

the New World. The more imposing and majestic the objects we describe, the more essential it becomes to seize them in their smallest details, to fix the outline of the picture we would present to the imagination of the reader, and to describe with simplicity what characterises the great and imperishable monuments of nature.

The navigation of the Orinoco from its mouth as far as the confluence of the Anaveni, an extent of 260 leagues, is not impeded. There are shoals and eddies near Maitaco, in a cove that bears the name of the Mouth of Hell (Boca del Infierno); and there are rapids (raudalitos) near Carichana and San Borja; but in all these places the river is never entirely barred, as a channel is left by which boats can pass up and down.

In all this navigation of the Lower Orinoco travellers experience no other danger than that of the natural rafts formed by trees, which are uprooted by the river, and swept along in its great floods. Woe to the canoes that during the night strike against these rafts of wood interwoven with lianas! Covered with aquatic plants, they resemble here, as in the Mississippi, floating meadows, the *chinampas* or floating gardens of the Mexican lakes. The Indians, when they wish to surprise a tribe of their enemies, bring together several canoes, fasten them to each other with cords, and cover them with grass and branches, to imitate this assemblage of trunks of trees, which the Orinoco sweeps along in its middle current. The Caribs are accused of having heretofore excelled in the use of this artifice; at present the Spanish smugglers in the neighbourhood of Angostura have recourse to the same expedient to escape the vigilance of the custom-house officers.

After proceeding up the Orinoco beyond the Rio Anaveni, we find, between the mountains of Uniana and Sipapu, the Great Cataracts of Mapara and Quittuna, or, as they are more commonly called by the missionaries, the Raudales of Atures and Maypures. These bars, which extend from one bank to the other, present in general a similar aspect: they are composed of innumerable islands, dikes of rock, and blocks of granite piled on one another and covered with palm-trees. But, notwithstanding a uniformity of aspect each of these cataracts preserves an individual charac