

when I solicited the Directory to hasten the departure of Captain Baudin. On leaving Spain, I had promised to rejoin the expedition wherever I could reach it. M. Bonpland and I resolved instantly to divide our herbals into three portions, to avoid exposing to the risks of a long voyage the objects we had obtained with so much difficulty on the banks of the Orinoco, the Atabapo, and the Rio Negro. We sent one collection by way of England to Germany, another by way of Cadiz to France, and a third remained at the Havannah. We had reason to congratulate ourselves on this foresight: each collection contained nearly the same species, and no precautions were neglected to have the cases, if taken by English or French vessels, remitted to Sir Joseph Banks, or to the professors of natural history at the Museum at Paris. It happened fortunately that the manuscripts which I at first intended to send with the collection to Cadiz, were not intrusted to our much esteemed friend and fellow traveller, Fray Juan Gonzales, of the order of the Observance of St. Francis, who had followed us to the Havannah with the view of returning to Spain. He left the island of Cuba soon after us, but the vessel in which he sailed foundered on the coast of Africa, and the cargo and crew were all lost. By this event we lost some of the duplicates of our herbals, and what was more important, all the insects which M. Bonpland had with great difficulty collected during our voyage to the Orinoco and the Rio Negro. By a singular fatality, we remained two years in the Spanish colonies without receiving a single letter from Europe; and those which arrived in the three following years made no mention of what we had transmitted. The reader may imagine my uneasiness for the fate of a journal which contained astronomical observations, and barometrical measurements, of which I had not made any copy. After having visited New Grenada, Peru, and Mexico, and just when I was preparing to leave the New Continent, I happened, at a public library of Philadelphia, to cast my eyes on a scientific publication, in which I found these words: "Arrival of M. de Humboldt's manuscripts at his brother's house in Paris, by way of Spain!" I could scarcely suppress an exclamation of joy.

While M. Bonpland laboured day and night to divide and