

action of volcanic force, the changes in the direction of currents, and the consequent swelling of the waters, are very different from the effects manifested at once over the space of several hundred square leagues.

IV. GROUP OF THE MOUNTAINS OF PARIME.—It is essential to mineralogical geography, to designate by one name all the mountains that form one system. To attain this end, a denomination belonging to a partial group only may be extended over the whole chain; or a name may be employed, which, by reason of its novelty, is not likely to give rise to homogenic mistakes. Mountaineers designate every group by a special denomination; and a chain is generally considered as forming a whole only when it is seen from afar bounding the horizon of the plains. We find the name of 'snowy mountains' (Himalaya, Imaus) repeated in every zone, 'white' (Alpes, Alb), 'black,' and 'blue.' The greater part of the Sierra Parime is, as it were, edged round by the Orinoco. I have, however, avoided a denomination having reference to this circumstance, because the group of mountains to which I am about to direct attention extends far beyond the banks of the Orinoco. It stretches south-east, towards the banks of the Rio Negro and the Rio Branco, to the parallel of $1\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north latitude. The geographical name of Parime has the advantage of reviving recollections of the fable of El Dorado, and the lofty mountains which, in the sixteenth century, were supposed to surround the lake Rupunuwini, or the Laguna de Parime. The missionaries of the Orinoco still give the name of Parime to the whole of the vast mountainous country comprehended between the sources of the Erevato, the Orinoco, the Caroni, the Rio Parime* (a tributary of the Rio Branco), and the Rupunuri or Rupunuwini, a tributary of the Rio Essequibo. This country is one of the least known parts of South America, and is covered with thick forests and savannahs; it is inhabited by independent Indians, and is intersected by rivers of dangerous navigation, owing to the frequency of shoals and cataracts.

* The Rio Parime, after receiving the waters of the Uraricuera, joins the acutu, and forms, near the fort of San Joaquin, the Rio Branco, one of the tributary streams of the Rio Negro.