

cultivated region of Venezuela, were naturally the first to receive missionaries, and with them some germs of social life. Corresponding to the Carony and the Caura, which flow toward the north, are two great tributary streams of the Upper Orinoco, that send their waters toward the south; these are the Padamo and the Ventuari. No village has hitherto risen on their banks, though they offer advantages for agriculture and pasturage, which would be sought in vain in the valley of the immense river to which they are tributary. In the centre of these wild countries, where there will long be no other road than the rivers, every project of civilization should be founded on an intimate knowledge of the hydraulic features of the country, and the relative importance of the tributary streams.

In the morning of the 26th of May we left the little village of Santa Barbara, where we found several Indians of Esmeralda, who had come reluctantly, by order of the missionary, to construct for him a house of two stories. During the whole day we enjoyed the view of the fine mountains of Sipapo, which rise at a distance of more than eighteen leagues in the direction of north-north-west. The vegetation of the banks of the Orinoco is singularly varied in this part of the country; the aborescent ferns* descend from the mountains, and mingle with the palm-trees of the plain. We rested that night on the island of Minisi; and, after having passed the mouths of the little rivers Quejanuma, Ubuá, and Masao, we arrived, on the 27th of May, at San Fernando de Atabapo. We lodged in the same house which we had occupied a month previously, when going up the Rio Negro. We then directed our course towards the south, by the Atabapo and the Temi; we were now returning from the west, having made a long circuit by the Cassiquiare and the Upper Orinoco.

We remained only one day at San Fernando de Atabapo, although that village, adorned as it was by the pirijao palm-tree, with fruit like peaches, appeared to us a delicious

* The geographical distribution of these plants is extremely singular. Scarcely any are found on the eastern coast of Brazil. (See the interesting work of Prince Maximilian of Neuwied, "Reise nach Brasilien," vol. I p. 274.)