

vegetation surprised us the more, as we had till then seen on the banks of the Atabapo only small trees with slender trunks, which from afar resembled young cherry-trees. The Indians assured that these small trees do not form a very extensive group. They are checked in their growth by the inundations of the river; while the dry grounds near the Atabapo, the Temi, and the Tuamini, furnish excellent timber for building. These forests do not stretch indefinitely to the east and west, toward the Cassiquiare and the Guaviare; they are bounded by the open savannahs of Manuteso, and the Rio Inirida. We found it difficult in the evening to stem the current, and we passed the night in a wood a little above Mendaxari; which is another granitic rock traversed by a stratum of quartz. We found in it a group of fine crystals of black schorl.

On the 29th, the air was cooler. We had no zancudos, but the sky was constantly clouded, and without stars. I began to regret the Lower Orinoco. We still advanced but slowly from the force of the current, and we stopped a great part of the day to seek for plants. It was night when we arrived at the mission of San Balthasar, or, as the monks style it, the mission of *la divina Pastora de Balthasar de Atabapo*. We were lodged with a Catalonian missionary, a lively and agreeable man, who displayed in these wild countries the activity that characterises his nation. He had planted a garden, where the fig-tree of Europe was found in company with the persea, and the lemon-tree with the mammee. The village was built with that regularity which, in the north of Germany, and in protestant America, we find in the hamlets of the Moravian brethren; and the Indian plantations seemed better cultivated than elsewhere. Here we saw for the first time that white and fungous substance which I have made known by the name of *dapicho* and *zapis*.* We immediately perceived that it was analogous to india-rubber; but, as the Indians made us understand by signs, that it was found underground, we were inclined to think, till we arrived at the mission of Javita, that the *dapicho* was a fossil caoutchouc, though different from the elastic bitumen of Derbyshire. A Poimisano Indian, seated by the fire in the hut of

* These two words belong to the Poimisano and Paragiai tongues.