

to all the phenomena of muscular motion subject to volition. It will perhaps be found that, in most animals, every contraction of the muscular fibre is preceded by a discharge from the nerve into the muscle; and that the mere simple contact of heterogeneous substances is a source of movement and of life in all organized beings. Did an ingenious and lively people, the Arabians, guess from remote antiquity, that the same force which inflames the vault of Heaven in storms, is the living and invisible weapon of inhabitants of the waters? It is said, that the electric fish of the Nile bears a name in Egypt, that signifies *thunder*.*

We left the town of Calabozo on the 24th of March, highly satisfied with our stay, and the experiments we had made on an object so worthy of the attention of physiologists. I had besides obtained some good observations of the stars; and discovered with surprise, that the errors of maps amounted here also to a quarter of a degree of latitude. No person had taken an observation before me on this spot; and geographers, magnifying as usual the distance from the coast to the islands, have carried back beyond measure all the localities towards the south.

As we advanced into the southern part of the Llanos, we found the ground more dusty, more destitute of herbage, and more cracked by the effect of long drought. The palm-trees disappeared by degrees. The thermometer kept, from eleven in the morning till sunset, at 34° or 35°. The calmer the air appeared at eight or ten feet high, the more we were enveloped in those whirlwinds of dust, caused by the little currents of air that sweep the ground. About four o'clock in the afternoon, we found a young Indian girl stretched upon the savannah. She was almost in a state of nudity, and appeared to be about twelve or thirteen years of age. Exhausted with fatigue and thirst, her eyes, nostrils, and mouth

When the gymnotus was enfeebled by bad health, the lateral shock was imperceptible; and in order to feel the shock, it was necessary to form a chain, and touch the fish with both hands at once. Cavendish, in his ingenious experiments on an artificial torpedo, had well remarked these differences, depending on the greater or less energy of the charge. (Philosophical Transactions, 1776, p. 212).

* It appears, however, that a distinction is to be made between *rahad*, thunder, and *razhadh*, the electrical fish; and that this latter word means simply 'that which causes trembling.'