

The first, the Atures, is most easily passable when the waters are low. The Indians prefer crossing the second, the Maypures, at the time of great floods. Beyond the Maypures and the mouth of the Caño Cameji, the Orinoco is again unobstructed for the length of more than one hundred and sixty-seven leagues, or nearly to its source; that is to say, as far as the Raudalito of Guaharibos, east of the Caño Chiguire and the lofty mountains of Yumariquin.

Having visited the basins of the two rivers Orinoco and Amazon, I was singularly struck by the differences they display in their course of unequal extent. The falls of the Amazon, which is nearly nine hundred and eighty nautical leagues (twenty to a degree) in length, are pretty near its source in the first sixth of its total length, and five-sixths of its course are entirely free. We find the great falls of the Orinoco on a point far more unfavourable to navigation; if not at the half, at least much beyond the first third of its length. In both rivers it is neither the mountains, nor the different stages of flat lands lying over one another, whence they take their origin, that cause the cataracts; they are produced by other mountains, other ledges which, after a long and tranquil course, the rivers have to pass over, precipitating themselves from step to step.

The Amazon does not pierce its way through the principal chain of the Andes, as was affirmed at a period when it was gratuitously supposed that, wherever mountains are divided into parallel chains, the intermedial or central ridge must be more elevated than the others. This great river rises (and this is a point of some importance to geology) eastward of the western chain, which alone in this latitude merits the denomination of the high chain of the Andes. It is formed by the junction of the river Aguamiros with the Rio Chavinillo, which issues from the lake Llauricocha in a longitudinal valley bounded by the western and the intermedial chain of the Andes. To form an accurate idea of these hydrographical relations, it must be borne in mind that a division into three chains takes place in the colossal group or knot of the mountains of Pasco and Huanuco. The western chain, which is the loftiest, and takes the name of the *Cordillera Real de Nieve*, directs its course (between Haary and Caxatamba, Guamachuco and Luema, Micui-