

the columns of Hercules, beyond which no white man has been able to penetrate. It appears, that this point, known by the name of the great Raudal de Guaharibos, is three-quarters of a degree west of Esmeralda, consequently in longitude  $67^{\circ} 38'$ . A military expedition, undertaken by the commander of the fort of San Carlos, Don Francisco Bovadilla, to discover the sources of the Orinoco, led to some information respecting the cataracts of the Guaharibos. Bovadilla had heard, that some fugitive negroes from Dutch Guiana, proceeding towards the west (beyond the isthmus between the sources of the Rio Carony and the Rio Branco), had joined the independent Indians. He attempted an *entrada* (hostile incursion), without having obtained the permission of the governor; the desire of procuring African slaves, better fitted for labour than the copper-coloured race, was a far more powerful motive than that of zeal for the progress of geography. Bovadilla arrived without difficulty as far as the little Raudal\* opposite the Gehette; but having advanced to the foot of the rocky dike that forms the great cataract, he was suddenly attacked, while he was breakfasting, by the Guaharibos and Guaycas, two warlike tribes, celebrated for the virulence of the *curare* with which their arrows are empoisoned. The Indians occupied the rocks that rise in the middle of the river, and seeing the Spaniards without bows, and having no knowledge of fire-arms, they provoked the whites, whom they believed to be without defence. Several of the latter were dangerously wounded, and Bovadilla found himself forced to give the signal for battle. A fearful carnage ensued among the natives, but none of the Dutch negroes, who, as was believed, had taken refuge in those parts, were found. Notwithstanding a victory so easily won, the Spaniards did not dare to advance eastward in a mountainous country, and along a river inclosed by very high banks.

These white Guaharibos have constructed a bridge of lianas above the cataract, supported on rocks that rise, as generally happens in the *pongos* of the Upper Marañon, in the middle of the river. The existence of this bridge,

\* It is called *Raudal de abaxo* (Low Cataract), in opposition to the great *Raudal de Guaharibos*, which is situated higher up toward the east.