

coast, will some day offer the greatest attraction to European settlers.

The whole population of this vast province in its present state is, with the exception of a few Spanish parishes, scattered on the banks of the Lower Orinoco, and subject to two monastic governments. Estimating the number of the inhabitants of Guiana, who do not live in savage independence, at thirty-five thousand, we find nearly twenty-four thousand settled in the missions, and thus withdrawn as it were from the direct influence of the secular arm. At the period of my voyage, the territory of the Observantin monks of St. Francis contained seven thousand three hundred inhabitants, and that of the *Capuchinos Catalanes* seventeen thousand; an astonishing disproportion, when we reflect on the smallness of the latter territory compared to the vast banks of the Upper Orinoco, the Atabapo, the Cassiquiare, and the Rio Negro. It results from these statements that nearly two-thirds of the population of a province of sixteen thousand eight hundred square leagues are found concentrated between the Rio Imataca and the town of Santo Thomé del Angostura, on a space of ground only fifty-five leagues in length, and thirty in breadth. Both of these monastic governments are equally inaccessible to Whites, and form *status in statu*. The first, that of the Observantins, I have described from my own observations; it remains for me to record here the notions I could procure respecting the second of these governments, that of the Catalonian Capuchins. Fatal civil dissensions and epidemic fevers have of late years diminished the long-increasing prosperity of the missions of the Carony; but, notwithstanding these losses, the region which we are going to examine is still highly interesting with respect to political economy.

The missions of the Catalonian Capuchins, which in 1804 contained at least sixty thousand head of cattle grazing in the savannahs, extend from the eastern banks of the Carony and the Paragua as far as the banks of the Imataca, the Curumu, and the Cuyuni; at the south-east they border on English Guiana, or the colony of Essequibo; and toward the south, in going up the desert banks of the Paragua and the Paraguamasi, and crossing the Cordillera of Pacaraimo,