

animated, strikes the imagination of the traveller when he enters the basin of the Mediterranean, within the zone of olives, dwarf palms, and date-trees.

We passed the night on the eastern bank of the Orinoco, at the foot of a granitic hill. Near this desert spot was formerly seated the Mission of San Regis. We could have wished to find a spring in the Baraguan, for the water of the river had a smell of musk, and a sweetish taste extremely disagreeable. In the Orinoco, as well as in the Apure, we are struck with the difference observable in the various parts of the river near the most barren shore. The water is sometimes very drinkable, and sometimes seems to be loaded with a slimy matter. "It is the bark (meaning the coriaceous covering) of the putrified cayman that is the cause," say the natives. "The more aged the cayman, the more *bitter is his bark.*" I have no doubt that the carcasses of these large reptiles, those of the manatis, which weigh five hundred pounds, and the presence of the porpoises (toninas) with their mucilaginous skin, may contaminate the water, especially in the creeks, where the river has little velocity. Yet the spots where we found the most fetid water, were not always those where dead animals were accumulated on the beach. When, in such burning climates, where we are constantly tormented by thirst, we are reduced to drink the water of a river at the temperature of 27° or 28°, we cannot help wishing at least that water so hot, and so loaded with sand, should be free from smell.

On the 8th of April we passed the mouths of the Suapure or Sivapuri, and the Caripo, on the east, and the outlet of the Sinaruco on the west. This last river is, next to the Rio Arauca, the most considerable between the Apure and the Meta. The Suapure, full of little cascades, is celebrated among the Indians for the quantity of wild honey obtained from the forests in its neighbourhood. The melipones there suspend their enormous hives to the branches of trees. Father Gili, in 1766, made an excursion on the Suapure, and on the Turiva, which falls into it. He there found tribes of the nation of Areverians. We passed the night a little below the island Macapina.

Early on the following morning we arrived at the beach of Pararuma, where we found an encampment of Indians.