

diffused over the ground, in the air, and on the surface of the waters. But towards noon, when the sun reaches its zenith, these strong shadows gradually disappear, and the whole group is veiled by an aerial vapour of a much deeper azure than that of the lower regions of the celestial vault. These vapours, circulating around the rocky ridge, soften its outline, temper the effects of the light, and give the landscape that aspect of calmness and repose which in nature, as in the works of Claude Lorraine and Poussin, arises from the harmony of forms and colours.

Cruzero, the powerful chief of the Guaypunaves, long resided behind the mountains of Sipapo, after having quitted with his warlike horde the plains between the Rio Inirida and the Chamochiquini. The Indians told us that the forests which cover the Sipapo abound in the climbing plant called *vehuco de maimure*. This species of liana is celebrated among the Indians, and serves for making baskets and weaving mats. The forests of Sipapo are altogether unknown, and there the missionaries place the nation of the Rayas,\* whose mouths are believed to be in their navels. An old Indian, whom we met at Carichana, and who boasted of having often eaten human flesh, had seen these *acephali* "with his own eyes." These absurd fables are spread as far as the Llanos, where you are not always permitted to doubt the existence of the Raya Indians. In every zone intolerance accompanies credulity; and it might be said that the fictions of ancient geographers had passed from one hemisphere to the other, did we not know that the most fantastic productions of the imagination, like the works of nature, furnish everywhere a certain analogy of aspect and of form.

We landed at the mouth of the Rio Vichada or Visata to examine the plants of that part of the country. The scenery is very singular. The forest is thin, and an innumerable quantity

\* *Rays*, on account of the pretended analogy with the fish of this name, the mouth of which seems as if forced downwards below the body. This singular legend has been spread far and wide over the earth. Shakespeare has described Othello as recounting marvellous tales

" of cannibals that do each other eat :  
Of Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders."