposed communication of the two rivers useless." The errors of Father Gumilla arose from his firm persuasion that he had reached the parallel of $1^{\circ} 4'$ on the Orinoco. He was in error by more than $5^{\circ} 10'$ of latitude; for I found, by observation, at the mission of Atures, thirteen leagues south of the rapids of Tabaje, the latitude to be $5^{\circ} 37' 34''$. Gumilla having gone but little above the confluence of the Meta, it is not surprising that he had no knowledge of the bifurcation of the Orinoco, which is found by the sinuosities of the river to be one hundred and twenty leagues distant from the Raudal of Tabaje.

La Condamine, during his memorable navigation on the river Amazon in 1743, carefully collected a great number of proofs of this communication of the rivers, denied by the Spanish Jesuit. The most decisive proof then appeared to him to be the unsuspected testimony of a Cauriacani Indian woman with whom he had conversed, and who had come in a boat from the banks of the Orinoco (from the mission of Pararuma) to Grand Para. Before the return of La Condamine to his own country, the voyage of Father Manuel Roman, and the fortuitous meeting of the missionaries of the Orinoco and the Amazon, left no doubt of this fact, the knowledge of which was first obtained by Acunha.

The incursions undertaken from the middle of the seventeenth century, to procure slaves, had gradually led the Portuguese from the Rio Negro, by the Cassiquiare, to the bed of a great river, which they did not know to be the Upper Orinoco. A flying camp, composed of the troop of