

ing in the air, and continuing their migration towards the mouths of the Orinoco.

The fine vegetation of the mountains spreads over the plains, wherever the rock is covered with mould. We generally find that this black mould, mixed with fibrous vegetable matter, is separated from the granitic rock by a layer of white sand. The missionary assured us that verdure of perpetual freshness prevails in the vicinity of the cataracts, produced by the quantity of vapour which the river, broken into torrents and cascades for the length of three or four thousand toises, diffuses in the air.

We had not heard thunder more than once or twice at Atures, and the vegetation everywhere displayed that vigorous aspect, that brilliancy of colour, seen on the coast only at the end of the rainy season. The old trees were decorated with beautiful orchideas,\* yellow bannisterias, blue-flowered bignonias, peperomias, arums, and pothoses. A single trunk displays a greater variety of vegetable forms than are contained within an extensive space of ground in our countries. Close to the parasite plants peculiar to very hot climates we observed, not without surprise, in the centre of the torrid zone, and near the level of the sea, mosses resembling in every respect those of Europe. We gathered, near the Great Cataract of Atures, that fine specimen of *Grimmia*† with fontinalis leaves, which has so much fixed the attention of botanists. It is suspended to the branches of the loftiest trees. Of the phænerogamous plants, those which prevail in the woody spots are the mimosa, ficus, and laurinea. This fact is the more characteristic as, according to the observations of Mr. Brown, the laurineæ appear to be almost entirely wanting on the opposite continent, in the equinoctial part of Africa. Plants that love humidity adorn the scenery surrounding the cataracts. We there find in the plains groups of heliconias and other scitamineæ with large and glossy leaves, bamboos, and the three palm-trees, the *murichi*,

\* *Cymbidium violaceum*, *Habenaria angustifolia*, &c.

† *Grimmia fontinaloides*. See Hooker's *Musci Exotici*, 1818, tab. ii. The learned author of the *Monography of the Jungermanniæ* (Mr. Jackson Hooker), with noble disinterestedness, published at his own expense, in London, the whole collection of cryptogamous plants, brought by Bonpland and Humboldt from the equinoctial regions of America.