

vallations, that remind us of the fortified camps (the pretended cities of vast extent) of the ancient and modern nomad tribes of Asia. In the oriental plains of South America, the force of vegetation, the heat of the climate, and the too lavish gifts of nature, have opposed obstacles still more powerful to the progress of human civilization. Between the Orinoco and the Amazon I heard no mention of any wall of earth, vestige of a dyke, or sepulchral tumulus; the rocks alone show us (and this through a great extent of country), rude sketches which the hand of man has traced in times unknown, and which are connected with religious traditions.

Before I quitted the wildest part of the Upper Orinoco, I thought it desirable to mention facts which are important only when they are considered in their connection with each other. All I could relate of our navigation from Esmeralda to the mouth of the Atabapo would be merely an enumeration of rivers and uninhabited places. From the 24th to the 27th of May, we slept but twice on land; our first resting-place was at the confluence of the Rio Jao, and our second below the mission of Santa Barbara, in the island of Minisi. The Orinoco being free from shoals, the Indian pilot pursued his course all night, abandoning the boat to the current of the river. Setting apart the time which we spent on the shore in preparing the rice and plantains that served us for food, we took but thirty-five hours in going from Esmeralda to Santa Barbara. The chronometer gave me for the longitude of the latter mission  $70^{\circ} 3'$ ; we had therefore made near four miles an hour, a velocity which was partly owing to the current, and partly to the action of the oars. The Indians assert, that the crocodiles do not go up the Orinoco above the mouth of the Rio Jao, and that the manatis are not even found above the cataract of Maypures.

The mission of Santa Barbara is situated a little to the west of the mouth of the Rio Ventuari, or Venituari, examined in 1800 by Father Francisco Valor. We found in this small village of one hundred and twenty inhabitants some traces of industry; but the produce of this industry is of little profit to the natives; it is reserved for the monks, or, as they say in these countries, for the church and the con-