

manganese, seem to justify this conjecture. They are found on all the stones, far from the mission, and indicate the former abode of the waters. In going up the river all merchandise is discharged at the confluence of the Rio Toparo and the Orinoco. The boats are entrusted to the natives, who have so perfect a knowledge of the *raudal*, that they have a particular name for every step. They conduct the boats as far as the mouth of the Cameji, where the danger is considered as past.

I will here describe the cataract of Quituna or Maypures as it appeared at the two periods when I examined it, in going down and up the river. It is formed, like that of Mapara or Atures, by an archipelago of islands, which, to the length of three thousand toises, fill the bed of the river; and by rocky dikes, which join the islands together. The most remarkable of these dikes, or natural dams, are *Purimarimi*, *Manimi*, and the *Leap of the Sardine* (*Salto de la Sardina*). I name them in the order in which I saw them in succession from south to north. The last of these three stages is near nine feet high, and forms by its breadth a magnificent cascade. I must here repeat, however, that the turbulent shock of the precipitated and broken waters depends not so much on the absolute height of each step or dike, as upon the multitude of counter-currents, the grouping of the islands and shoals, that lie at the foot of the *raudalitos* or partial cascades, and the contraction of the channels, which often do not leave a free navigable passage of twenty or thirty feet. The eastern part of the cataract of Maypures is much more dangerous than the western; and therefore the Indian pilots prefer the left bank of the river to conduct the boats down or up. Unfortunately, in the season of low waters, this bank remains partly dry, and recourse must be had to the process of *portage*; that is, the boats are obliged to be dragged on cylinders, or round logs.

To command a comprehensive view of these stupendous scenes, the spectator must be stationed on the little mountain of Manimi, a granitic ridge, which rises from the savannah, north of the church of the mission, and is itself only a continuation of the ridges of which the *raudalito* of Manimi is composed. We often visited this mountain, for we were never weary of gazing on this astonishing spectacle.