

end those records of nature, that it is in our power to consult. We are ignorant whether the human race, which at the time of the discovery of America scarcely formed a few feeble tribes on the east of the Cordilleras, had already descended into the plains; or whether the ancient tradition of the 'great waters,' which is found among the nations of the Orinoco, the Erevato, and the Caura, belong to other climates, whence it has been propagated to this part of the New Continent.

On the 11th of April, we left Carichana at two in the afternoon, and found the course of the river more and more encumbered by blocks of granite rocks. We passed on the west the Caño Orupe, and then the great rock known by the name of *Piedra del Tigre*. The river is there so deep, that no bottom can be found with a line of twenty-two fathoms. Towards evening the weather became cloudy and gloomy. The proximity of the storm was marked by squalls alternating with dead calms. The rain was violent, and the roof of foliage, under which we lay, afforded but little shelter. Happily these showers drove away the mosquitos, at least for some time. We found ourselves before the cataract of Cariven, and the impulse of the waters was so strong, that we had great difficulty in gaining the land. We were continually driven back to the middle of the current. At length two Salive Indians, excellent swimmers, leaped into the water, and having drawn the boat to shore by means of a rope, made it fast to the *Piedra de Carichana Vieja*, a shelf of bare rock, on which we passed the night. The thunder continued to roll during a part of the night; the swell of the river became considerable; and we were several times afraid that our frail bark would be driven from the shore by the impetuosity of the waves.

The granitic rock on which we lay is one of those, where travellers on the Orinoco have heard from time to time, towards sunrise, subterraneous sounds, resembling those of the organ. The missionaries call these stones *laxas de musica*. 'It is witchcraft (cosa de bruxas),' said our young Indian pilot, who could speak Spanish. We never ourselves heard these mysterious sounds, either at Carichana Vieja, or in the Upper Orinoco; but from information given us by witnesses worthy of belief, the existence of a pheno-