

island of Panumana is rich in plants. We there again found those shelves of bare rock, those tufts of melastomas, those thickets of small shrubs, the blended scenery of which had charmed us in the plains of Carichana. The mountains of the Great Cataracts bounded the horizon towards the south-east. In proportion as we advanced, the shores of the Orinoco exhibited a more imposing and picturesque aspect.

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## CHAPTER XX.

The Mouth of the Rio Anaveni.—Peak of Uniana.—Mission of Atures.—Cataract, or Raudal of Mapara.—Islets of Surupamana and Uirapuri.

THE river of the Orinoco, in running from south to north, is crossed by a chain of granitic mountains. Twice confined in its course, it turbulently breaks on the rocks, that form steps and transverse dykes. Nothing can be grander than the aspect of this spot. Neither the fall of the Tequendama, near Santa Fé de Bogotá, nor the magnificent scenes of the Cordilleras, could weaken the impression produced upon my mind by the first view of the rapids of Atures and of Maypures. When the spectator is so stationed that the eye can at once take in the long succession of cataracts, the immense sheet of foam and vapours illumined by the rays of the setting sun, the whole river seems as it were suspended over its bed.

Scenes so astonishing must for ages have fixed the attention of the inhabitants of the New World. When Diego de Todaz, Alfonso de Herrera, and the intrepid Raleigh, anchored at the mouth of the Orinoco, they were informed by the Indians of the Great Cataracts, which they themselves had never visited, and which they even confounded with cascades farther to the east. Whatever obstacles the force of vegetation under the torrid zone may throw in the way of intercourse among nations, all that relates to the course of great rivers acquires a celebrity which extends to vast distances. The Orinoco, the Amazon, and the Uruguay, traverse, like inland arms of seas, in different directions, a land covered with forests, and inhabited by tribes