

placed under them to serve as rollers, they are drawn as far as the place where the river again becomes navigable. This operation is seldom necessary when the water is high. We cannot speak of the cataracts of the Orinoco without recalling to mind the manner heretofore employed for descending the cataracts of the Nile, of which Seneca has left us a description probably more poetical than accurate. I shall cite the passage, which traces with fidelity what may be seen every day at Atures, Maypures, and in some *pongos* of the Amazon. "Two men embark in a small boat; one steers, and the other empties it as it fills with water. Long buffeted by the rapids, the whirlpools, and the contrary currents, they pass through the narrowest channels, avoid the shoals, and rush down the whole river, guiding the course of the boat in its accelerated fall." *

In hydrographic descriptions of countries, the vague names of cataracts, cascades, falls, and rapids,† denoting those tumultuous movements of water which arise from very different circumstances, are generally confounded with one another. Sometimes a whole river precipitating itself from a great height, and by one single fall, renders navigation impossible. Such is the majestic fall of the Rio Tequendama, which I have represented in my "Views of the Cordilleras;" such are the falls of Niagara and of the Rhine, much less remarkable for their elevation, than for the mass of water they contain. Sometimes stony dikes of small height succeed each other at great distances, and form distinct falls; such are the *cachoeiras* of the Rio Negro and the Rio Madeira, the *saltos* of the Rio Cauca, and the greater part of the *pongos* that are found in the Upper Marañon, from the confluence of the Chinchipe to the village of San Borja. The highest and most formidable of these *pongos*, which are descended on rafts, that of Mayasi, is however only three feet in height. Sometimes small rocky dikes are so near each other that they form for several miles an uninterrupted succession of cascades and whirlpools (*chorros* and *remolinos*); these are properly

* Nat. Quæst., lib. iv, cap. 2. (edit. Elzev., tom. ii, p. 609.)

† The corresponding terms in use among the people of South America, *re saltos, chorros, pongos, cachoeiras, and raudales.*