

myself to pointing out what is imperfect, or fatal to humanity, in their civil or religious institutions. If I have dwelt longer on the *Rock of the Guahiba*, it was to record an affecting instance of maternal tenderness in a race of people so long calumniated; and because I thought some benefit might accrue from publishing a fact, which I had from the monks of San Francisco, and which proves how much the system of the missions calls for the care of the legislator.

Above the mouth of the Guasucavi we entered the Rio Temi, the course of which is from south to north. Had we continued to ascend the Atabapo, we should have turned to east-south-east, going farther from the banks of the Guainia or Rio Negro. The Temi is only eighty or ninety toises broad, but in any other country than Guiana it would be a considerable river. The country exhibits the uniform aspect of forests covering ground perfectly flat. The fine *pirijao* palm, with its fruit like peaches, and a new species of *bache*, or *mauritia*, its trunk bristled with thorns, rise amid smaller trees, the vegetation of which appears to be retarded by the continuance of the inundations. The *Mauritia aculeata* is called by the Indians *juria* or *cauvaja*; its leaves are in the form of a fan, and they bend towards the ground. At the centre of every leaf, no doubt from the effect of some disease of the parenchyma, concentric circles of alternate blue and yellow appear, the yellow prevailing towards the middle. We were singularly struck by this appearance; the leaves, coloured like the peacock's tail, are supported by short and very thick trunks. The thorns are not slender and long like those of the corozo and other thorny palm-trees; but on the contrary, very woody, short, and broad at the base, like the thorns of the *Hura crepitans*. On the banks of the Atabapo and the Temi, this palm-tree is distributed in groups of twelve or fifteen stems, close together, and looking as if they rose from the same root. These trees resemble in their appearance, form, and scarcity of leaves, the fan-palms and palmettos of the Old World. We remarked that some plants of the *juria* were entirely destitute of fruit, and others exhibited a considerable quantity; this circumstance seems to indicate a palm-tree of separate sexes.

Wherever the Rio Temi forms coves, the forest is inun-