

THE GRANITES OF GUIANA.

trade with more southern nations; but nothing indicates that they ever constructed an edifice of stone. We saw no vestige of any during the course of our journey.

Though the celebrity of the riches of Spanish Guiana is chiefly assignable to the geographical situation of the country, and the errors of the old maps, we are not justified in denying the existence of any auriferous land in the tract of country of eighty-two thousand square leagues, which stretches between the Orinoco and the Amazon, on the east of the Andes of Quito and New Granada. What I saw of this country between the second and eighth degrees of latitude, and the sixty-sixth and seventy-first degrees of longitude, is entirely composed of granite, and of a gneiss passing into micaceous and talcous slate. These rocks appear naked in the lofty mountains of Parima, as well as in the plains of the Atabapo and the Cassiquiare. Granite predominates there over the other rocks; and though, in both continents, the *granite of ancient formation* is pretty generally destitute of gold-ore, we cannot thence conclude that the granite of Parima contains no vein, no stratum of auriferous quartz. On the east of the Cassiquiare, towards the sources of the Orinoco, we observed that the number of these strata and these veins increased. The granite of these countries, by its structure, its mixture of hornblende, and other geological features alike important, appears to me to belong to a more recent formation, perhaps posterior to the gneiss, and analogous to the stanniferous granites, the hyalomictes, and the pegmatites. Now the least ancient granites are also the least destitute of metals; and several auriferous rivers and torrents in the Andes, in the Salzburg, Fichtelgebirge, and the table-land of the two Castiles, lead us to believe that these granites sometimes contain native gold, and portions of auriferous pyrites and galena disseminated throughout the whole rock, as is the case with tin and magnetic and micaceous iron. The group of the mountains of Parima, several summits of which attain the height of one thousand three hundred toises, was almost entirely unknown before our visit to the Orinoco. This group, however, is a hundred leagues long, and eighty broad; and though wherever M. Bonpland and I traversed this vast group of mountains, its structure seemed to us extremely uniform, it would be wrong to affirm