

more distant from the shore, and called Tecoma, the symbolic figures are found, it is said, at the height of a hundred feet. The Indians knew heretofore a road, that led by land from Caycara to Demerara and Essequibo.

On the northern bank of the Orinoco, opposite Caycara, is the mission of Cabruta, founded by the Jesuit Rotella, in 1740, as an advanced post against the Caribs. An Indian village, known by the name of Cabritu,* had existed on the same spot for several ages. At the time when this little place became a Christian settlement, it was believed to be situate in 5° latitude, or two degrees forty minutes more to the south than I found it by direct observations made at San Rafael, and at la Boca del Rio Apure. No idea was then conceived of the direction of a road that could lead by land to Nueva Valencia and Caracas, which were supposed to be at an immense distance. The merit of having first crossed the Llanos, to go to Cabruta, from the Villa de San Juan Baptista del Pao belongs to a woman. Father Gili relates, that Doña Maria Vargas was so devoted to the Jesuits, that she attempted herself to discover the way to the missions. She was seen with astonishment to arrive at Cabruta from the north. She took up her abode near the fathers of St. Ignatius, and died in their settlements on the banks of the Orinoco. Since that period, the northern part of the Llanos has been considerably peopled; and the road leading from the valleys of Aragua by Calabozo to San Fernando de Apure and Cabruta, is much frequented. The chief of the famous expedition of the boundaries made choice of the latter place in 1754, to establish dock-yards for building the vessels necessary for conveying his troops intended for the Upper Orinoco. The little mountain, that rises north-east of Cabruta, can be discerned from afar in the steppes, and serves as a landmark for travellers.

We embarked in the morning at Caycara; and driving with the current of the Orinoco, we soon passed the mouth of the Rio Cuchivero, which according to ancient tradition is the country of the *Aikeambenanos*, or women without husbands; and we there reached the paltry village of Alta Gracia, which is called a Spanish town. It was near this place, that

* A cacique of *Cabritu* received Alonzo de Herrera at his dwelling, on the expedition undertaken by Herrera for ascending the Orinoco in 1535.