

aquatic serpents, swim on the surface of the water, and crowd under the bellies of the horses and mules. A contest between animals of so different an organization presents a very striking spectacle. The Indians, provided with harpoons and long slender reeds, surround the pool closely; and some climb up the trees, the branches of which extend horizontally over the surface of the water. By their wild cries, and the length of their reeds, they prevent the horses from running away and reaching the bank of the pool. The eels, stunned by the noise, defend themselves by the repeated discharge of their electric batteries. For a long interval they seem likely to prove victorious. Several horses sink beneath the violence of the invisible strokes which they receive from all sides, in organs the most essential to life; and stunned by the force and frequency of the shocks, they disappear under the water. Others, panting, with mane erect, and haggard eyes expressing anguish and dismay, raise themselves, and endeavour to flee from the storm by which they are overtaken. They are driven back by the Indians into the middle of the water; but a small number succeed in eluding the active vigilance of the fishermen. These regain the shore, stumbling at every step, and stretch themselves on the sand, exhausted with fatigue, and with limbs benumbed by the electric shocks of the gymnoti.

In less than five minutes two of our horses were drowned. The eel being five feet long, and pressing itself against the belly of the horses, makes a discharge along the whole extent of its electric organ. It attacks at once the heart, the intestines, and the cæliac fold of the abdominal nerves. It is natural that the effect felt by the horses should be more powerful than that produced upon man by the touch of the same fish at only one of his extremities. The horses are probably not killed, but only stunned. They are drowned from the impossibility of rising amid the prolonged struggle between the other horses and the eels.

We had little doubt that the fishing would terminate by killing successively all the animals engaged; but by degrees the impetuosity of this unequal combat diminished, and the wearied gymnoti dispersed. They require a long rest, and abundant nourishment, to repair the galvanic force which