

These torches are tubes made of bark, three inches in diameter, and filled with copai resin. We walked at first over beds of rock, which were bare and slippery, and then we entered a thick grove of palm trees. We were twice obliged to pass a stream on trunks of trees hewn down. The torches had already ceased to give light. Being formed on a strange principle, the woody substance which resembles the wick surrounding the resin, they emit more smoke than light, and are easily extinguished. The Indian pilot, who expressed himself with some facility in Spanish, told us of snakes, water-serpents, and tigers, by which we might be attacked. Such conversations may be expected as matters of course, by persons who travel at night with the natives. By intimidating the European traveller, the Indians imagine they render themselves more necessary, and gain the confidence of the stranger. The rudest inhabitant of the missions fully understands the deceptions which everywhere arise from the relations between men of unequal fortune and civilization. Under the absolute and sometimes vexatious government of the monks, the Indian seeks to ameliorate his condition by those little artifices which are the weapons of physical and intellectual weakness.

Having arrived during the night at San Jose de Maypures we were forcibly struck by the solitude of the place; the Indians were plunged in profound sleep, and nothing was heard but the cries of nocturnal birds, and the distant sound of the cataract. In the calm of the night, amid the deep repose of nature, the monotonous sound of a fall of water has in it something sad and solemn. We remained three days at Maypures, a small village founded by Don Jose Solano at the time of the expedition of the boundaries, the situation of which is more picturesque, it might be said still more admirable, than that of Atures.

The *raudal* of Maypures, called by the Indians Quituna, is formed, as all cataracts are, by the resistance which the river encounters in its way across a ridge of rocks, or a chain of mountains. The lofty mountains of Cunavami and Calitamini, between the sources of the rivers Cataniapo and Ventuari, stretch toward the west in a chain of granitic hills. From this chain flow three small rivers, which embrace in some sort the cataract of Maypures. There are, on