

moral dispositions of nations. Every type comprehends species, which, while exhibiting the same general appearance, differ in the varied development of the similar organs. The palm-trees, the scitamineæ, the malvaceæ, the trees with pinnate leaves, do not all display the same picturesque beauties; and generally the most beautiful species of each type, in plants as in animals, belong to the equinoctial zone.

The proteaceæ,\* crotons, agaves, and the great tribe of the cactuses, which inhabit exclusively the New World, disappear gradually, as we ascend the Orinoco above the Apure and the Meta. It is, however, the shade and humidity, rather than the distance from the coast, which oppose the migration of the cactuses southward. We found forests of them mingled with crotons, covering a great space of arid land to the east of the Andes, in the province of Bracamoros, towards the Upper Marañon. The arborescent ferns seem to fail entirely near the cataracts of the Orinoco; we found no species as far as San Fernando de Atabapo, that is, to the confluence of the Orinoco and the Guaviare.

Having now examined the vicinity of the Atures, it remains for me to speak of the rapids themselves, which occur in a part of the valley where the bed of the river, deeply ingulfed, has almost inaccessible banks. It was only in a very few spots that we could enter the Orinoco to bathe, between the two cataracts, in coves where the waters have eddies of little velocity. Persons who have dwelt in the Alps, the Pyrenees, or even the Cordilleras, so celebrated for the fractures and the vestiges of destruction which they display at every step, can scarcely picture to themselves, from a mere narration, the state of the bed of the river. It is traversed, in an extent of more than five miles, by innumerable dikes of rock, forming so many natural dams, so many barriers resembling those of the Dnieper, which the ancients designated by the name of *phragmoi*. The space between the rocky dikes of the Orinoco is filled with islands of different dimensions; some hilly, divided into several peaks, and two or three hundred toises in length, others small, low, and like mere shoals. These islands divide the river into a number of torrents, which boil up as

\* *Rhapalas*, which characterise the vegetation of the Llanos.