

The monks, who like to keep themselves isolated, in order to withdraw from the eye of the secular power, have been hitherto unwilling to settle on the banks of the Orinoco. It is, however, by this river only, or by the Cuyuni and the Essequibo, that the missions of Carony can export their productions. The latter way has not yet been tried, though several Christian settlements* are formed on one of the principal tributary streams of the Cuyuni, the Rio Juruario. This stream furnishes, at the period of the great swellings, the remarkable phenomenon of a bifurcation. It communicates by the Juraricuima and the Aurapa with the Rio Carony; so that the land comprised between the Orinoco, the sea, the Cuyuni, and the Carony, becomes a real island. Formidable rapids impede the navigation of the Upper Cuyuni; and hence of late an attempt has been made to open a road to the colony of Essequibo much more to the south-east, in order to fall in with the Cuyuni much below the mouth of the Curumu.

The whole of this southern territory is traversed by hordes of independent Caribs; the feeble remains of that warlike people who were so formidable to the missionaries till 1733 and 1735, at which period the respectable bishop Gervais de Labrid,† canon of the metropolitan chapter of Lyon, Father Lopez, and several other ecclesiastics, perished by the hands of the Caribs. These dangers, too frequent formerly, exist no longer, either in the missions of Carony, or in those of the Orinoco; but the independent Caribs continue, on account of their connection with the Dutch colonists of Essequibo, an object of mistrust and hatred to the government of Guiana. These tribes favour the contraband trade along the coast, and by the channels or estuaries that join the Rio Barima to the Rio Moroca; they carry off the cattle belonging to the missionaries, and excite the Indians recently converted, and living "within the sound of the bell," to return to the forests. The free hordes have everywhere a powerful interest in opposing the progress

* Guacipati, Tupuquen, Angel de la Custodia, and Cura, where the military post of the frontiers was stationed in 1800, which had been anciently placed at the confluence of the Cuyuni and the Curumu.

† Consecrated a bishop for the four parts of the world (obispo para las quatro partes del mundo) by pope Benedict XIII.