

of waters is formed by the mountains of the Parime group; it first rises a little on the north-east towards the sources of the Orinoco (lat. $3^{\circ} 45'$?) and the chain of Pacaraina (lat. $4^{\circ} 4' - 4^{\circ} 12'$); then, during a course of 80 leagues, between the portage of the Anocapra and the banks of the Rupunuri, it runs very regularly from west to east; and finally, beyond the meridian $61^{\circ} 50'$, it again deviates towards lower latitudes, passing between the northern sources of the Rio Suriname, the Maroni, the Oyapoc, and the southern sources of Rio Trombetas, Curupatuba, and Paru (lat. $2^{\circ} - 1^{\circ} 50'$). These facts suffice to prove that this first line of partition of the waters of South America (that of the northern hemisphere) traverses the whole continent between the parallels of 2° and 4° . The Cassiquiare alone has cut its way across the ridge just described. The hydraulic system of the Orinoco displays the singular phenomenon of a bifurcation where the limit of two basins (those of the Orinoco and the Rio Negro) crosses the bed of the principal recipient. In that part of the basin of the Orinoco which runs in the direction of from south to north, as well as in that running from west to east, the maxima of depression are found at the foot of the Sierra Parime, we may even say, on its outline.

IV.—THE BASIN OF THE RIO NEGRO AND THE AMAZON. This is the central and largest basin of South America. It is exposed to frequent equatorial rains, and the hot and humid climate develops a force of vegetation to which nothing in the two continents can be compared. The central basin, bounded on the north by the Parime group, and on the south by the mountains of Brazil, is entirely covered by thick forests, while the two basins at the extremities of the continent (the Llanos of Venezuela and the Lower Orinoco, and the Pampas of Buenos Ayres or the Rio de la Plata) are savannahs or prairies, plains without trees and covered with gramina. This symmetric distribution of savannahs bounded by impenetrable forests, must be connected with physical revolutions which have operated simultaneously over great surfaces.

(a.)—*Part of the basin of the Amazon, running from east to west, between 2° north and 12° south; 880 leagues in length.*