

his hut, towards the close of the rainy season, found a tigress settled in it with her two young. These animals had inhabited the dwelling for several months; they were dislodged from it with difficulty, and it was only after an obstinate combat that the former master regained possession of his dwelling. The jaguars are fond of retiring to deserted ruins, and I believe it is more prudent in general for a solitary traveller to encamp in the open air, between two fires, than to seek shelter in uninhabited huts.

On quitting the island of Panumana, we perceived on the western bank of the river the fires of an encampment of Guahibo savages. The missionary who accompanied us caused a few musket-shots to be fired in the air, which he said would intimidate them, and shew that we were in a state to defend ourselves. The savages most likely had no canoes, and were not desirous of troubling us in the middle of the river. We passed at sunrise the mouth of the Rio Anaveni, which descends from the eastern mountains. On its banks, now deserted, Father Olmos had established, in the time of the Jesuits, a small village of Japuians or Jaruros. The heat was so excessive that we rested a long time in a woody spot, to fish with a hook and line, and it was not without some trouble that we carried away all the fish we had caught. We did not arrive till very late at the foot of the Great Cataract, in a bay called the *lower harbour* (puerto de abaxo); and we followed, not without difficulty, in a dark night, the narrow path that leads to the Mission of Atures, a league distant from the river. We crossed a plain covered with large blocks of granite.

The little village of San Juan Nepomuceno de los Atures was founded by the Jesuit Francisco Gonzales, in 1748. In going up the river this is the last of the Christian missions that owe their origin to the order of St. Ignatius. The more southern establishments, those of Atabapo, of Cassiquiare, and of Rio Negro, were formed by the fathers of the Observance of St. Francis. The Orinoco appears to have flowed heretofore where the village of Atures now stands, and the flat savannah that surrounds the village no doubt formed part of the river. I saw to the east of the mission a succession of rocks, which seemed to have been the ancient shore of the Orinoco. In the lapse of ages the