

rarefied air through the fissures of a sonorous stone might have suggested to the Egyptian priests the invention of the juggleries of the Memnonium.

We left the rock at four in the morning. The missionary had told us that we should have great difficulty in passing the rapids and the mouth of the Meta. The Indians rowed twelve hours and a half without intermission, and during all that time, they took no other nourishment than cassava and plantains. When we consider the difficulty of overcoming the force of the current, and of passing the cataracts; when we reflect on the constant employment of the muscular powers during a navigation of two months; we are equally surprised at the constitutional vigour and the abstinence of the Indians of the Orinoco and the Amazon. Amylaceous and saccharine substances, sometimes fish and the fat of turtles' eggs, supply the place of food drawn from the first two classes of the animal kingdom, those of quadrupeds and birds.

We found the bed of the river, to the length of six hundred toises, full of granite rocks. Here is what is called the *Raudal de Cariven*. We passed through channels that were not five feet broad. Our canoe was sometimes jammed between two blocks of granite. We sought to avoid these passages, into which the waters rushed with a fearful noise; but there is really little danger, in a canoe steered by a good Indian pilot. When the current is too violent to be resisted the rowers leap into the water, and fasten a rope to the point of a rock, to warp the boat along. This manœuvre is very tedious; and we sometimes availed ourselves of it, to climb the rocks among which we were entangled. They are of all dimensions, rounded, very black, glossy like lead, and destitute of vegetation. It is an extraordinary phenomenon to see the waters of one of the largest rivers on the globe in some sort disappear. We perceived, even far from the shore, those immense blocks of granite, rising from the ground, and leaning one against another. The intervening channels in the rapids are more than twenty-five fathoms deep; and are the more difficult to be observed, as the rocks are often narrow toward their bases, and form vaults suspended over the surface of the river. We perceived no crocodiles in the *raudal*; these animals seem to shun the noise of cataracts.