

recesses of the cavern. "Man," say they, "should avoid places which are enlightened neither by the sun (zis), nor by the moon (nuna)." "To go and join the guacharos," is with them a phrase signifying to rejoin their fathers, to die. The magicians (piaches) and the poisoners (imorons) perform their nocturnal tricks at the entrance of the cavern, to conjure the chief of the evil spirits (ivorokiamo). Thus in every region of the earth a resemblance may be traced in the early fictions of nations, those especially which relate to two principles governing the world, the abode of souls after death, the happiness of the virtuous and the punishment of the guilty. The most different and most barbarous languages present a certain number of images, which are the same, because they have their source in the nature of our intelligence and our sensations. Darkness is everywhere connected with the idea of death. The Grotto of Caripe is the Tartarus of the Greeks; and the guacharos, which hover over the rivulet, uttering plaintive cries, remind us of the Stygian birds.

At the point where the river forms the subterranean cascade, a hill covered with vegetation, which is opposite to the opening of the grotto, presents a very picturesque aspect. It is seen at the extremity of a straight passage, 240 toises in length. The stalactites descending from the roof, and resembling columns suspended in the air, are relieved on a back-ground of verdure. The opening of the cavern appeared singularly contracted, when we saw it about the middle of the day, illumined by the vivid light reflected at once from the sky, the plants, and the rocks. The distant light of day formed a strange contrast with the darkness which surrounded us in the vast cavern. We discharged our guns at a venture, wherever the cries of the nocturnal birds and the flapping of their wings, led us to suspect that a great number of nests were crowded together. After several fruitless attempts M. Bonpland succeeded in killing a couple of guacharos, which, dazzled by the light of the torches, seemed to pursue us. This circumstance afforded me the means of making a drawing of this bird, which had previously been unknown to naturalists. We climbed, not without difficulty, the small hill whence the subterranean rivulet descends. We saw that the grotto was perceptibly