

Rio Negro, to carry off slaves and exercise pillage, compelled some rude tribes to rouse themselves from their indolence, and form associations for their common defence: the little good, however, which these wars with the Caribs (the Bedouins of the rivers of Guiana) produced, was but slight compensation for the evils that followed in their train, by rendering the tribes more ferocious, and diminishing their population. We cannot doubt, that the physical aspect of Greece, intersected by small chains of mountains, and mediterranean gulfs, contributed, at the dawn of civilization, to the intellectual development of the Greeks. But the operation of this influence of climate, and of the configuration of the soil, is felt in all its force only among a race of men who, endowed with a happy organization of the mental faculties, are susceptible of exterior impulse. In studying the history of our species, we see, at certain distances, these foci of ancient civilization dispersed over the globe like luminous points; and we are struck by the inequality of improvement in nations inhabiting analogous climates, and whose native soil appears equally favoured by the most precious gifts of nature.

Since my departure from the banks of the Orinoco and the Amazon, a new era has unfolded itself in the social state of the nations of the West. The fury of civil discussions has been succeeded by the blessings of peace, and a freer development of the arts of industry. The bifurcations of the Orinoco, the isthmus of Tuamini, so easy to be made passable by an artificial canal, will ere long fix the attention of commercial Europe. The Cassiquiare, as broad as the Rhine, and the course of which is one hundred and eighty miles in length, will no longer form uselessly a navigable canal between two basins of rivers which have a surface of one hundred and ninety thousand square leagues. The grain of New Grenada will be carried to the banks of the Rio Negro; boats will descend from the sources of the Napo and the Ucayabe, from the Andes of Quito and of Upper Peru, to the mouths of the Orinoco, a distance which equals that from Timbuctoo to Marseilles. A country nine or ten times larger than Spain, and enriched with the most varied productions, is navigable in every direction by the medium of the natural canal of the Cassiquiare, and the bifurcation