

nearly to the confluence of the Rio Suapure. From these granite mountains the natives heretofore gave the name of Baraguan to that part of the Orinoco comprised between the mouths of the Arauca and the Atabapo. Among savage nations great rivers bear different denominations in the different portions of their course. The Passage of Baraguan presents a picturesque scene. The granite rocks are perpendicular. They form a range of mountains lying north-west and south-east; and the river cutting this dyke nearly at a right angle, the summits of the mountains appear like separate peaks. Their elevation in general does not surpass one hundred and twenty toises; but their situation in the midst of a small plain, their steep declivities, and their flanks destitute of vegetation, give them a majestic character. They are composed of enormous masses of granite of a parallelopipedal figure, but rounded at the edges, and heaped one upon another. The blocks are often eighty feet long, and twenty or thirty broad. They would seem to have been piled up by some external force, if the proximity of a rock identical in its composition, not separated into blocks but filled with veins, did not prove that the parallelopipedal form is owing solely to the action of the atmosphere. These veins, two or three inches thick, are distinguished by a fine-grained quartz-granite crossing a coarse-grained granite almost porphyritic, and abounding in fine crystals of red feldspar. I sought in vain, in the Cordillera of Baraguan, for hornblende, and those steatitic masses that characterise several granites of the Higher Alps in Switzerland.

We landed in the middle of the strait of Baraguan to measure its breadth. The rocks project so much towards the river that I measured with difficulty a base of eighty toises. I found the river eight hundred and eighty-nine toises broad. In order to conceive how this passage bears the name of a strait, we must recollect that the breadth of the river from Uruana to the junction of the Meta is in general from 1500 to 2500 toises. In this place, which is extremely hot and barren, I measured two granite summits, much rounded: one was only a hundred and ten, and the other eighty-five, toises. There are higher summits in the