

one premeditated. The Indians have a dislike and a predilection for certain races of monkeys; they love the viuditas, the titis, and generally all the little sagoins; while the araguatos, on account of their mournful aspect, and their uniform howling, are at once detested and abused. In reflecting on the causes that may facilitate the propagation of sound in the air during the night, I thought it important to determine with precision the distance at which, especially in damp and stormy weather, the howling of a band of araguatos is heard. I believe I obtained proof of its being distinguished at eight hundred toises distance. The monkeys which are furnished with four hands cannot make excursions in the Llanos; and it is easy, amidst vast plains covered with grass, to recognize a solitary group of trees, whence the noise proceeds, and which is inhabited by howling monkeys. Now, by approaching or withdrawing from this group of trees, the maximum of the distance may be measured, at which the howling is heard. These distances appeared to me sometimes one-third greater during the night, especially when the weather was cloudy, very hot, and humid.

The Indians pretend that when the araguatos fill the forests with their howling, there is always one that chaunts as leader of the chorus. The observation is pretty accurate. During a long interval one solitary and strong voice is generally distinguished, till its place is taken by another voice of a different pitch. We may observe from time to time the same instinct of imitation among frogs, and almost all animals which live together and exert their voices in union. The Missionaries further assert, that, when a female among the araguatos is on the point of bringing forth, the choir suspends its howlings till the moment of the birth of the young. I could not myself judge of the accuracy of this assertion; but I do not believe it to be entirely unfounded. I have observed that, when an extraordinary incident, the moans for instance of a wounded araguato, fixed the attention of the band, the howlings were for some minutes suspended. Our guides assured us gravely, that, "to cure an asthma, it is sufficient to drink out of the bony drum of the hyoidal bone of the araguato." This animal having so extraordinary a volume of voice, it is supposed that its