

tion by filtration through a thick mass of grasses. I suggest these ideas only in the form of a doubt. The colouring principle seems to be in little abundance; for I observed that the waters of the Guaina or Rio Negro, when subjected to ebullition, do not become brown like other fluids charged with carburets of hydrogen.

It is also very remarkable, that this phenomenon of *black waters*, which might be supposed to belong only to the low regions of the torrid zone, is found also, though rarely, on the table-lands of the Andes. The town of Cuenca in the kingdom of Quito, is surrounded by three small rivers, the Machangara, the Rio del Matadero, and the Yanuncai; of which the two former are white, and the waters of the last are black (aguas negras). These waters, like those of the Atabapo, are of a coffee-colour by reflection, and pale yellow by transmission. They are very clear, and the inhabitants of Cuenca, who drink them in preference to any other, attribute their colour to the sarsaparilla, which it is said grows abundantly on the banks of the Rio Yanunçai.

We left the mouth of the Zama at five in the morning of the 23rd of April. The river continued to be skirted on both sides by a thick forest. The mountains on the east seemed gradually to retire farther back. We passed first the mouth of the Rio Mataveni, and afterward an islet of a very singular form; a square granitic rock that rises in the middle of the water. It is called by the missionaries El Castillito, or the Little Castle. Black bands seem to indicate, that the highest swellings of the Orinoco do not rise at this place above eight feet; and that the great swellings observed lower down are owing to the tributary streams which flow into it north of the *raudales* of Atures and Maypures. We passed the night on the right bank opposite the mouth of the Rio Siucurivapu, near a rock called Aricagua. During the night an innumerable quantity of bats issued from the clefts of the rock, and hovered around our hammocks.

On the 24th a violent rain obliged us early to return to our boat. We departed at two o'clock, after having lost some books, which we could not find in the darkness of the night, on the rock of Aricagua. The river runs straight from south to north; its banks are low, and shaded on both sides