

by the name of Parima.* Here, as in several other countries of Spanish America, the savages have reconquered what had been wrested from them by civilization, or rather by its precursors, the missionaries. The expedition of the boundaries under Solano, and the extravagant zeal displayed by a governor of Guiana for the discovery of El Dorado, partially revived in the latter half of the eighteenth century that spirit of enterprise which characterised the Spaniards at the period of the discovery of America. In going along the Rio Padamo, a road was observed across the forests and savannahs (the length of ten days' journey), from Esmeralda to the sources of the Ventuari; and in two days more, from those sources, by the Erevato, the missions on the Rio Caura were reached. Two intelligent and enterprising men, Don Antonio Santos and Captain Bareto, had established, with the aid of the Miquiritares, a chain of military posts on this line from Esmeralda to the Rio Erevato. These posts consisted of block-houses (*casas fuertes*), mounted with swivels, such as I have already mentioned. The soldiers, left to themselves, exercised all kinds of vexations on the natives (*Indians of peace*), who had cultivated pieces of ground around the *casas fuertes*; and the consequence was that, in 1776, several tribes formed a league against the Spaniards. All the military posts were attacked on the same night, on a line of nearly fifty leagues in length. The houses were burnt, and many soldiers massacred; a very small number only owing their preservation to the pity of the Indian women. This nocturnal expedition is still mentioned with horror. It was concerted in the most profound secrecy, and executed with that spirit of unity which the natives of America, skilled in concealing their hostile passions, well know how to practise in whatever concerns their common interests. Since 1776 no attempt has been made to re-establish the road which leads by land from the Upper to the Lower Orinoco, and no white man has been able to pass from Esmeralda to the

* The name Parima, which signifies *water, great water*, is applied sometimes, and more especially, to the land washed by the Rio Parima, or Rio Branco (*Rio de Aguas Blancas*), a stream running into the Rio Negro; sometimes to the mountains (Sierra Parima), which divide the Upper and Lower Orinoco.