

almost a refinement of luxury, in that wild spot; but our wants rendered us every day more and more ingenious.

After an hour of expectation, we saw the boat arrive above the *raudal*, and we were soon ready to depart. After quitting the rock, our passage was not exempt from danger. The river is eight hundred toises broad, and must be crossed obliquely, above the cataract, at the point where the waters, impelled by the slope of their bed, rush with extreme violence toward the ledge from which they are precipitated. We were overtaken by a storm, accompanied happily by no wind, but the rain fell in torrents. After rowing for twenty minutes, the pilot declared, that, far from gaining upon the current, we were again approaching the *raudal*. These moments of uncertainty appeared to us very long: the Indians spoke only in whispers, as they do always when they think their situation perilous. They redoubled their efforts, and we arrived at nightfall, without any accident, in the port of Maypures.

Storms within the tropics are as short as they are violent. The lightning had fallen twice near our boat, and had no doubt struck the surface of the water. I mention this phenomenon, because it is pretty generally believed in those countries that the clouds, the surface of which is charged with electricity, are at so great a height that the lightning reaches the ground more rarely than in Europe. The night was extremely dark, and we could not in less than two hours reach the village of Maypures. We were wet to the skin. In proportion as the rain ceased, the zancudos reappeared, with that voracity which tipulary insects always display immediately after a storm. My fellow-travellers were uncertain whether it would be best to stop in the port or proceed on our way on foot, in spite of the darkness of the night. Father Zea was determined to reach his home. He had given directions for the construction of a large house of two stories, which was to be begun by the Indians of the mission. "You will there find," said he gravely, "the same conveniences as in the open air; I have neither a bench nor a table, but you will not suffer so much from the flies, which are less troublesome in the mission than on the banks of the river." We followed the counsel of the missionary, who caused torches of copal to be lighted.