

this vast extent of forests, savannahs, and mountains, the progress of those who sought the great lake with auriferous banks, and the town of 'the gilded king,' was directed towards two points only, on the north-east and south-west of the Rio Negro; that is, to Parima (or the isthmus between the Carony, the Essequibo, and the Rio Branco), and to the ancient abode of the Manaos, the inhabitants of the banks of the Yurubesh. I have just mentioned the situation of the latter spot, which is celebrated in the history of the conquest from 1535 to 1560; and it remains for me to speak of the configuration of the country between the Spanish missions of the Rio Carony, and the Portuguese missions of the Rio Branco or Parima. This is the country lying near the Lower Orinoco, the Esmeralda, and French and Dutch Guiana, on which, since the end of the sixteenth century, the enterprises and exaggerated narratives of Raleigh have shed so bright a splendour.

From the general disposition of the course of the Orinoco, directed successively towards the west, the north, and the east, its mouth lies almost in the same meridian as its sources: so that by proceeding from *Vieja Guyana* to the south the traveller passes through the whole of the country in which geographers have successively placed an inland sea (Mar Blanco), and the different lakes which are connected with the *El Dorado de la Parime*. We find first the Rio Carony, which is formed by the union of two branches of almost equal magnitude, the Carony properly so called, and the Rio Paragua. The missionaries of Piritu call the latter river a lake (laguna): it is full of shoals, and little cascades; but, "passing through a country entirely flat, it is subject at the same time to great inundations, and its real bed (su verdadera caxa) can scarcely be discovered." The natives have given it the name of Paragua or Parava, which means in the Caribbee language 'sea,' or 'great lake.' These local circumstances and this denomination no doubt have given rise to the idea of transforming the Rio Paragua, a tributary stream of the Carony, into a lake called Cassipa, on account of the Cassipagotos,* who lived in those coun-

* *Raleigh*, p. 64, 69. I always quote, when the contrary is not ex-