

the house before he could save these productions of the industry of the Curacicanas. The neophytes of Santa Barbara, who think themselves very superior to these supposed savages, appeared to me far less industrious. The Rio Manipiare, one of the principal branches of the Ventuari, approaches near its source those lofty mountains, the northern ridge of which gives birth to the Cuchivero. It is a prolongation of the chain of Baraguan; and there Father Gili places the table-land of Siamacu, of which he vaunts the temperate climate. The upper course of the Rio Ventuari, beyond the confluence of the Asisi, and the Great Raudales, is almost unknown. I was informed only, that the Upper Ventuari bends so much towards the east that the ancient road from Esmeralda to the Rio Caura crosses the bed of the river. The proximity of the tributary streams of the Carony, the Caura, and the Ventuari, has facilitated for ages the access of the Caribs to the banks of the Upper Orinoco. Bands of this warlike and trading people went up from the Rio Carony, by the Paragua, to the sources of the Paruspa. A portage conducted them to the Chavarro, an eastern tributary stream of the Rio Caura; they descended with their canoes first this stream, and then the Caura itself, as far as the mouth of the Erevato. After having gone up this last river south-west, and traversed vast savannahs for three days, they entered by the Manipiare into the great Rio Ventuari. I trace this road with precision, not only because it was that by which the traffic of native slaves was carried on, but also to call the attention of those, who at some future day may rule the destiny of Guiana, to the high importance of this labyrinth of rivers.

It is by the four largest tributary streams, which the majestic river of the Orinoco receives on the right, (the Carony, the Caura, the Padamo, and the Ventuari,) that European civilization will one day penetrate into this region of forests and mountains, which has a surface of ten thousand six hundred square leagues, and which is bounded by the Orinoco on the north, the west, and the south. The Capuchins of Catalonia and the Observantins of Andalusia and Valencia, have already made settlements in the vallies of the Carony and the Caura. The tributary streams of the Lower Orinoco, being the nearest to the coast and to the